

FEATURED EDITORIAL

# GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

looking to lay blame. Maybe we should all take a share of it.

For a lack of better words, I'm often right out there on the streets, visiting with clients to discuss what's called their ad "copy" – the verbiage which they'd like that month in their ad and any offers or specials or discounts they may choose to offer. I also speak with many local merchants who I hope are prospective advertisers, and I hear legitimate tales of woe about the state of the local economy and their anxiety over the possibility of failing in their respective place of business. They fear that the inevitable will be that they'll come to shutting down their doors, which is often right along with giving up their dreams. Some are panicked they'll face defeat by competition, while others are scared that even stability with their "regulars" won't ultimately help them to pay their respective bills. Consistently increasing costs for rent and leasing and the rising costs of doing business in general often holds a business back from spending any money to promote it and challenge the economy by advertising.

Take *Local Luxuries* as an example. It's conflicting to realize that we really *must spend money to try and make money.* As

advertising, I didn't give much thought to a lot of these issues, but it did occur to me one day as I drove past the Peninsula Shopping Center and realized that a florist that had only been open for weeks, had already closed down. *That was an enormous factor in my impetus to develop a new publication.* I was sorry that before, I'd mostly picked up flowers from a large market because of convenience. I felt regretful that I may have been a part of the reason why they'd "gone down," but I was also annoyed that there had been nothing to remind me that they were there. So much of our lives are spent with some degree of tunnel vision; we're provincial inasmuch as we'll routinely go somewhere because our reflexes are automatic. It's sort of inconvenient to have our attention diverted from what we're accustomed to. Through discussions I've held with business owners and managers, I've become convinced that we're as visual a society as we are one with a sort of auto-responsiveness. For our attention to be diverted, *we have to be stimulated.*

In developing *Local Luxuries*, it was amazing to me how stepping foot into a place of business I'd never been to before,

This is *not a plea for more advertising*; it's a plea to consider what we may each take part in being responsible for in terms of what we're doing to the businesses around us. It's an argument for some to consider of whether they can stimulate others to either attract them as new "customers" or to *keep the ones they already have.* I'm fickle, I'll admit. With a career and a family and so many other things on my plate, like many others, I'm forgetful. I have to see something to be reminded of it. If I've never been somewhere, I may just drive right past it. When photos are taken of the inside of a business and broadcast, if you will, in a publication, they give some insight into what a consumer can expect when they get there. If a business has an ad in front of us, we either learn of them, or are reminded of them. Many of us will walk or drive by the same places every day and fail to notice details, but when a person has made an association from an ad or an offer or a picture of an interior and a logo and a name, something subconsciously draws or lures us to it. Recognition can lead to revenue when branding has been established. *We're visual* -- and in this day and age, we have to remain visually alert, because if we don't open our eyes wide and recognize the state

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Local Luxuries has grown, we've pushed every month to increase the amount of "readable" content; advertisers express desire to give recipients of the publication ultra-motivation to open it. Readers, thankfully, respond to it so favorably. In this day and age of Internet and other technology-driven means of communication, there's real value to having something to physically hold in hand and be able to leisurely look through and read. For many, that is a luxury – even more so, given that the publication is a free one. We're told through voluntary comments made to and written to us, that we have some unique and enjoyable content. That means more to us than words can describe. Yet as with almost anything in life, of course there's a flip side to this. That flip side is cost.

For our part at *Local Luxuries*, and really for any print periodical for that matter, is that for every page allocated for "feature" content, there's a cost expended by the publication. Each page without an advertisement is a page that isn't generating revenue. Notwithstanding, having these pages that actually *cost us money*, are tremendously important because we believe in social positivity. We want to highlight wonderful people and businesses that make up our community. The potential benefits of print are limitless, though often overlooked.

Before I began in the world of print and

opened my eyes to a whole new world of opportunity. "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten," or so some adage I've heard in different variations over the years has made impression enough on me to not let go of. It's true as it relates to doing business; if a consumer repeatedly patronizes a particular place, they may be cutting themselves off from others. If a business only advertises to its existing clientele through emails and direct-mail offers, they'll likely only re-attract the customer base they've already had. "Word of mouth," is effective only if everyone is always talking about you, but then again, that's sort of an arrogant approach to take. To believe that we're so damned good, everyone is spreading the word about how great we are.

These are surely frustrating concepts because of their complexities, but it seems that we're largely either on auto-pilot in our shopping, or we're on the completely other side of the spectrum; *we're distracted from what we're used to when we've been stimulated visually.* In so much as we're all either consumers, business owners, employees, or some combination thereof, shouldn't we be called to take action and fight to make our presence known and aggressively try and reclaim what used to be a far more stimulated local economy?

of our local economy and spend our money close by, then we'll continue to see smaller businesses closing rapidly.

Each time I drive by a business that I've visited before for the purposes of advertising and heard a "There's no money to advertise" or "We don't need to advertise because we already have a customer base" and then subsequently I've seen a "Going out of business" sign with "Everything must go!" -- *my heart sinks.* Another merchant gone. People's dreams dashed and people's jobs lost and careers put on hold. It's horrid for them. It's horrid for us. It's horrid overall.

## WHY It's Wise To Advertise

By Publisher, Jacqueline Bergrin

The sight of a building being knocked down, a lot emptied, an "out of business" sign to us is almost one we're becoming accustomed to seeing. Many of our local businesses are dying and when another one passes, phone lines are hot with the news. "Did you know that so-and-so went out of business?" Or, "You should get over to so-and-so soon because they're selling everything down to the store's bare bones." Some of us rush a local business right before they close their doors, but *where were we before?* It's easy to point fingers at one another

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