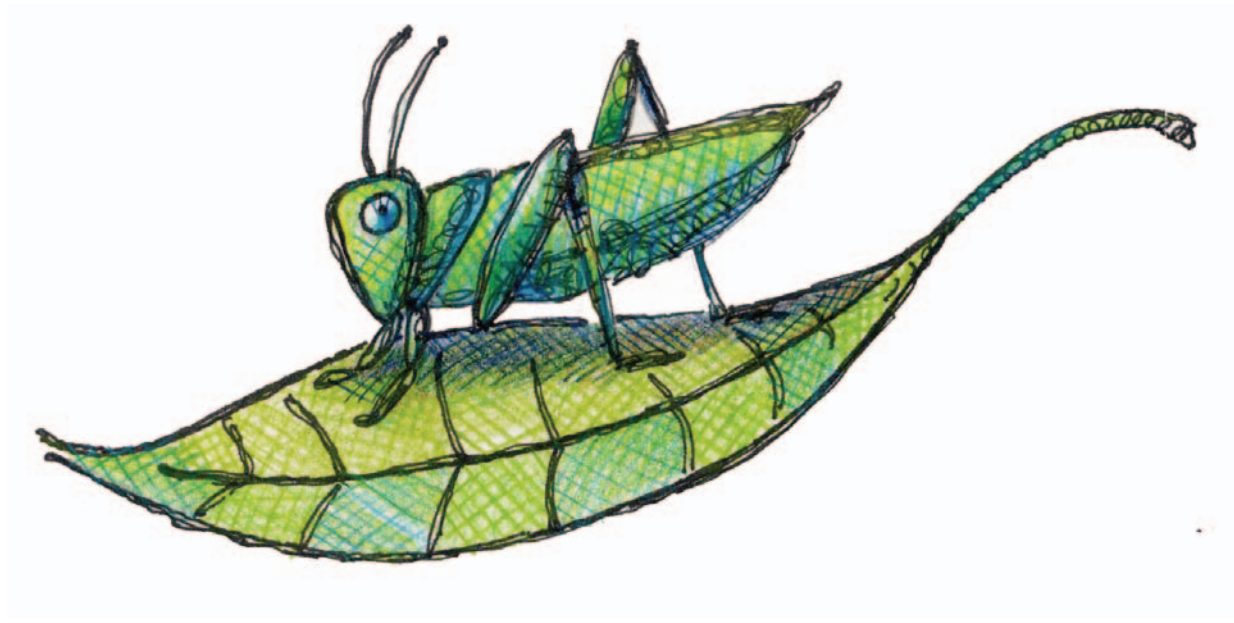


Marketing Through A Tough Economy

the cricket theory

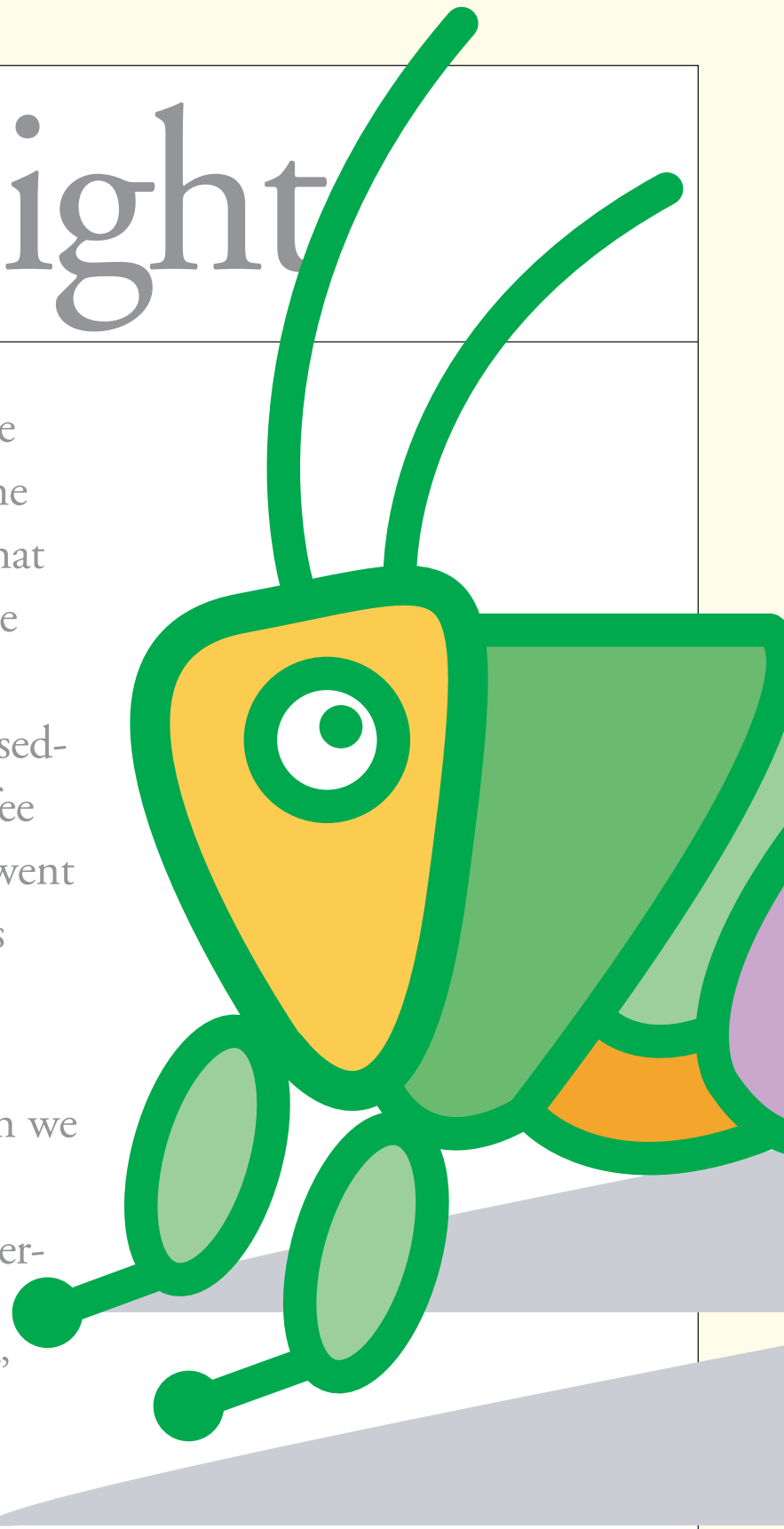


Make As Much Noise As Possible
In Dark Times.

You Will Be Well Remembered
When It Is Light Again.

