

# THE BOTTOM LINE

## Maine's advertising industry can compete



**CHARLES LAWTON**

### The advertising industry in Maine, 1997 and 2002

Business sector	Establishments in 2002	Number of jobs in 2002	Sales in 2002 (\$millions)	Sales growth, 1997-2002	Job growth, 1997-2002
Graphic design services	55	147	\$14	35%	24%
Marketing consulting services	67	289	\$48	440%	207%
Advertising and related services	146	1,578	\$219	38%	30%
Marketing research and public opinion	19	140	\$7	5%	-10%
Commercial photography	27	78	\$6	9%	32%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>2,232</b>	<b>\$295</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>36%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997 and 2002 Economic Census

STAFF GRAPHIC | JEFF WOODBURY

From an economic development perspective, the most significant implication of this growth is the demonstration that creativity can have a payoff in Maine. The key to success in this industry is not the cost of labor but the ability to understand and serve the needs of a client – a client that, more often than not, knows little or nothing about Maine and cares less.

The quality of life in Portland didn't win Gino Bona or Garrand this contest; the ability to

conceive, articulate and visualize an idea that will appeal to a football-crazed nation won them the contest. And in that lies the key to Maine's true competitive advantage. Keep your pulse on national – even international – trends, maintain relationships with the key players in the industry and do it from Maine. It's not Maine that makes ideas conceived here more compelling; it's that people sufficiently talented and connected to conceive of such ideas can work

here that makes Maine more compelling. In a world where one of the decisions creative people make is where to live, Maine needs to raise its profile because it has much to tout.

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## Quotable

"We cannot continue to grow in Portland with this ban, and we cannot reverse our sales decline: if Congress Street deteriorates. This ban is the opposite of everything I've learned about downtown revitalization."

**Matthew Curtis**

owner of Cadillac Mountain Sports, c the Portland City Council's approval of the ordinance that limits the number of formula businesses in the Old Port and Congress Street.

"Approval is a big deal. The citizens have to want it. You don't want to mess with anybody who doesn't want you."

**Scott Christiansen**

executive director of Fractionation Development Center, who is looking at sites for a refinery that would turn forest products into clean-burning oil to be used as fuel in electrical plants.

"It goes to show that great advertising comes from great ideas. And they don't all happen on Madison Avenue."

The fact that an executive from Garrand Marketing Communications bested thousands of competitors to win the right to produce a TV spot for the Super Bowl is, of course, big news. It would be big news for any winner.

The fact that he works for an agency in Portland, Maine, is big news only because we don't think of ourselves as a major player in the advertising business. To land a new paper mill or a new call center would be welcome news, but not surprising news. Those activities are part of our milieu, our self-image. Being great pitchmen (or women) is not.

But it ought to be. Advertising and its associated activities represent exactly the sort of business that Maine ought to nourish and promote. Consider the table nearby listing information from the 1997 and 2002 Economic Censuses conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

While data from 2002 do not capture the most recent changes, they do offer the best available picture of how the advertising industry in Maine has changed over the recent past. And, for the most part, the

answer is encouraging.

In 2002, Maine had approximately 300 businesses engaged in advertising activities; they had sales of nearly \$300 million, and employed over 2,200 people. And this total does not include self-employed subcontractors who may do work for these businesses.

Over the five-year period, this cluster of businesses enjoyed sales growth of 55 percent and employment growth of 36 percent. Every subsector saw sales gains over the period, and all but public opinion polling saw increases in employment (the effect of robo-calls?). Marketing consulting services in particular saw spectacular growth. The number of firms nearly tripled from 24 to 67, their sales increased nearly fivefold and their employment more than doubled.