

Re-inventing an existing market

Miles Latham,
Affixius Productions

Affixius Productions came into being in 2003 – although Tim and I have been making corporate videos since we were 16. Now, we're a leading provider of corporate and public sector video production.

Our strap line is 'Corporate Video Has Changed', and we take that incredibly seriously. Corporate video is a very tired market, but we're doing things differently. Unlike the majority of our industry, we have a completely in-house crew that can see the project through from start to finish – so there's a better understanding of the brief, and a lot more room for creativity. We write our own music for every video we produce

and handle the graphic design – things that are usually subcontracted out, we look after in-house. We won the BT Essence of the Entrepreneur Award 2008, and one of the things they picked up on was the fact that we took something that was a little sleepy and made our best efforts to revise it.

The economic downturn has definitely posed challenges for us. About a year ago, most of our turnover was made up from a core of key accounts that regularly wanted professional video production work. It's like somebody flipped a switch last November – everything just stopped. We considered where there was still potential demand and money for what we do and we highlighted the education sector. We founded the sub-brand Affixius Education, which saved our business. It's the biggest and best decision we've ever made. Now we're handling international projects like a prestigious school in the Swiss Alps, and we've got a college in Kenya – so it can only get better.

We've also put a lot of hard work into coming up with products that are more fitting to smaller budgets. We have something called ProPoint, which is a very clever, cheap, presentation tool. We've just started producing very low budget – as low as £350 – testimonial videos for small businesses, which is becoming quite popular.

At the Bank, we're very lucky with our Relationship Manager, Martin Arnold. In these difficult times when your cash flow is taking a pounding, the Bank has backed us.

We were in survival mode for the first half of this year, but there's a real air of excitement around the business now. If we're doing this well in the recession, when the world comes to its senses we're going to be unstoppable – and that's exciting.

10-SECOND TIPS

1. Be robust. Make sure you're in a position to be knocked on your back and get up again, because it's going to happen. We got about 60 of them one after the other
2. Don't be scared to back yourself. It can be very scary to be ambitious, but quite often, if you've got a hunch, it works
3. Don't be so arrogant as to think the entire world will flock to what you do. Sometimes you have to go to what the world wants – you have to diversify

affixius.com



IMAGE: DAN BURR/FPRIT

Taking skills across markets

Daisy Silva-Stafford,
Chain Reaction Coaching

Chain Reaction Coaching offers training on self-motivation, self-esteem and decision-making. Julie and I work with clients one-to-one, but also do group workshops.

Life coaching is very popular at the moment. I think it's because of the recession: people need to achieve. We've had the business for less than a year, but we've built up clients pretty quickly.

Right now I'm balancing the business with my full time job as a Skills Development Adviser in the probation service. Between us, Julie and I have 30 years working with offenders. And I think that's what makes us unique: we are qualified life coaches, but we have been working with people who are reluctant to change – so we have developed a very strong foundation on motivation.

I've created some Chain Reaction Coaching courses for offenders, to help them make small changes. We're going to start going to schools and coaching young people, too. It's about building up a reputation at the moment, so we've had to do a lot of stuff for free to get noticed, but working for the Government offers some security.

The main goal for us is to become a respected training provider in the UK, and then also in other countries. It's exciting and scary at the same time. We get a buzz from helping people, and they respond to us.

10-SECOND TIPS

1. Visit your competitors' websites and ask: 'What they are doing that is good and how can I make it great?'
2. Use social media to help you with your marketing research. Ask people: 'Would you buy this service or product? Why?'
3. Work for charity. It keeps you grounded and the experience can help you look outside the box. Success is also about sharing chainreactioncoaching.com

IMAGE: NICK DAWE