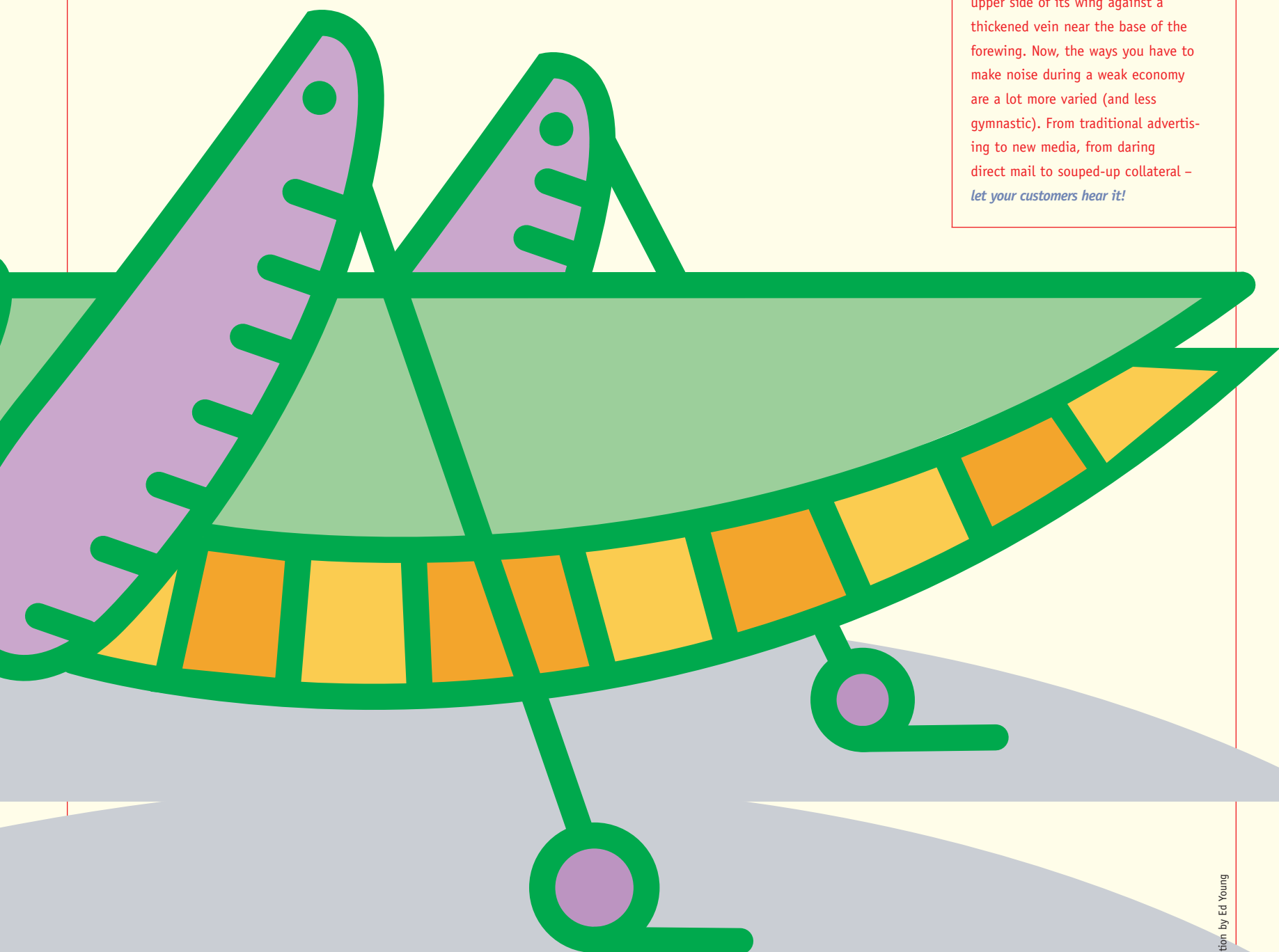
insect insight

Contrary to what you might assume, the Cricket Theory® wasn't conceived by some formal, academic think tank. (That *is* what you are thinking, isn't it?) Rather, it is the takeaway of a getaway country weekend shared by a group of friends (of the stressed-out, marketing-career variety). Over coffee on Saturday morning, the conversation went something like this. "Man, those crickets sure put up a ruckus last night." "It was non-stop." "I swear that chirping is still ringing in my ears this morning." "I wish we could convince our clients to make that much steady noise – especially in this roller-coaster economy." "What did you say?" "I wish we could convince our clients..." Cue the light bulb!





The way a cricket (the male) makes noise – or sings, according to those who specialize in that sort of thing – is by rubbing a hardened area on the upper side of its wing against a thickened vein near the base of the forewing. Now, the ways you have to make noise during a weak economy are a lot more varied (and less gymnastic). From traditional advertising to new media, from daring direct mail to souped-up collateral – *let your customers hear it!*



cricket believers

Now, a theory is just a theory until you find the facts to make it a fact. Or, at the very least, until you uncover official research and expert opinions that give the premise validity. We didn't have to look far for any or all of the above. All it took was a single trip to Yahoo!®, typing in “marketing through a tough economy,” and clicking “search” to be served up some 206,000 matches. Not 206. Not 2,060. Not 20,600. But 206,000. (Clearly, this is a subject getting the attention of a lot of folks.) Doing your own search is definitely one of those feats you *should* attempt at home (or office). It's amazing how persuasive the arguments are for keeping the marketing volume up in a down economy.



Crickets are able to jump up to twenty or thirty times their body length, which is about three feet into the air. Even more impressively, they do it from a standing-still position – no running start for these little guys. Yes, there is a lot to be said for strong legs – a truth particularly pertinent to your marketing initiatives. Keeping your marketing efforts in constant motion – during good times and bad – is leaps and bounds more effective than taking up even temporary residence on the sidelines.

Stay in action!



chirp

“Recession? I thought about it, and decided not to take part.” SAM WALTON



cricket findings

“I’ve lived through several downturns and recessions, and they always offer great opportunities for growth. You’ll have less competition, because some of your competitors do bound to make the most common mistake...in an effort to conserve cash, they cut back in the one area they should be expanding – namely sales and marketing. If you do the opposite, there’s a good chance you will be able to pick up market share.” Entrepreneur Norm Brodsky in the June 2001 issue of *Inc. Magazine*.

