

**All Media Is Local**

***Work local. Buy local. Play local. Eat local.***

Have you noticed recently the trend toward localism? By localism I'm referring to consumer's affection for supporting local businesses and focusing their energy locally. It has manifested in many ways, such as buying locally-grown food; buying cars from the local dealer instead of an online dealer three states away; using a friendlier, more accommodating local banker instead of the big bank with the new name and lots of TARP money to lend. Even the kids in your neighborhood seem to be outside playing more often, many of them knocking on your door looking for odd jobs. Shoot, if this keeps up we might even start seeing our family doctors visit our homes again.

If you're a local professional trying to make payroll or keep your shelves stocked; or a local CPA or lawyer working more overtime than usual just to hang onto your customer base, I'm guessing you're more involved in your local business community than ever before. You better be, and you better get to know your customer like never before.

More and more of us want local products and services, produced and delivered by local merchants that we know and trust. The same can be said of branded products. They may not be made locally but they better be perceived as providing local-like quality, and have some personality. Otherwise, you will lose market share to a local producer or a better positioned competitor. Price is still a key ingredient in the decision making process, but quality is gaining ground rapidly and there are many quality brands and services out there that can and will compete on price.

This isn't to say that price and quality are no longer important, because they are still key in the decision making process, I'm simply saying there is a new factor for businesses to consider.

Being in the media planning and buying business, I'd like to put a plug in for your local TV, radio and newspaper sales rep. My company interacts with these folks on a daily basis in almost every market in the country and we have developed a tremendous respect for their hard work and dedication to community.

They are a key conduit for keeping their local economy healthy and vibrant. Their connections with business professionals in the community are deep. In addition to their professional networking, they also have rich social connections. They go to your schools and churches. They belong to Rotary, the Chamber and the country club. They know people who can help your son find a summer job, or grow your business by introducing you to a new supplier or customer.

Most are seasoned marketing and advertising professionals and they can transform your business, if you listen to their advice. That advice is even more important than ever before because of their understanding of the local marketplace. So, as you manage your way through this difficult economy give some thought to localism and to utilizing the local talent that might just be your most valuable resource.

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