**Marketing in Tough times**

During tough times it is important to maintain a profile and presence even if people are not signing up immediately. There may be increased competition, and business owners may shop around, but business goes on, and they still need accounting technicians, BAS agents and advisors. By keeping your presence active, people will be more likely to remember you when they need you. Bookkeeping businesses still need to generate new business to remain viable long-term, even if it's a 'tough time'.

The number one thing business owners look for in a bookkeeper is trustworthiness. What are you doing right now to increase the impression of professionalism and reliability?

**Marketing Tips for Tough Times**

* Keep helping your existing clients. Maintain your communications with them, and they will remember you. Word-of-mouth referrals are the most reliable source of new business, so give generously to your existing clients, and the chances are this will pay off in the long run with referrals.
* If you have a mailing list - can you offer something for free as an incentive to sign up for your list so that you can reach more people now? Again, over the long term, the more people on your list, the more likely some will become paying customers at some point.
* Check out paid ads – they are becoming cheaper as more people are online for more time looking at more sites. Targeted Facebook ads and boosted posts can work well.
* Use social media as part of maintaining your online presence. If you don't write your own blog or social posts, share posts from others, such as colleagues, the ATO, business.gov.au or AAT.
* Can you offer something practical and educational for your clients for free? Make it short, give them an overview and then an incentive to sign up for customised or detailed training.
* Add some recent testimonials to your website. Better still – add a couple of case study stories to your website that demonstrate how you have helped particular businesses.
* Write testimonials for businesses you love – you never know, you might get prospective customers.
* Get your face out there – people like to see who they are doing business with.
* Get your LinkedIn profile, experience, certifications and photo updated.
* Get on Google My Business. It’s easy to set up and free to use.
* Sort out your Search Engine Optimisation – for anyone using DIY websites, get a free plugin to help you assess the SEO rating of each page. Update your keywords and page descriptions. Add some keywords about your services, business advice and how you support your clients. Remember that search engines like fresh content and recently updated pages.
* Get networking – check out your local council business networks – they may offer online and/or face-to-face events you can join.

Businesses are still operating and still need help and expert advice. Possibly more than ever, business owners see the value in connecting with an advisor they can work closely with. Whenever people talk about ‘tough times’ or difficult business environments, there are just as many businesses experiencing growth.

AAT How to Offer Value to Clients in Tough Times