

Editorial

Construct a Careful Business Plan Based on Economic Signs

All economic indicators are pointing downward these days.

New home construction and home sales have slid since last summer, and holiday sales at major retailers were soft.

Foreign markets slumped last month on fears of a U.S. economic slowdown. Panicky investors pulled out of the U.S. stock market causing a sudden freefall of leading indexes.

Then, the Federal Reserve Board made a stunning three-quarter percent

rate cut—the biggest single rate cut in the United States since 1982.

All of this has fanned fears that a recession is just around the corner.

While reports foretell doom and gloom for the overall U.S. economy, our industry retains some positive news.

The Bicycle Products Suppliers Association reported a modest uptick in dollar sales of 3.5 percent last year. Suppliers at its recent conference were cautiously optimistic about similar growth this year.

The latest Leisure Trends Group top-line report for December showed sales at outdoor specialty retailers grew 11 percent. A good snow season is likely driving solid winter sales for retailers that sell skis and bikes.

Taiwanese suppliers, from the big three down to small components manufacturers, are reporting excellent year-end profitability. Factory owners are aggressively investing in expensive CNC machines and equipment.

With these mixed messages, how

does a company leader budget and plan for the year ahead?

Constantly monitor information at hand and gather relevant facts. Use this information to create a plan that is appropriate for your company. Be prepared to make changes to control negative impacts.

The more carefully we as an industry pay attention to data and plan to meet upcoming challenges, the more likely we will all survive—and perhaps even thrive during an economic downturn.

Guest Editorial

It's Easy Being Green: Tips to Become More Eco Friendly

BY ELLEN HALL

Going “green” doesn’t mean turning into a radical environmentalist. You are not required to tote all of the recyclables you come across during your day home in a backpack.

As part of the cycling industry we are in the perfect position to lead by example. Start small—making gradual changes, challenging yourself to do a little more each week until you’ve made a conscious change for your lifestyle and business.

Reduce, reuse and recycle. In our efforts to clean up our act we should carefully think about ways to reduce and reuse versus simply recycling. Interbike set an excellent example by discontinuing their exhibitor manual in favor of electronic documents. They also en-

couraged recycling at each booth by providing color coded-bags.

Here are a few other ideas:

- Commuting to work should be the easiest area for improvement. Every day should be bike to work day. If you are not already riding to work, try incorporating one day per week of alternative transportation; ride, walk, run, skip, take the bus. Encourage others to do the same. You’ll love how self-sufficient you feel riding to work while others sit in traffic. Visit www.catyecommuter.com to log your commute miles, see your fuel and cash savings, or sign up for a commute challenge in your office or department.

- Try to use less paper in your office. Invest in a scanner to create electronic documents. Learn how to make double-

sided prints. Visit www.ecogreenoffice.com for eco-friendly office supplies. Reduce office purchases by reusing items. Keep recycling bins handy so it is just as convenient to recycle as it is to pitch into the garbage. Get a smaller dumpster and larger recycling bins. Choose recycled and recyclable products when making purchasing decisions.

- To save energy, turn the thermostat down in the winter and wear a sweater, up in the summer and wear short sleeves. Set timers on thermostats and electronics so you are not drawing full power when away from the office. Research energy ratings before making electronics purchases and make sure that they offer a recycling program for the item you are replacing.

- Support local organic farms and

breweries. Choose mugs, glasses and reusable containers for eating at the office. Try a meatless meal. Consider this for yourself or your next company event.

- Get involved with your community. Volunteer to help with Bike-to-Work Day in your city; request bike racks at public buildings; support your local bike couriers; and buy from local businesses. Get a friend on board to share your enthusiasm with colleagues, employees and customers.

Visit www.treehugger.com or www.idealbite.com for great tips and resources on “greening” everything. Be the catalyst for change.

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