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2011 Small Business Resolutions Focus on Building Marketing Muscle

Easy tips help small businesses keep their New Year's resolutions; High-potential Project REV entrepreneurs share their 2011 goals

ST. PAUL, Minn., Dec. 21, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Small business owners determined to strengthen their bottom lines in 2011 are making New Year's resolutions focused on marketing, according to Deluxe Corporation (NYSE: DLX), a growth engine for nearly four million small businesses and the founder of Project REV, a year-long small business marketing lab that is helping nine entrepreneurs build their marketing effectiveness.

Deluxe sponsored a national small business survey earlier this year that found marketing is a primary challenge, with nearly 80 percent of entrepreneurs expressing frustration about how to make marketing work for their businesses. Deluxe's Project REV participants are committed to making and keeping 2011 business resolutions that will build their marketing muscle and grow their businesses.

"Resolving to strengthen your business' marketing program can make the difference between a strong bottom line and a weak one," said Stephanie Chandler, Project REV small business advisor, author and founder of BusinessInfoGuide.com.

Chandler offers five easy tips to help small business owners stay focused on their 2011 marketing goals and resolutions. Deluxe asked Project REV small business participants to weigh in on how these tips will guide their 2011 resolution plans:

1. Find a Coach: To keep a resolution, share it with others. Find a business coach who can help you stay accountable to your resolutions and help you brainstorm when you hit roadblocks.

Tasha Oldham, owner of My Story Inc. (Los Angeles, Calif.) and a Project REV participant said, "My Project REV mentor suggested a small change in my target audience that's made a big difference. When you're running a small business, having someone with an objective perspective and who challenges you to think just a little differently can be game-changing."

2. Establish a Routine: Incorporate your resolutions into your overall 2011 business plan and commit to the steps you will take regularly to stay on track. Review your resolutions at least weekly to help stay focused and on task.

"I placed social media marketing on the back burner in 2010 because I didn't have a plan in place — that just isn't an option in 2011," said Mary Helton, owner of Fenton Family Eyecare (Fenton, Mo.) and a Project REV participant. "This year I have a detailed social media plan with deadlines — I will review it weekly."

"My 2011 resolution is to make my business profitable enough to support me full time," said Amy Sandoz, owner of Ready Set Go Kits (Beaverton, Ore.) and a Project REV participant. "I have worked with my advisor to outline specific monthly marketing activities to move me from a viable business model to growing my business."

3. Measure Your Progress: It's easier to keep doing something when you see results. Set milestones so you can measure both your effort and your progress as you work to achieve your 2011 goals.

"My 2010 marketing plan still has online marketing tasks to be completed, but when I look back, I made significant progress," said Trevor Byrne, owner of AUM Framing & Gallery (Denver, Colo.) and a Project REV participant. "My 2011 resolution is to complete those tasks and measure how they are working — by site traffic, search engine results and Facebook engagement."

4. Find Balance: Set yourself up for success from the start by determining how much of your budget and time can be allocated to marketing and growing your business. Find a balance that allows you to focus on your market resolutions, meet other critical business demands and sets aside personal time to recharge.

Felicia Frazier, owner of Staging by Dwell (Columbus, Ohio) and a Project REV participant said, "In 2010, I found it challenging to ensure that I gave my business enough attention without my personal life suffering. My goal in 2011 is to establish better time management — and to ask for help from those around me as I simply can't do it alone."

5. Stay Motivated: Find resolutions you can be passionate about. This will help you stick with them throughout the year and will keep you motivated, even when faced with obstacles or setbacks.

Yamile Jackson, Ph.D., a Project REV participant and owner of Zakeez, Inc. (Sugarland, Texas) said, "I am driven by a passion for helping preterm babies survive and thrive. That motivation will stay with me as I resolve in 2011 to expand my network and drive conversations with my target audience — the medical community."

To read more about the Project REV participants, their resolutions and the Project REV program, visit: <http://projectrev.com/>

To find more advice for small businesses, visit Stephanie Chandler's blog at: <http://projectrev.com/author/stephanie-chandler/>

About Project REV

Deluxe Corporation launched Project REV in June 2010 to help nine entrepreneurs from across the country learn, test and measure what marketing strategies work for their small businesses. The year-long marketing lab was inspired by a quantitative research study that found almost 80 percent of entrepreneurs are frustrated with marketing because too often they don't see results. Each Project REV participant received up to \$5,000 of Deluxe small business marketing products and services, as well as an experienced Deluxe marketing advisor and a SCORE counselor for advice. Go to ProjectRev.com to follow their progress, learning and successes over 12 months.

About Deluxe Corporation

Deluxe Corporation is a growth engine for small businesses and financial institutions. Through its industry-leading businesses and brands, the Company helps small businesses and financial institutions attract and retain customers. The Company employs a multi-channel strategy to provide a suite of lifecycle driven solutions to its customers. In addition to its personalized printed products, the Company offers a growing suite of business services, including logo design, payroll, web design and hosting, business networking and other web-based services to help small businesses grow. In the financial services industry, Deluxe sells check programs and fraud prevention, customer loyalty and retention programs to help banks build lasting relationships and grow core deposits. The Company also sells personalized checks, accessories, and other services directly to consumers. For more information about Deluxe, visit www.deluxe.com.

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