

*Prepared for you by*

**A-Train Marketing**

# **FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE OR SURGE?**

*Why and how a “Surge Mentality” can be your competitive advantage.*

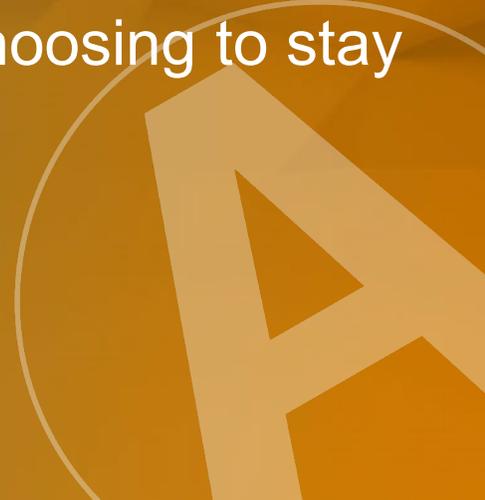
**a-train<sup>®</sup>**  
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# HOUSEKEEPING

- Please mute your lines
- Any questions that come in will be answered at the end
- There are a few ways to comment
- There is a slide at the end with my direct contact info. Please send me a message if you have specific questions.



## TODAY WE WILL COVER ...

- Gauging reaction in times of uncertainty to pivot and take advantage of hidden opportunity
  - Why a “surge mindset” can be the difference between treading water or charging forward
  - How to address “surge” tactics in the face of adversity and strategize for future success
  - How to maintain visibility and relevance when others in your marketplace are choosing to stay below the radar
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# UNCERTAINTY + BUSINESS ...

- Uncertainty and business do not mix well
- Facing both a global health crisis and economic crisis is a unique circumstance
- We don't know where we will be in 1 month, 3 months, a year ...
- We are all navigating uncharted territory, and we all manage the stressors of challenging times differently

**BUT THE GOOD NEWS IS ...**

**WE CAN'T  
CONTROL THE  
UNCERTAINTY,  
BUT WE CAN  
CONTROL HOW  
WE HANDLE IT.**



**FIGHT  
FLIGHT  
FREEZE  
OR  
SURGE**

WHERE DO  
YOU WANT  
TO BE?

# FIGHT MENTALITY

- Being reactive but being aggressive
- Trying to squeeze the juice from every raisin
- Reexamining priorities, products and services for relevance
- Revisiting all clients to see where support makes sense
- Increasing exposure via all viable tactics and channels

# FLIGHT MENTALITY

- Cutting as much as possible
- Considering closure
- Trying to save a seemingly sinking ship
- Having a hard time facing the realities of leadership
- Putting all marketing on hold
- Flying below the radar

# FREEZE MENTALITY

- Learning to adjust, but doing so with reluctance
- Trying to tread water
- Holding back on marketing investments
- Literally putting business on hold
- Making or preparing the hard decisions like lay-offs and closures

# SURGE MENTALITY

- Pivoting to get ahead
- Re-evaluating brand, products, offers, and clients
- Identifying and taking advantage of new opportunities
- Leveraging resources like the Better Business Bureau to expand reach & visibility
- Recalibrating to come out of the gate with a vengeance

# WHY SURGE?

- 
- Project an image of strength and stability
  - Take advantage of decrease in your competitors' marketing exposure
  - Accelerate the possibility for growth rather than focusing only on recovery
  - Take advantage of new advertising opportunities or advertising packages
  - Utilize downtime to re-evaluate your business & refine
  - Get clear about who you are, who you serve, & what you sell (and share it)
  - Be a thought leader!

# ADOPT A SURGE MINDSET

## BE RELEVANT, STAY CONNECTED, REMAIN VISIBLE

- Be a leader/thought leader; not a time to put your head in the sand
- Be relevant: find ways to create value and meaning
- Shift from a competitive mindset to a partnership mindset
- Get creative and engage your whole team – like being a source for front-line responders
- **Be ready to COME OUT OF THE GATE WITH A VENGEANCE**

A close-up photograph of two hands reaching towards each other. The hand on the left is light-skinned and open, while the hand on the right is dark-skinned and slightly curled. They are positioned against a bright blue sky with soft, white clouds. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall mood is one of hope, support, and reaching out.

