

## Excercise marketing muscle by getting into the game

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Marketing is a little like staying fit. You've got to work it into your everyday routine and work it out with gusto.

It takes time and a lot of energy. You can't let up, either. To keep those marketing muscles from atrophying, be ready to tweak, revise or completely revamp a good plan in favor of an even better plan.

Fight the temptation to coast along on existing momentum and continually look for new marketing moves, including those that seem pretty unconventional.

That's the advice of two Valley-based consultants.

"I call it magic marketing," says Doug Zogby, owner of Got Game Consulting.

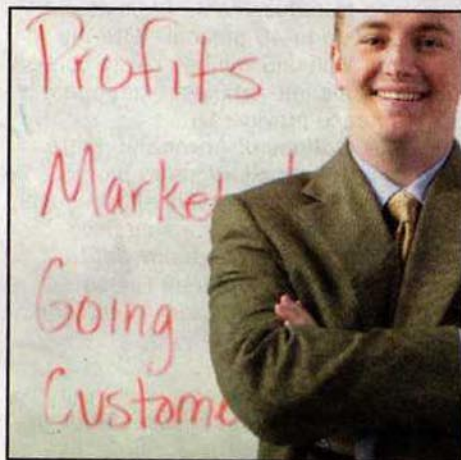
A former insurance industry executive, Zogby devised his own "magic" methods to gain a larger share of the consulting marketplace and to help clients better promote their own businesses.

"Magic marketing is micro-branding yourself. You become a recognized expert in your field by doing more speaking, more book writing," says Zogby.

What Zogby calls magic marketing, Bill Gluth calls differentiation. A former corporate marketing executive, Gluth is founder of Develop Your Vision, a motivational and training company based in Surprise.

"Too many people don't grasp what differentiates them from everybody else, so their message falls on deaf ears," says Gluth. "They need to identify what their strength is and create a narrative (about that strength) that other people will care about."

New business owners are particularly susceptible to the ultimate marketing taboo, Gluth says. "They think, 'Everybody is my



customer.' That's the kiss of death."

Rather, hitch your marketing efforts to a smaller niche that enhances your expertise within a more exclusive audience, he says.

Another bit of advice: Assume that even the best marketing strategies have a shelf life. That means keeping on top of trends in your industry.

Zogby and Gluth both encourage clients to continually explore and experiment with unusual marketing methods.

Zogby, for example, delved into a totally different field and applied the new knowledge to his area of expertise.

"I learned about game theory through a process management seminar," Zogby says.

A professor from Columbia University demonstrated the relevance of game theory on business operations and conflicts. Current game theory — still largely an academic study but gaining influence in the business world and social settings — originated in the 1950s with the groundbreaking

economic theories of mathematician John Nash.

"Game theory caught my imagination, so I did my own research," says Zogby. "What it does is allow you to predict what happens in strategic situations."

That might be pretty valuable information for companies looking to improve their marketing efforts. And while it might sound like pretty esoteric stuff, Zogby points to a recent ABC-TV "Primetime Live" special about game theory and how it explains behavior in everyday situations, such as locating a stranger in New York City or motivating people to lose weight.

The implications for business are staggering. Some multinational corporations already employ game theorists.

Food producer Mars Inc., for example, used game theory to solve a major transportation problem in Europe that has dramatically reduced shipping costs and transformed the way trucking companies charge for services.

"The game theorist they hired, who specialized in Nash's theory of equilibrium, put together a software program that worked as a trucking clearinghouse," says Zogby, lauding the new business model that put Mars in the driver's seat.

"It placed Mars in the advantage over the truckers, who still sold their space, but it kept them from price gouging. Mars built the model and let other companies join the consortium. It created a win-win situation."

No wonder other companies are getting into the game.

To help that process along, Zogby is writing a book about game theory he hopes will make it more understandable to the busi-

### QUICK TIPS

#### Tips for navigating the new marketing landscape:

- Encourage clients to continually explore and experiment with unusual marketing methods.
- Pick up books on the subject to stimulate marketing juices. Recommended authors include Seth Godin, Jay Conrad Levinson, Jay Abraham and Jeffrey Fox.
- Check out motivational classics by Robert Collier, or take the golf wisdom of Fred Shoemaker and translate it out of the tee box into your company's marketing matrix.

#### For more:

[www.developyourvision.com](http://www.developyourvision.com)  
[www.gametheory.net](http://www.gametheory.net)  
[www.gotgameconsulting.com](http://www.gotgameconsulting.com)  
[www.trendwatching.com](http://www.trendwatching.com)  
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Source: Doug Zogby and Bill Gluth

ness community at large. "I'm trying to bridge that gap," he says.

Using game theory to pump up a company's marketing plan, says Zogby, "is definitely out of the box." He calls it the highest form of marketing magic. "You can separate yourself from the competition and give yourself a new tool in your toolbox."