

# Survivor Industries, Businesses, and Job Categories

*Coping With A Down Economy Begins With Knowing Where You Stand*

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On the cusp of 2008, as 4th quarter results came in, an advanced search session in Google returned some useful results. It showed significant consensus about which businesses weather hardship well or even thrive during bad times.

Please keep in mind this report is not scientific. It relies more on perceived consensus than upon hard research. Well-done research on this subject is not easy to come by. Even so, useful patterns can be perceived.

## Good Prospects -- The Upside

These categories were mentioned multiple times in several posts or articles found by searching on the string "recession proof industries jobs business." Extra weight was given to findings backed up by some form of research, either about what worked in the 1930's or during more recent economic downturns.

If you have any faith in such methodology, it is reasonable to think employment or business activity in the following sectors may be good for the near to mid term. The list is alphabetical, so position on the list is meaningless.

1. accounting
2. B2B services
3. banking
4. basic industries (mining, timber, agriculture, etc)
5. business consulting
6. camping
7. canning, drying, food preservation
8. chocolate, ice cream, other confections
9. computers/IT/web services
10. counseling/addiction related services
11. debt related services
12. education
13. emergency services
14. energy
15. entertainment
16. farmers markets
17. fishing
18. games and puzzles
19. gardening
20. government services
21. green business
22. handicrafts
23. healthcare
24. hobbies

25. insurance
26. investments
27. knitting
28. law enforcement
29. legal services
30. life coaching
31. luxury products or services
32. maintenance (auto, home, industrial, etc.)
33. mortgages (refinancing, not new loans)
34. organic foods
35. pet care
36. pleasure related (all the usual vices)
37. private schools
38. sales
39. security
40. support services and supply for basic industries
41. tax preparation
42. telephony
43. transportation (public and private)
44. waste management

If you have additional information that will help make this picture more complete, please share. My contact info is listed below.

### **Fundamentals**

One or more of the following factors apply for sectors listed on the upside --

1. Not dependent on middle class personal assets, solvency, or expendable income. The middle class is debt-bound and suffering from high unemployment and wage freezes. Last season's consumer spending picture shows significant regression. Folks are backed up to covering necessities, banking surplus income, and refinancing homes if they can.
2. Supported by government funding or purchasing. The government at all levels by definition never goes broke. Government may be the 'new consumer.'
3. Serves wants of wealthy people. In bad times, the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. Rich folks tend to have themselves set up and protected from downturns. They will continue to play as usual. Rich people will travel to exotic locations but the middle class will stay home, or close to home.
4. Services that support stability, growth, or survival of other businesses.
5. Escapism. People treat blowing off stress as a necessity. Entertainment in all forms will be popular, as will be all the usual vices.
6. Basic necessities. Start at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (safety, food, clothing, shelter, health, etc) and work your way up until you reach levels where consumers spend on non-essentials. Work below that level. People will spend for groceries but eat at restaurants less.

7. Driven by the boomer market's basic needs. As the boomer population ages, things like medical supplies and investment counseling do well. Older people have different needs and wants.

8. Coping with life and stress. Addiction, alcoholism, and emotional turbulence tend to increase in bad times and folks seek help with their issues.

The list goes on. For each segment listed on the upside above, there is a rationale for why it's there if you ponder it.

### **How To Cope As A Business Owner**

On the downside, realize that strong trends are working against typical consumerism-based industries. Retail and economy-level pleasure travel will suffer because there is depressed demand. High-ticket items that require a loan, like homes and cars, are going to be slow because credit is tightening.

Folks are not ready to spend on things they don't perceive as necessities. In fact, many simply can't, even if they want to.

If your business is non-necessity retail, or economy-travel based, or in another downside segment, take a hard look at moving to a different sector, adding another profit center, or finding some very creative ways to connect with strong new demand. Forming a strategic alliance may help.

Be agile, engaged, flexible, curious and creative. Be willing to make changes. Don't hang tough with an obvious loser. Plan well and constantly. Have more than one income stream or profit center.

Be cost-aware and thrifty but not obsessive about expense cutting. Nobody ever gets ahead by controlling cost. Do what you can on the expense side. Stop any bleeding and then focus on increasing income.

Growth that is well planned and controlled may well be the very best strategy for coping. Growth can take many forms, like opening new branches to serve the same markets in new locations or buying up a failing competitor. It may involve simply expanding your market and sales reach by advertising in new channels or redefining your niches.

This is a great time to engage a professional to help you strategize, plan your way forward, and apply tactics that will drive market growth. My business provides strategic analysis and business planning with marketing and public relations to help other businesses on their way forward.

*Over the last 2 years we have helped over 3 dozen businesses start up or prosper in one way or another. Reach me at 360-385-2714 or [joseph@josephriden.com](mailto:joseph@josephriden.com).*