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The Internet Strikes Again



Tradition is hard to break, but sometimes you have to ask yourself why you are doing something. If the answer is, “because we’ve *always* done it this way”, that’s the time to make a change. The change we are making is our decision NOT to attend or exhibit in this year’s K’01 Plastics Exhibition in Dusseldorf, Germany. The reason is: The Internet.

Our website has covered more territory, faster, and less expensive than exhibiting in an overseas trade show. At this time, we feel that it is more cost effective to use our marketing funds to improve and strengthen our website and e-commerce.

“What about us?”, you may be asking. Does our Internet success mean the end of our relationship with distributors? Not at all. In fact, our website is making your work easier. As encompassing as the Internet can be, it still can’t shake your hand or hand you an element through the monitor. In fact, to many people, the Internet still remains a frustrating mystery.

The Internet is here to stay. If you consider it a threat, it will become even more threatening. Instead, you need to consider it a “friend” and take advantage of using it in any way you can, even if you are one of those who consider it a frustrating mystery. Here’s how distributors can profit from a vendor’s website:

1. If you don’t have access to the Web. Get it.
2. If you don’t understand how to access our website, find someone who does. (It could easily be an 8 year old relative.)
3. Become familiar with our website. You have our permission to use any or all of the information on it. This can be copied and used for brochures, flyers, or to answer questions your customers may ask.
4. If you are an “active” distributor, any lead coming from the web-site in your territory will be sent to you. Make sure you tell us that you want these leads. If you receive a lead, let us know what happened to it. If we see that you are an active, participating distributor who follows up on the leads given to them, we will eagerly give you more.
5. What is an “active” distributor? One who communicates with us on a regular basis and one who keeps an ample inventory of elements on their shelf based on their previous years of sales.
6. Can I list my company name on your website? Good websites are very expensive to maintain and keep accessible. If you are able to link up with a good website without creating your own, you should definitely take advantage of it. We don’t want our website cluttered with distributors who do not stock our elements or have not had a good history of sales. The reason is, we don’t want to provide you with leads unless we are sure you are selling *Salamander* elements and not a competitor’s. For this reason, sales amount, stock levels and company location will be used to qualify a reference on our website. The best reason for a customer to buy from you, and not on-line, is because you “have” shaken his hand, and you have the element he needs on your shelf.

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7. Educate yourself. We also don't want distributors referenced on our website that don't know what they are talking about. Understanding how to adapt ceramic elements to a customer's needs can be difficult. They would much rather discuss their options with you than through an e-mail conversation or expensive, long distance phone call. When your customer's consider you an expert, "we" consider you an expert. Our relationship strengthens and we consider you a valuable extension of our company.



Think of the world as a big pond full of fish. What kind of fisherman are you?

___ I don't really like to fish, I just like to be part of the experience. I can tell some really great stories about "the one that got away".

___ I'm not a serious fisherman. I usually just go where I see others are getting them. Sometimes they even give me their leftovers, and I tell people that I caught them.

___ I like to fish, but it's too much work. I don't have the time to put into it. If I can't catch a big one, forget the little ones.

___ The fishing is great. I've got good equipment and I've spent a lot of time studying the habits of fish, so I know right where to go to get them. I catch all kinds, a good variety. After a while, the fish almost jump into my boat.

Our website and online "fishing" can be a good opportunity for the distributor who knows how to make the "catch."



***Salamander News* Soon to be Available to Overseas Customers by E-mail Only**

Due to the rise in postage, the *Salamander News* will only be available to overseas customers by e-mail. If you are in another country other than the United States, and you wish to continue to receive the newsletter, please send us your e-mail address as soon as possible. E-mail is our preferred method of communication for all customers. Not only is it less expensive, but you receive your copy immediately. If you want a hard copy, all you have to do is print it. Help us, to help you, clear out your "in box". Send us your e-mail address.

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