

Frequently Asked Questions

BY GARRY UPTON

Over the course of 2008, this space will identify opportunities within customers' homes that you may not have observed in the past. The opportunities are based on a recent homeowner survey conducted by Decision Analyst, Inc.

What are you doing with your website to help bring in business? We've completed the field work on this year's American Home Comfort study, and initial numbers show more homeowners are using the Internet when looking for an HVAC contractor and to conduct brand research.

Contractors, consider spending a few minutes in research yourselves:

- Look closely at your website and those of your competitors.
- List the differences in their site and yours.
- What are you doing that makes your site better?
- How can you expand on what you do well?
- What are they doing that you can try?


- What will you do to fix the inequity?
- What other things can you add or shape or move that will dress your website for more action?

Next, try to find your website using Google, Yahoo, or another of the search engines, by using search terms a homeowner might use. If you're like most, you'll be amazed at the results of this activity. I accessed the Internet looking for local HVAC contractors by asking Google for:

- "air conditioning service contractor"
- "furnace service contractor"
- "HVAC contractor" sites.

The most organized and useful response from Google was provided when I searched for "HVAC contractor" sites. What I also saw, in addition to specific contractor sites on the first

page of listings were: ACCA; manufacturer sites that would find a local contractor for the inquirer; and contractor groups (local or national) that connect prospective customers with contractors in their area. Are you a part of any of the above? If so, are you tracking their effectiveness in bringing you prospects? Now's the time to verify the following:

1. Can prospective customers find your website easily?
2. Does your website accurately describe your capabilities?
3. Is your website attractive enough to prompt inquiries from prospective customers? 

Garry Upton, of Decision Analyst, Inc., shares his interpretations of its American Home Comfort Study of homeowners, and explores what customers look for in HVAC contractors. To learn more about this study, or to purchase it, contact Garry at gupton@decisionanalyst.com.