

Now's not the time to skip NPE

As we approach NPE2009, I felt the urge to pass on some advice to an industry I've now been a part of for 23 years.

My first message: Come to NPE2009. There has been much debate about the importance of the upcoming event in Chicago. It comes at a time when the economy is in a recession and the industry is struggling, perhaps like never before. Some exhibitors have pulled out of the show, and there are questions about how many people will actually attend.

I have been at every NPE since 1988 and it has always been one of the most important events in the industry. I expect nothing less this year. Come to Chicago in June and attend NPE2009, which will showcase the industry's top suppliers and latest technologies. In addition to NPE's 2,000 exhibitors, there are no fewer than eight co-located events, providing you with an unprecedented opportunity to keep up to date on what's happening in your industry.

This year's NPE will include a new conference, SPI's "Business of Plastics," which runs concurrently with the show, from June 22-26. This conference will feature a wealth of presentations from industry leaders on

topics such as best business practices, global economic trends, technology and sustainability, to name a few. The "Business of Plastics" of course includes marketing, and on June 24, I am excited to be joining many other industry professionals as a presenter at one of the conference's marketing educational sessions.

This brings me to my second message:



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Don't forget the importance of marketing. At a time when businesses are struggling and the economy isn't good, it's important to be reminded of the importance of promoting your company.

Many of you have slashed your advertising and promotion budgets, and that's understandable in this economy. But how far have you cut? Are you generating leads for your sales force? Are you keeping your company visible to prevent your image from suffering? These are basic things you need to do, and there are ways to do them on a limited budget.

If you want some help in this area, consider attending my presentation during NPE, which is titled "Spreading the Word — The Basics for Promoting Your Company." It will take place at 3 p.m. June 24 at McCormick Place. My goal is to pass on some of my knowledge of marketing communications to companies in the plastics industry, and to provide you with strategies for promoting your company in a down economy.

My third and final message to plastics industry processors and suppliers: Hang in there. It's hard to do, considering many of you already have had to make difficult decisions because of the weak economy. But do it. There's a popular saying that goes, "That which doesn't kill me makes me stronger."

It's true. If you survive this recession, you will emerge stronger when things finally do improve. And improve they will.

Greg Hannoosh is the founder and president of Next Step Communications Inc. of West Newbury, Mass., a B2B advertising/marketing communications consulting firm specializing in serving clients in the plastics and packaging industries.