

eVantage – Success in Application Leads to a Progressive, Creative Company

In October of 2002, Earl Gregorich and Frank Wollenhaupt attended the very first eVantage Training Program. The course appealed to them because it covered a topic very important to the future of Weiler Welding, Earl and Frank's employer at the time. eVantage was designed to help businesses find the best ways to integrate the internet into their daily business practices to improve efficiency and position their company to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the web.

The primary goal of eVantage was to create an action plan to take back to your business to implement concepts described in class. Since Frank and Earl already used the web in their daily work as a sales and marketing tool, the course gave them the final piece to a puzzle they had been working on for several months. "The course helped organize our thoughts and forced us to put an action plan on paper." says Frank, Vice President of Internet Sales Plus, LLC. The three page document produced as their action plan became the foundation for a full blown business plan and ultimately a budding start up company called Internet Sales Plus, LLC.

eVantage started Internet Sales Plus, LLC (ISP) down a path that offered resources at every twist and turn. Early on, Frank and Earl worked with fellow class members to help them gain a "big picture" view of how the web was working within their company and how it could open doors for everyone's business. These established business contacts lead to an invaluable network of non-competing companies that were willing to share internet related ideas on everything from design and computer software to site content and the latest tricks used in internet marketing.

Further networking opportunities were also established with resources such as Edison Materials Technology Center (EMTEC), Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) of Ohio and Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC). Consultants and resource providers from these and other organizations were constantly available in and out of class to lend a hand with sticky topics like patent issues, intellectual property protection, merchant account set-up and computer support. Every attendee to the class also received a substantial number of free consulting hours after course completion in order to help insure the success of the action plan they had developed.

Every session of the course seemed to provide guidance and encouragement as the attendees fed off each other's experiences. "The instructor lead portions of the class gave us needed content but the interaction of the businesses in attendance was truly what made the class successful. As we developed our plan and shared it with our peers, it allowed us to identify areas we needed to address further. We also gained a better understanding of what it was truly going to take to accomplish our internet related goals and how each step we implemented would impact our daily business." says Earl.

Many of the companies from the original eVantage class have gone on to produce better, more useful websites. Four years after the class, many of the attendees still trade emails and recommendations.

For Frank and Earl, the relationships with other companies and the research done while implementing their action plan, identified a unique need in the internet marketing industry. Specifically, companies needed a resource that could provide simple, low cost solutions to market their business and sell their products and services over the web. Earl and Frank realized the same concepts that helped build an internet division of an 85 year old company from scratch and run it for literally hundreds of dollars a month could be applied to many companies! They found that so many solutions for web strategies on the market offered only a piece of the entire program and typically for prices in the tens of thousands of dollars.

In order for a company to incorporate a web strategy into their existing business, they would need to hire a design firm or employee, then possibly add web savvy sales staff, incorporate new methods of customer service for long-distance and “blind” sales, and finally figure out how to fulfill the orders that ultimately would follow if it all worked right. It was a major investment and a huge risk for some companies. It didn’t need to be this way! So, Frank and Earl set upon building a plan that would help companies incorporate the web into their business from conception through order fulfillment.

Internet Sales Plus, LLC resulted from the plan that would be presented as the final project for eVantage. Originally, ISP was to be a division of Frank and Earl’s employer but the differences in cultures of an 85 year old company and new internet strategies clashed too much for a full buy in from executive management. So, when external opportunities arose, Frank and Earl decided to create ISP to keep alive a process they developed and believed in and had proven to be successful.

ISP believes in the eVantage program so much that they recently began the process to establish additional eVantage courses throughout Ohio. “The internet changes at a rapid pace. Putting together a strategy and implementing it is a daunting task. ISP has taken experience and skills learned over the years of running internet based programs and applied that knowledge to the eVantage curriculum.” Frank says, “ISP is a living example of how the internet can work for a company. We create websites and sell items on the web every day. And, we do it for a minimal cost. Companies need to know that internet marketing and sales are attainable for a realistic price! eVantage will allow us to spread that message and get companies started on the right track.”

ISP has helped many businesses across the United States regain their brand image, sell consumer products and establish business-to-business web initiatives. The goal of ISP remains the same as it was on the three page document created in the eVantage class nearly four years ago. Create a solid, low cost web strategy that can be understood by everyone from the CEO to the janitor and do it in a way that promotes good business practices that result in true bottom line savings. ISP is one of the only internet marketing firms willing to create a full company strategy, build a solid website, manage the processes to support the site and integrate it all into existing marketing, sales and management plans. “We pride ourselves on being a complete solution from concept to order fulfillment.” says Earl, President, Internet Sales Plus, LLC.

Internet Sales Plus, LLC Contact Information

Earl Gregorich, President

earl@internetsalesplus.com

937-475-4572

Frank Wollenhaupt, Vice President

frank@internetsalesplus.com

937-475-2889