The Top 20 Training Websites

By Gordon L. Johnson of www.HowToMarketTraining.com

When you are looking for a service provider — whether it be an office machine supplier or a translation specialist — where do you start your search? The Web, right? Your prospects are no different.

In training, as in all industries, creating a vibrant, informative web presence is key to marketing your company effectively. In most cases, your prospects’ first impression of your company is whatever you have posted on the web. Your website can cause prospects to pick up the phone and contact you, or it can chase them away. And your website doesn’t exist in isolation. When you send a direct mail piece or an email broadcast, or when you call a prospect, your URL is usually a significant part of your message.

Given this, I recently set out to review as many training company websites as I could find to see how well we as an industry are doing at presenting ourselves to our prospects. After recovering from the shock that I would have at least 1300 sites to review (Who knew there would be so many?!), I chose the top twenty training websites.

What was the common denominator that made these sites standouts?

- Simple navigation
- Attractive, clean design
- Content highlighting the benefits of doing business with the company

Here are the 20 sites I chose as the best of the best:
I found that the best training websites are usually training companies who create training software. This isn’t a coincidence, since these companies have talented programmers on staff who can design dynamic websites. Ascend Training is an exception. Their core competency is delivering public training classes. However, since much of their training is Macromedia, you might suppose they have some talented designers at their disposal.

The design of this site is simple, fun, and attractive, with straightforward navigation. I also give the site high marks for its attention to detail. Take the Instructor page, for example. Its excellent photography ties in with the overall theme of the site and the overall company culture. Check it out!
2nd Place
Horizon Wimba
www.horizonwimba.com

The two big strengths of this site are simple navigation and an inviting site design. Land on the front page and you get the immediate urge to click on one of the “product” boxes.

Many of the 1300 websites I reviewed tried to be all things to all people, succumbing to the urge to put “everything” on their website – often on the home page. This usually results in a jumbled mess that compromises the overall quality of the customer experience. The Horizon Wimba site also makes a wealth of information available, but in a way that screams simplicity. Take a look!
This website is strong in all three of my main criteria: design, navigation, and content. The design is clean, making good use of photography, iconography, typography, and white space. Navigation is straightforward with generous sized buttons, drop-down menus, and icons to help you find your way around. The content (messaging) is excellent, and uses case studies as the focal point of the site. With so many fly-by-night training companies, customers want to see longevity and lots of experience. This website’s case studies show off Vuepoint’s experience very well.

Rarely do great design and great messaging come together like this. Vuepoint obviously invested an amazing amount of time, thought, and teamwork into creating this site.
The Top 20 Training Company Websites:

1. Vuepoint  
   www.vuepoint.com
2. Horizon Wimba  
   www.horizonwimba.com
3. Ascend Training  
   www.ascendtraining.com
4. Articulate  
   www.articulateglobal.com
5. LearnKey  
   www.learnkey.com
6. Discovery Learning  
   www.discoverylearning.com
7. Marshall Goldsmith Partners  
   www.marshallgoldsmith.com
8. Design Media  
   www.designmedia.com
9. Emantras  
   www.emantras.com
10. Kryterion  
    www.drakekryterion.com
11. ROS Incorporated  
    www.rosourcing.com
12. Chalk  
    www.chalk.com
13. Ninth House  
    www.ninthhouse.com
14. Qarbon  
    www.qarbon.com
15. Ziglar Training Systems  
    www.zigziglar.com
16. Learning Point Inc.  
    www.learningpointinc.com
17. New Horizons  
    www.newhorizons.com
18. KnowledgePlanet  
    www.kimpact.com
19. The Forum Corporation  
    www.forum.com
20. Cylix  
    www.cylix.co.uk

Postscript: In picking the winners, I reviewed 1300 websites, but I probably still missed some good ones. Let me know if you know of a truly great site worthy of a mention.

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Gordon L. Johnson is a marketing consultant for the training industry. He offers marketing solutions for training suppliers who want to grow their business and corporate training departments who want to market to their employees. You can reach him at gordon@gordjohn.com or visit his website at www.HowToMarketTraining.com.