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MARKETING & MEDIA

PR, marketing firms offering low-cost services

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by [Giannina Smith](#)

As the unstable economy causes companies to cut marketing budgets, some public relations and marketing firms are offering new abbreviated and lower-cost services to help keep themselves and their clients afloat.

“Companies are becoming very sales-focused and sales-driven and that falls right on the shoulders of the CMOs and marketing directors, but they are the ones having their staff and budgets cut,” said Lisa Calhoun, founder of Atlanta public relations firm **Write2Market Inc.**

Calhoun says Write2Market’s “Results on Tap” program has been popular in a time of tightened budgets and schedules. For a monthly fee, the program gives companies access to writing services for marketing and sales, media relations and online services on an on-call basis, keeping the cost per piece for marketing materials low.

“It’s really good for an organization that has a lot of need for writing, but their budgets have been cut,” Calhoun said.

Atlanta public relations firm **Shira Miller Communications Inc.** has developed a condensed public relations planning session called “Creative Ways to Thrive in Today’s Economy.” The three-hour consultation allows clients to brainstorm sales ideas and build communications plans for a \$500 flat fee — a fraction of the cost of a typical client investment, which can start at \$5,000 per month.

Trevelino/Keller Communications Group is also being creative. The firm’s new FirstGear program is aimed at attracting early-stage companies offering services like brand work, content development or launch support with services capped at \$2,500.

As more and more companies find themselves in a state of crisis due to the economy, another initiative launched by Trevelino/Keller provides crisis management services for a flat fee of \$200 per hour, which principal Dean Trevelino said is anywhere from

50 percent to 100 percent less than many agencies and law firms that are charging more than \$350.

I want my GT

W **Georgia Tech**'s Communications and Marketing Department has launched a marketing initiative aimed at encouraging retailers to carry more Georgia Tech licensed merchandise. The marketing program provides Yellow Jacket fans with an "I Want My GT" card to give to retailers who do not carry Tech gear to encourage them to get it.

Kicked off on Nov. 20 at the Georgia Tech-Miami game where each fan received the card, the fan-powered campaign also includes a Web site (www.iwantmygt.com), which lists official "Buzz Stops" where fans can purchase merchandise.

Georgia Tech has more than 400 licensees with revenues from royalties totaling more than \$780,000 in fiscal year 2007-2008. Proceeds from licensing fees go toward the university's scholarship programs.

Lawsuit

Advertising agency Fletcher Martin LLC has filed suit against Colorado-based **W** **Boston Market Corp.** and restaurant marketing company **W** **Metro Marketing Resources Inc.** (MRI) after the fast-food chain allegedly failed to pay the Atlanta firm for more than \$400,000 in advertising services.

According to the suit, Connecticut-based Metro Marketing Resources hired Fletcher Martin on behalf of Boston Market for various advertising and marketing services. Following the completed work, Fletcher Martin sent MRI nine invoices totaling \$407,857. In June, MRI presented Fletcher Martin with a \$25,000 check as partial payment of the invoices, but the bank later informed Fletcher Martin that the check had been returned due to insufficient funds. Since the \$25,000 check, MRI has not attempted to make any other payments, the suit says.

In the suit, Fletcher Martin contends it is entitled to the \$407,857 owed from services rendered; interest on that amount; litigation costs and attorneys' fees.

Calls to both parties were not returned by press time.

Who got what

22squared Inc. has been hired by the **W** **High Museum of Art** to help enhance its brand position and help drive visitor traffic. The Atlanta-based advertising firm has also taken on new projects for the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, **W** **Atlanta Brewing Co.** and CBSsports.com.