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### From The Editor:

This edition of Connections may be just the elixir the business doctor ordered. There is no avoiding the subject of the world's economic situation. It affects all of us in some way, even more if we get mired down in the news cycle of the economic ebb and flow. I have a saying: When the times get tough, the tough get marketing. And that's what this edition is all about.



Sangeeta Bahl, an image consultant practicing in India, shows how the basics of marketing are essentially the same throughout the world, in an emerging powerhouse economy or in a mature one. Shauna Heathman, a South Carolina (USA) image consultant, keeps us on point as she explains the ease and benefits of blogging. Kathryn Towner, a Des Moines, Iowa (USA) on-line communications consultant and publisher of this very publication, explains how email etiquette is perhaps one of the most important marketing strategies. Of course, image consulting is a people business. Thanks to Caterina Rando, a San Francisco, California (USA) business coach, you'll get a crash course on how to get yourself in front of more people, and ultimately how to get more people banging on your door.

Sometime around the year I was born, one of my favorite writers, Erica Jong, wrote a poem, "Autumn Perspective." One of its lines (if not the entire poem) is as relevant to today's world as it was some 40 years ago. "We have plans that will not tolerate our fears." So take the advice of the woman who wrote "Fear of Flying" and become a fearless marketer of your image consulting practice.

Joseph Rosenfeld, AICI, CIP

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## Successful Business Marketing Strategies and Tactics

Sangeeta S. Bahl, MBA(UK), AICI FLC

Marketing and managing the international business appearance for companies is gaining momentum. Formerly known in India - where I am a practicing image consultant - as personality development or personal enhancement, image consulting includes three components: country, corporate, and brand image.

India is fast becoming a top leader in the growth of the global economy, the one-stop shop for all services, catering to a wide variety of clients and companies. Large companies foraying into the world of international business are fueling an increase in the demand for "specialist services" like education and training, including image development. Companies' corporate images, having undergone a paradigm shift, are now considered vehicles of high brand awareness. The advancements in marketing technologies have created sophisticated tools for consulting businesses to increase their brand awareness and visibility.

[www.AICI.org](http://www.AICI.org)

We hope you are enjoying AICI's online newsletter and we would love to hear from you. The topic for January's edition is "Expanding Your Services." If you would like to contribute an article on this topic that is written in the spirit of sharing and that is non-promotional, please connect with me prior to writing your article:  
[joseph@JRIImageMentor.com](mailto:joseph@JRIImageMentor.com).

When submitting entries for the C.E.U. Corner, please use this format and order: Date of training course, Title of training course, Location of training course, Contact information (contact name with credentials, telephone number, e-mail), Total number of CEUs possible, Total number of days. Programs between February 1 and April 30, 2009, may be published in the January 2009 edition. All courses must be authorized by AICI and meet approval prior to publication.

When submitting entries for the Members in the News, please use this format: Name with credentials; Title of article, TV or radio segment; Publication name, TV or radio show name or call letters; Date of publication or appearance. Please submit a maximum of 3 recent media mentions occurring between October and December 2008. Submissions for the January 2009 edition will be accepted until January 1, 2009.



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Marketing the intangible services of image consulting can be a challenge, especially in India where the majority is not aware of the concept. But I offer 10 proven marketing strategies to build a client base no matter where you live and do business:

- **VALUE BASED WEBSITE:** One of the most important tools of marketing is the Website. Practically everyone is computer savvy and whenever someone needs information, they go directly to the Internet.
- **REFERRALS:** The adage "Old is Gold" rings true when you ask your existing client for more business. Ask happy clients for referrals to people they know, but whom you don't. Be sure to keep track of who referred whom. Most of my business has come from referrals.
- **COLD CALLING:** You will be surprised at some of the people who have become clients through careful cold calling. Check the background of the company and have something nice to say when you first introduce yourself. Know what to say with a well-honed speech about what services your company has to offer. Always follow up with an e-mail.
- **QUESTIONS:** Ask questions. I can't emphasize enough how important and how underused this tip is in business. Simply allowing people to verbalize their needs makes them happy and tells them you listen. It also allows you to hone in on the points to make when it's your turn to talk so you effectively market yourself.
- **BLOG:** Look for a highly trafficked and searched blog in your industry, then post relevant articles about your business. Let your personality shine through in the tone of your writing. People interested in your services will contact you.
- **E-BROCHURE:** This is distributed, viewed and delivered via the Internet. Like printed brochures, e-brochures feature photos, graphics, copy, and your logo. However, unlike printed brochures, e-brochures can be sent as e-mail attachments, incorporated on a Website or burned onto a self-playing CD.
- **NEWSLETTER:** Clients love getting monthly information from you as a service provider. Make them happy to see your name in the "from" field. If they only hear from you when you want something, they'll turn you off when they hear from you. A newsletter gives clients the feeling they are being thought of while generating interest in your business.
- **GET SOLD:** Find the most successful competitors in your area and let them sell you. Become a customer and see why their approach works well. Did you know that automakers buy each other's cars and break them down to nuts and bolts? Incorporate the same approach in your image consulting business.
- **PRESS** is the "secret pathway" to your business. Decide which media you would like to carry your press release. It is important to note that in doing so, one has to include a cover letter addressed to the person in charge of getting it printed. When that has been done, it is always courteous to send a thank you note to the editor for using your press release.
- **FREE:** Have we all not been automatically attracted to the word "free"? Advertising free stuff on your Website is a great way to market your service.

The art of getting new business is no mystery. In fact, it's so simple we miss the forest for the trees. It's strange, but we become so busy doing business that we have a tendency to overlook what's in front of our noses. When you ask yourself "How can I do something?" - open your mind to new ideas and think like an entrepreneur.

Sangeeta S Bahl, Founder and Director of IMPACT IMAGE CONSULTANTS, is an MBA(UK), AICI FLC, based out of Gurgaon, India. She is a charismatic personal and corporate stylist for both men and women. Specializing in color and etiquette, she delivers workshops and in-house programs to associations and individuals, tapping their hidden potential and enhancing their positive attributes. Connect with Sangeeta via email: [sangeeta\\_sbahl@hotmail.com](mailto:sangeeta_sbahl@hotmail.com).