



MANA's Toronto Chapter Gets Web Site Initiation

If members of MANA's Toronto Chapter hadn't given much thought to agency web sites prior to that group's meeting this fall, they changed their mindset in a hurry after hearing what Steve Cranstoun had to say.

Cranstoun, from Panther Marketing & Design, Alliston, Ontario, Canada, says he shocked attendees at the outset of the meeting by asking how many in the room could tell him the name of their Internet server. "Predictably no one could," he says, adding, "And even if they were back in their offices, I'm sure it would take each of them more than half an hour to find their server. Here's the real problem when it comes

to reps and their web sites — if they're up on the Internet, that's it, no one cares after that." But, according to Cranstoun, they had better care about a marketing tool that's much more effective than anything they've used before in their careers.

Voicing agreement with the guest speaker was Les Rapchak, Tech Sales Company, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Rapchak, who heads the Toronto Chapter Steering Committee, notes that the subject of agency web sites more than held the attention of the attendees. "Steve really emphasized the point that advertising your agency is nothing like it was in the past. The whole ball game has changed. I've got maga-

zines that are begging me to advertise in them, but I'm at the point where I've cut my advertising dollars in half and I'm about ready to cut it in half again. Why? Because there's nothing like the web to get your agency's message out there. If people want information, today they're going to the Internet, not checking what appears in printed advertising."

A Constant Communication Tool

Cranstoun continues that an effective web site operates "24 hours a day, seven days a week delivering your agency's message. A good site makes more of an impression in one day than your sales force can in an entire month. In addition, it quickly and easily showcases your entire product line. Someone can enter your site looking for something like a spray nozzle, and what they find in ad-

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dition is a whole array of products that they need. If your site is properly put together, the traffic can be unbelievable. Some reps I've worked with get upward of 30,000 hits per month. On my own web site (www.process-controls.com), I get more than 125,000 hits. That's big-time traffic."

Visitors to Cranstoun's web site will find several links to sites Panther Marketing & Design has designed and currently maintains.

But learning about the web and building an effective web site are two entirely different tasks, according to Cranstoun. "What is the point of putting a web site on the Internet if no one can find

you?" he asks. "We design our web sites so that you will be found, and we guarantee top-30 positioning for your site — not only the home page but for all pages on your site!"

Steps to Follow

Among the recommendations Cranstoun provided to his audience were:

- Don't look at the cost of erecting a web site as an expense. Rather, look at it as an investment in your business. "I'm holding a magazine in my hand right now," he explains. "And when I come to a full-page ad, I can guarantee

this costs somewhere in the neighborhood of \$6,500. The leads that this ad will generate are a fraction of what develops from a web site. As a result, if the rep or anyone else would take that \$6,500 and invest it in a web site, they'd be well ahead of the game."

- Use professionals to put your web site together. "Too many people rely on their sons or someone else to put their sites together and to maintain them. Or, they've decided they ought to have a web site for no other reason than because everyone else is doing it. That's not a professional approach to an important marketing tool."

- Make your manufacturers' web pages your own. "Instead of just providing links to your manufacturers' web sites, capture those pages and make them your own. As a result, the rep will then get the leads and send them to manufacturers, rather than the other way around."

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