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Tough Economy Means Small Businesses Must Market Smarter *Marketing Pro Offers Tips to Help Companies Increase Return on Investment*

HOPKINS, MINN. (January 6, 2009) — In today's tight economy, small businesses need to reassess their marketing strategies for 2009, says marketing expert Scott Severson, president of Minnesota-based marketing services company ARAnet.

"Particularly in a tough climate like this one, the most effective companies are the ones that are taking a hard look at their campaigns and measuring exactly what their marketing dollars are delivering," Severson says. It's more critical than ever to utilize cost-effective tactics that deliver measurable results, says Severson, whose company manages marketing programs for clients across the country.

"Small businesses don't need a big budget to make a significant impact," Severson says, and offers these tips to squeeze the greatest return on investment out of a marketing campaign:

Save on services. If you're working with a limited budget, consider tackling marketing projects where you can get others to do the writing for you cost-effectively. For example, some article-distribution services will not only distribute "brand storytelling" releases about your brand or products to thousands of newspapers and Web sites, but write them, as well, according to Severson.

Seek out value. Look into using tactics that provide added value to deliver more bang for the marketing buck. Severson cited ARAnet's Quick Read program as a great example with its two-for-the-price-of-one article release program. The Quick Read release program combines writing and distribution of a full-length feature article with a second, condensed version that caters to newspapers and Web sites that don't have space for full-length articles.

Measure your marketing program. Set clear and measurable goals at the outset, then use the data generated by your campaign to assess which tactics are working -- and which aren't. "Ask yourself

the tough questions,” Severson says. “Are your tactics meeting your success metrics? Are you achieving your allowable cost goals? Learn from each effort, and use the data you gather to improve your marketing.”

Following these steps will help you get the marketing chores done efficiently, measurably and inexpensively.

About ARAnet

Founded in 1996, ARAnet is a leading media company with two products to help its clients reach and win new customers, Adfusion and ARAcontent. Adfusion is an article-based cost per click advertising platform. It is one of the nation’s most dynamic online advertising networks, currently delivering more than one billion impressions monthly through a network of premium publishing partners. ARAcontent generates feature article placements in print and online publications that build awareness of its clients’ products and services. To learn more, visit www.ARAnetOnline.com. For more information on ARAcontent’s Quick Read release program, contact Jeff Bialek at 866-287-9168 or jeffb@ARAcontent.com.