

EXPERTADVICE

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How can I ensure that my company's brand is protected by staffers during a down economy?

A: It's tempting to curtail your brand management and marketing budget during an economic slowdown. However, a company should manage and market its brand even more carefully at such times.

Living up to your company's brand promise separates the strong, sustainable brands from those that will fail in economic turmoil. No one can maintain your brand better than your employees on the front line, because they are often the first point of contact for your customer.

Strong brands are protected through a downturn and maintain their value when employees understand their role. Maintain-

ing a focus on brand management provides a company with myriad important benefits that will sustain the brand.

In a downturn, it is more important than ever to keep your customers' loyalty, retain the company's ability to recruit top talent, and stay a steady course on your stock performance. Plenty of direct open communication with your employees will keep rivals at bay, keep staffers engaged and informed, and allow you to take advantage of new market opportunities as they appear.

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Ask the expert: letters@prweek.com