

DIY and other economic realities

In the midst of economic crisis, we don't flaunt wealth or advertise luxury goods. Instead, we emphasize savings and value. A few weeks ago, I wrote about banks emphasize how solid they are, and how some retailers like Walmart are running campaigns about saving. In fact, Walmart is currently running a commercial that talks about eating in as a saving strategy (and you can get all your ingredients at Walmart). And in today's *Washington Post* there is an article that says Americans are doing more things for themselves, things they used to pay someone else to do. Things like mowing the lawn, walking the dog, dying hair, and others. The Post reports on one retailer that is using the trend in its advertising: Target, with its "brand new day" campaign. Target's advertising has consistently been cutting-edge. In the ads, which you may have seen, against a catchy tune, Target shows you how several products it carries can be used to save money. It is clever and it is really responsive to the culture.

In general, advertisers are most definitely acknowledging the new economic realities. More and more I see the word "save" or "savings" in ads, across the board. Big Lots is running an ad showing a couple who bought a dining set for a lot less than it would have cost elsewhere. So basically the theme is you can save money but please buy from us. I wonder what advertising was like during the Great Depression. It must have been similar, putting emphasis on value and savings. If anyone has any examples, please share in the comments.



Save, save, save

It's no wonder, given the sour state of the U.S. economy, that advertisers are choosing to portray their products or services as the most economical. One such advertiser is NetZero. For those of you not familiar with it, or who don't watch any TV, NetZero is a dialup Internet Service Provider (ISP). For years, NetZero has been saying it can take us to the "same" Internet for only \$9.95 a month. However, NetZero has rarely said that it is the same Internet, yet slower compared to your more expensive broadband connection. Until now. A couple of nights ago, I saw NetZero's new campaign in which the company says each individual could save \$300 a year using NetZero. The first ad in the campaign went so far to say that you don't really need speed if you can save money. The rest of the ads have been truncated versions just focusing on the dollar savings and not on the speed loss.

What makes this ad so interesting is that it is all about saving money. In fact, that is NetZero's USP—cheaper than broadband. I guess if all you are doing is getting text emails, and perhaps visiting a non-graphic website, you don't need more than dialup. If, however, you transmit files or you share pictures or you simply want to visit and see mainstream websites, you would be very badly served having dialup. But yes, if you switch to dialup (and I am not sure who else provides this service), you could save some \$20-\$30 a month.

I think we will be seeing more of these ads from diverse companies. They will focus on how cheap they are (this is what Walmart is doing with its Live Better campaign) and ignore any other issues. The feeling seems to be people want to/have to save money, and if we tell them they can save money using our company, they will buy our product or service. A year ago I would have said there is no way this approach can work. People do not buy simply on cost...they buy on experience, promise, and whole slew of other issues. But today, when accounts are

dwindling, jobs are being lost and people feel panicky,
perhaps simply saving money is the way to go.