**SEIZE OPPORTUNITY ...  
BUT DO SO WITH  
COMPASSION**

# SURGE TACTICS MUST BE HANDLED WITH CARE

- Not right for every business
- Not a time for shameless self-promotion, aggressive selling, or using crisis as a platform for opportunism
- Be thoughtful and strategic to project the right motivations
- Tactics that appear to be predatory will likely damage your public image and turn off potential clients
- **GOAL:** maintain a consistent level of business activity, grow your business, or enhance it to build future momentum

# EMPATHY IS CURRENCY

- ***Think from the perspective of your employees:***
  - How are they impacted?
  - What is their family situation?
- ***Think from the perspective of your clients:***
  - How is their life or business being impacted NOW?
  - How will these things be impacted in the FUTURE?
  - What can you do to show them support and compassion?
  - While it is not a time for forceful selling, it is okay to offer what can help.

**EMPATHY IS CRUCIAL FOR AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT...**

**SEIZE OPPORTUNITY ...  
BUT DO SO  
THOUGHTFULLY**



# STRATEGICALLY PLANNING AHEAD

**THERE WILL BE A NEXT. IT WILL LOOK DIFFERENT.**

***If you are facing forced transformation; why not seize the opportunity?***

- **Evaluate your brand:** Have you outgrown it? Is it time for a remodel?
- **Examine message:** Is it relevant? Is it compelling? Is it clear/consistent?
- **Review products/ services:** Repackage?; Cut those that are not profitable?
- **Evaluate clients:** Time to cull the list? Pivot to new markets, etc.?
- **Evaluate competitors:** Where are they now? What are they offering?
- **Database/CRM:** Time to clean it up and get it ready for the next phase?

**CHANGE  
IS SCARY  
BECAUSE  
IT FEELS  
LIKE LOSS ...**

**BE WHAT WE CAN BE  
NOT WHAT WE CAN  
PRESERVE**

# WHAT CAN A SURGE PLAN LOOK LIKE?

## EXAMPLE: INTERIOR REMODEL

- Upgrade technology to meet new reality
- Evaluate brand, message, and website
- Create and promote messages about safety & sanitation
- Send a direct mail DIY kit with masks, branded hammer, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Create DIY email campaign with 2-minute how-to videos and tutorial blogs
- Retrain team about message, vision and values
- Survey clients, vendors and employees
- Clean up database
- Do competitive research / mystery shopping
- Look at budget for marketing and reevaluate strategy to meet current needs and demand
- Find ways to maximize your marketing budget:
- Call your clients and simply check in
- Offer “quick tips” social media posts boost
- Partner with community organizations and show your support of them (e.g. Food Bank)
- Brainstorm around your expertise to share relevant info and be the thought leader for your industry
- Think through a lens of empathy to offer value!

# SUMMARY

**Brands and organizations that find ways to market through a downturn often RECOVER FASTER, with a GREATER COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, and INCREASED MARKET AUTHORITY!**

Adopt a surge mentality and watch your employees and customers gain confidence and become loyal advocates.



*And remember...*

**WE CAN'T CONTROL**

**THE UNCERTAINTY,**

**BUT WE CAN CONTROL**

**HOW WE HANDLE IT.**



**TOGETHER WE RISE**

# THANK YOU!

## Questions?

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# Gretchen Gaede



## Gretchen Gaede, President

### A-Train Marketing Communications, Inc.

Gretchen Gaede co-founded A-Train Marketing Communications, Inc. in 1998 with a mission of helping drive the greater good through creative and strategic marketing, advertising and public relations solutions that are designed to gain aggressive results for clients worldwide.

Beyond winning dozens of national awards for creative marketing and advertising campaigns, she was recently added to the list of the Top 100 female entrepreneurs in Colorado by the Colorado Business Journal and listed as one of the 2019 Enterprising Women of the Year by Enterprising Women magazine. In May of 2010, Gaede was honored to accept the Governor's Award for Outstanding Colorado Business at the annual statewide Service & Leadership Awards given on the State Capital steps in Denver, CO.

From the start of her journey as an entrepreneur, she has made a commitment to giving back and has provided hundreds of volunteer hours to non-profits and initiatives supporting women and social justice including WomenGive, Boys & Girls Clubs, Food Bank of Larimer County, Project Self-Sufficiency, Suicide Prevention Initiative, and Crossroads Safehouse.

She currently holds executive board and planning positions for several organizations including the National Audubon Society, TAB Alternative Board, and the Women's Presidents Organization (WPO).