Nobody puts it quite like a legend. "If you stop advertising a brand which is still in its introductory phase, you will probably kill it... Studies of the last six recessions have demonstrated that companies which do not cut back their advertising budgets achieve greater increases in profits than companies which do cut back." *Ogilvy On Advertising*, 1983.

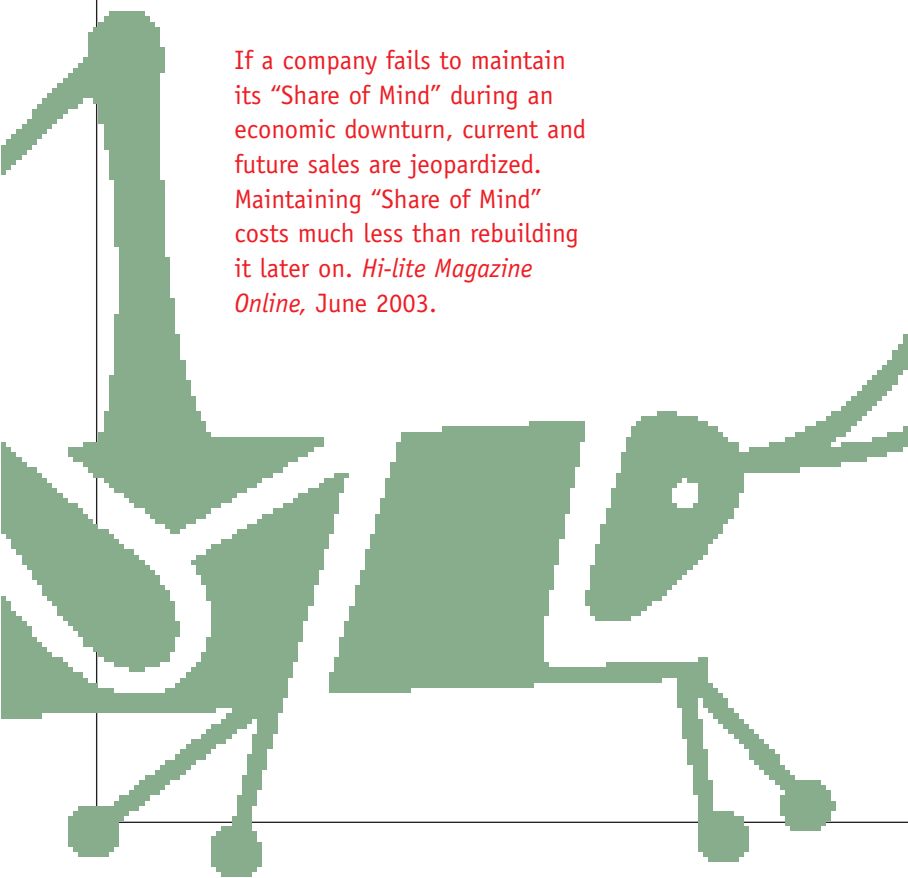
In analysis of the 1990-91 recession, Penton Research Services, Coopers & Lybrand, in conjunction with Business Science International, found that better-performing businesses focused on a strong marketing program, enabling them to solidify their customer base, take business away from less aggressive competitors, and position themselves for future growth during the recovery.



