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# FUTUREWORKS

## Tony Holtzhausen, BComm(Hons), CMA



### Certified Management Accountant "Your Partner in Business"

The focus of my practice is to assist entrepreneurs in growing their businesses. I act as an offsite controller and assist in all financial and taxation matters, including:

- Financial Statements and Tax Returns (personal & corporate)
- Accounting & Bookkeeping
- Management Consulting & Financing
- GST, PST
- Payroll
- New Business Setup
- Cash Flow Management
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## MARKETING CHANNEL



Rob Ciccone

## Variety of pillars keep sales leads flowing in *Lack of marketing mix often fatal*

The past year-and-a-half has been all about dealing with change for my family and me. We had our first child, expanded my business on a number of fronts, and most recently, my wife and I took on the challenge of moving from the city to the suburbs. If you've ever purchased a home you know what a huge drain this can be.

Between dealing with lawyers, banks, realtors, inspectors, and movers – all while continuing to run my business – I really had my hands full. Getting into our new home was practically a full-time job.

With so much of my attention focused on these major life events, what was going on with my business? In particular, my pipeline of leads and marketing initiatives?

I have witnessed a lot of small businesses suffer under the duress of changes in the economy, market conditions or in the lives of the owners, but the impact on mine was minimal and, in fact, business has grown.

It's not because I'm super human. And it's not because I'm smarter than the thousands of other small business owners out there. It's simply because my business is well supported by multiple marketing pillars. Having these pillars in place allowed me to deal with the diversion of a new baby and a new home, without the business suffering for a lack of new clients.

One of the reasons business owners often lack this peace of mind is that they're relying almost entirely on just one or two marketing sources, or what I like to call marketing pillars, to support their businesses.

One source, or pillar, is usually the sales force, and the other is usually some type of media such as the Yellow Pages or local newspaper. The challenge with this limited approach is that if a business is built upon these few marketing pillars, and for some reason one of them fails, the business will crumble.

What if your key salesperson leaves and takes your best customers with her? What if for some reason your ad stops producing results? Or, if you are the main person responsible for sales, what if you suffer an illness and can't work? After all, life won't stand still for very long, and events will force-

change.

For instance, many merchants along Cambie Street are feeling the pain of the Canada Line Skytrain construction right outside their doors. The Cambie merchants have no doubt depended upon location as one of their key marketing pillars. With construction, this pillar has just been yanked out from under them temporarily.

If you've got a one- or two-pillar company, this is the kind of event that could keep you up at night, or worse, put you out of business. In order for your business to thrive under challenging conditions, you need to build your business on multiple marketing pillars. Then, should one of the pillars weaken or even collapse (like, say, your location on Cambie Street), your business will still thrive.

In my own company, we have created a variety of different marketing approaches to support the business. We utilize direct mail, targeted local advertising, a permission-based telemarketing strategy and various referral programs; all of these are in addition to our Yellow Pages ad and my personal one-on-one sales activity, my keynote presentations and the networking I do.

What I'm essentially doing is recession-proofing my business by ensuring my pipeline of leads continues to produce, no matter what else might be going on around me.

Depending on your particular business, some pillars will be more effective than others. The point is: successful companies are built on multiple marketing pillars. Take a look at your business. How many pillars do you have? And what other pillars could you build, if you got creative about it?

Let's face it: running a business isn't easy. There's always going to be a lot required of you, and marketing isn't the only thing you have to worry about. But with the right marketing pillars in place, you can keep new business flowing in, regardless of what changes may come your way.

*Robert Ciccone is the president and founder of Success Unlimited Sales and Marketing Group (www.susmg.com), a full-service marketing consulting firm that helps companies increase their sales and profits. He can be reached at 604-688-7733 or rob@susmg.com.*