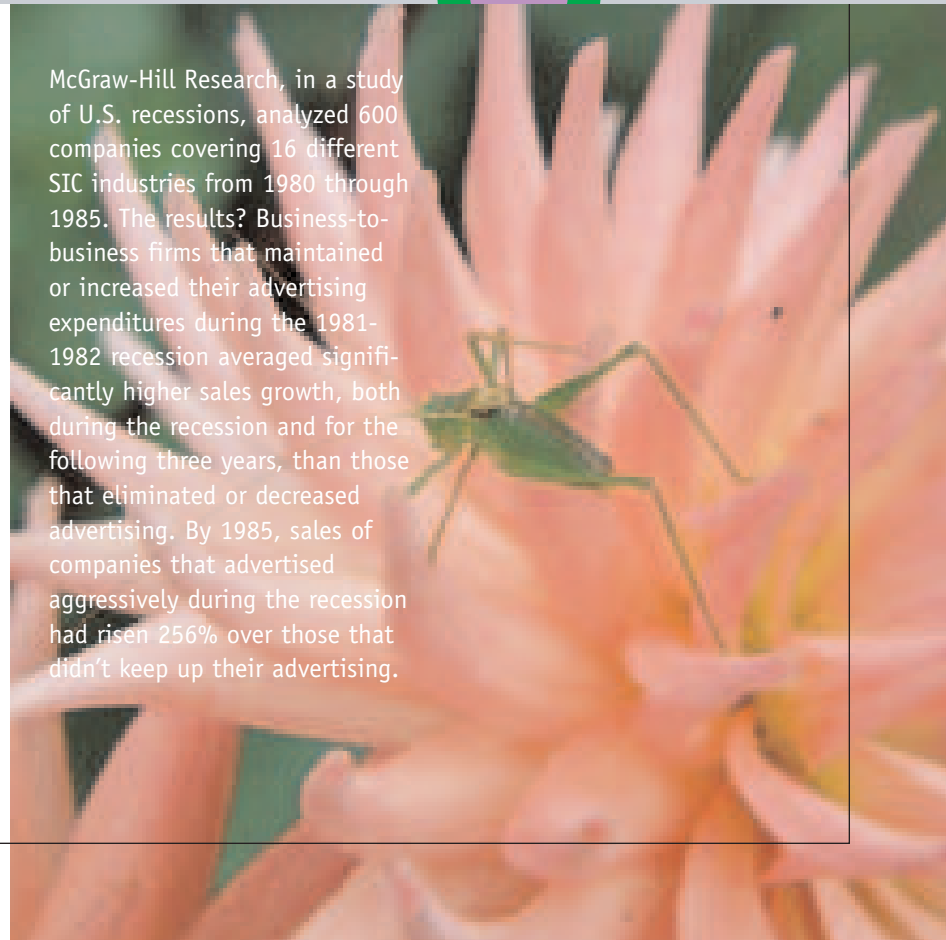


There is a broad misconception that people spend less during recessions and turbulent economic times. And that, in turn, companies should market less. In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, during the eight recessions from 1948 through 1981, spending actually increased. The average increase in spending for all eight recessions was almost 5%. The bottom line is that purchasing preferences change during recessions – not spending. There is more focus on quality and value – and more need (and opportunity) for an advertiser to build brand awareness and brand loyalty.

If a company fails to maintain its “Share of Mind” during an economic downturn, current and future sales are jeopardized. Maintaining “Share of Mind” costs much less than rebuilding it later on. *Hi-lite Magazine Online*, June 2003.

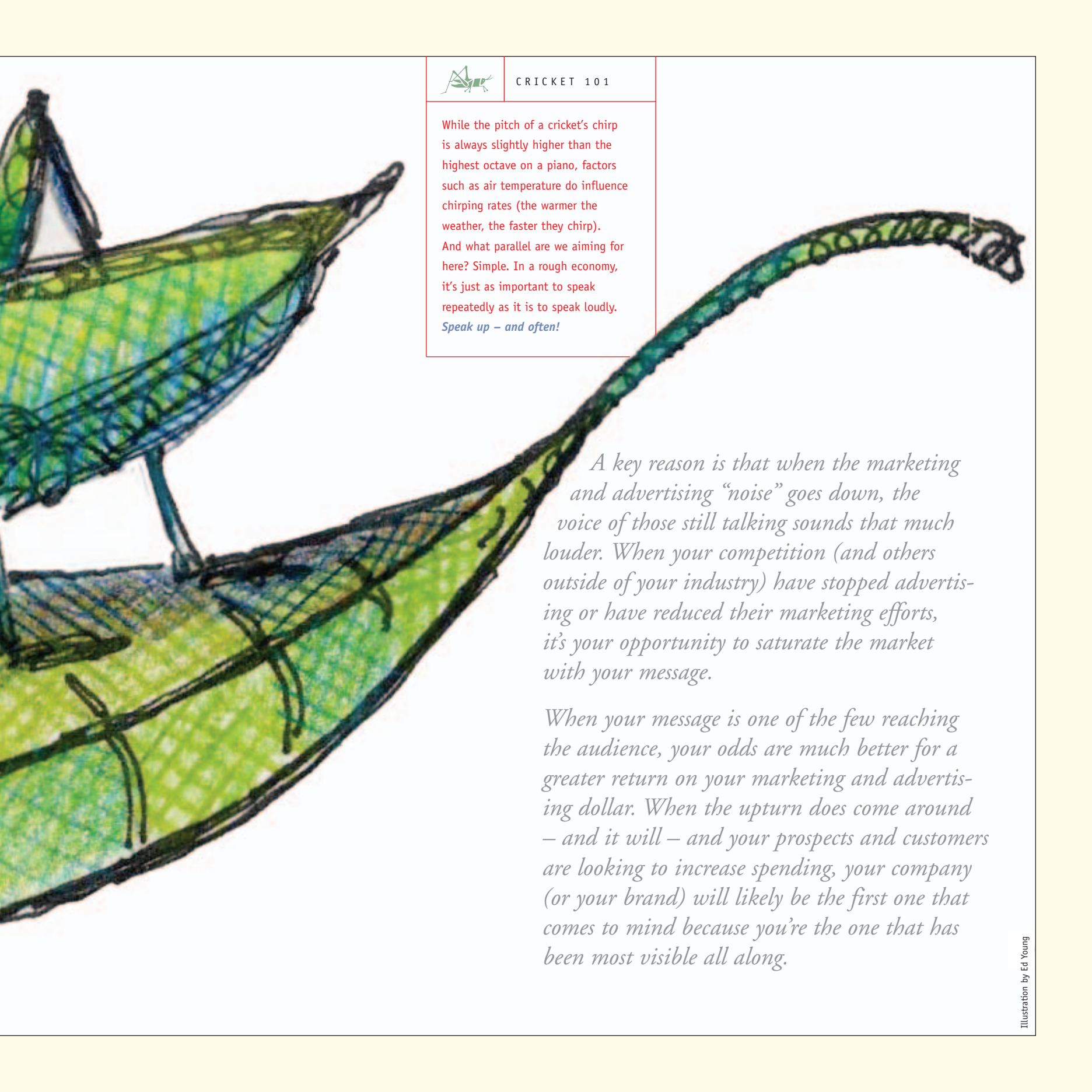


McGraw-Hill Research, in a study of U.S. recessions, analyzed 600 companies covering 16 different SIC industries from 1980 through 1985. The results? Business-to-business firms that maintained or increased their advertising expenditures during the 1981-1982 recession averaged significantly higher sales growth, both during the recession and for the following three years, than those that eliminated or decreased advertising. By 1985, sales of companies that advertised aggressively during the recession had risen 256% over those that didn't keep up their advertising.



A detailed illustration of a green grasshopper with large, expressive blue eyes. The grasshopper is perched on a green leaf with visible veins. It has long, thin antennae and its body is covered in green and blue patterns. The illustration is framed by a decorative border.

There is ample evidence to support the fact that maintaining or increasing your advertising and marketing investment in slow times is actually more effective than in good or growth periods.



While the pitch of a cricket's chirp is always slightly higher than the highest octave on a piano, factors such as air temperature do influence chirping rates (the warmer the weather, the faster they chirp).

And what parallel are we aiming for here? Simple. In a rough economy, it's just as important to speak repeatedly as it is to speak loudly.

Speak up – and often!

A key reason is that when the marketing and advertising “noise” goes down, the voice of those still talking sounds that much louder. When your competition (and others outside of your industry) have stopped advertising or have reduced their marketing efforts, it’s your opportunity to saturate the market with your message.

When your message is one of the few reaching the audience, your odds are much better for a greater return on your marketing and advertising dollar. When the upturn does come around – and it will – and your prospects and customers are looking to increase spending, your company (or your brand) will likely be the first one that comes to mind because you’re the one that has been most visible all along.

noisemaker

[illegible]



chirp



The Cricket Theory is an official “Practice-What-We-Preach” promotion from Nolen & Associates, Inc. An Atlanta-based, full-service marketing and communications agency, Nolen & Associates is an inventive resource for marketing strategies, brand positioning, creative concepts, advertising campaigns, promotional programs, media planning, media buying, collateral materials, and interactive initiatives. To see how that definition translates into real work (and real results), visit us at www.nolenassoc.com. If you like the way we make noise for our regional, national and global clients, we invite you to contact Pam Nolen, pnolen@nolenassoc.com or 404-365-8340. Think about it. Could the timing be any better than right now to add a proven noisemaker to your marketing team? Chirp. Chirp.

cricket credits

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