



September  
2002

# Telecom Sales Journal

Official Magazine Of The Telecom Sales Professional

## The Perfect Telecom Sales Web Site



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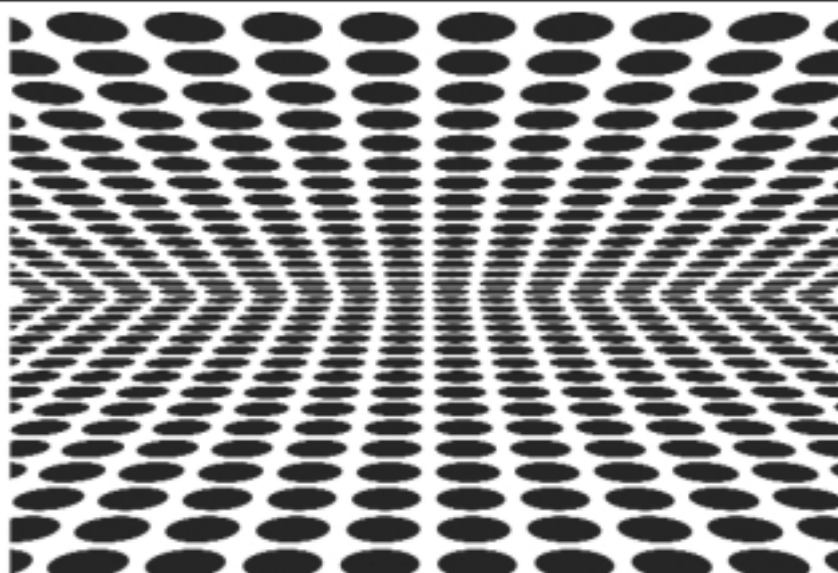
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To assist our members in understanding the difference between a really good web site and a really hideous one, we've developed what we believe is the perfect telecom sales web site. What follows is a detailed description of what makes it the perfect telecom web site and how you can use it as a model to create your perfect telecom web site.

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# Telecom Sales Journal

Official Magazine Of The Telecom Sales Professional

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1. Scan all the telecom news you need in one place
2. Check out the free agent-to-agent classified ads
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4. Build a free logo for a self-replicating web site
5. Listen to recordings of the latest Telecom Talk Radio shows
6. Play with our live internet audio streaming bridge
7. Learn the latest about our friends at NOS
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9. E-mail all the vendors at once with our vendor e-mail blast utility
10. Sign up for our cutting-edge e-mail newsletter so you won't miss anything important to your pocketbook



# President's Letter

## Dan Baldwin

"Sometimes is never quite enough.  
If you're flawless, then you'll win my love . . .  
We'll love you just the way you are  
if you're perfect."

- Partial lyrics to the song "Perfect" from Alanis Morissette's 1995 album Jagged Little Pill

For those of you familiar with Alanis' album, you know she was describing a child's overbearing parents.

But given the year of the album, the year before the telecom deregulation act, it might well have been a prophetic warning from venture capitalists and consumers to telecom companies. Kinda funny, huh?

Well the warning the telecom companies failed to hear is not falling on deaf ears with telecom agents and distributors. Is perfection all you need? No problem, I got some "perfect" right here! Actually, providing perfect customer service is nothing new for agents - it's been their main advantage for years.

But in today's age of the Internet, telecom prospects sample your web site before getting an opportunity to sample your customer service. That being the case, it's imperative that an agent's web site be as perfect as the suggested service that

follows. To that end and for your review, TAA is offering up what we believe to be 'the perfect telecom sales web site' at [www.FlatRateConference.com](http://www.FlatRateConference.com) (FRC). (FRC is an actual working telecom sales web site designed by yours truly and TAA super human Paige Porter-Brown.)

In this 11th issue of Telecom Sales Journal (TSJ11) we detail what makes for a perfect telecom sales web site, why we think FRC measures up and how you can use it as a model for your own 'perfect site'. As a bonus, we're including an article on the technical "piece parts" used to build FRC.

Send feedback to [dan@telecomagent.org](mailto:dan@telecomagent.org). Did we hit the spot or miss it by a mile?

Sincerely,

**Dan Baldwin is TAA's President as well as the Editor and Publisher of the TSJ.** ●

# The Perfect Telecom Sales Web Site

Much has been made in the past year or three about the ability of clever telecom agents to make it big selling telecom through a web site alone. TAA has suggested that through “masterful micro marketing (M3)” (TSJ 10) any agent can make a big splash in a small pond. Well we at TAA believe it’s still true, you can make a lot through the world wide web but a lot of the success you experience depends on your web site and how good (or bad) it is. So to assist our members in understanding the difference between a really good web site and a really hideous one, we’ve developed what we believe is the perfect telecom sales web site. What follows is a detailed description of what makes it the perfect telecom web site and how you can use it as a model to create your perfect telecom web site.

Our perfect telecom web site can be found at [www.FlatRateconference.com](http://www.FlatRateconference.com) (FRC). FRC is a site developed by Dan Baldwin, TAA president based on artwork developed by TAA’s Paige Porter-Brown. FRC’s perfection is due to the fact that it adheres to the following “Perfect Web site” rules:

## The perfect sales web site must:

1. Look professional
2. Have “perfect navigation”
3. Allow for instant human contact

4. Be “human”
5. Ask for the order,
6. Allow for remarketing
7. Answer all questions
8. “Tell the whole story”

Regarding point number one, let’s face it, a lot of agent telecom web sites totally suck. And I don’t mean suck just a little where you’re just a little embarrassed to say you know these people, I mean suck so bad that just looking at the web site gives you a migraine headache. And there’s no good reason for it.

Whether you’re selling telecom service or gift baskets, your website needs to not scare people off. It’s like your calling card or even your face, make sure you do whatever is necessary not to horrify people when they see it for the first time. What does that take? A lot less than you think.

What’s the key to a “professional” look? Well the acid test is, “Do you like it enough to want to read the content or does it make you want to immediately close your browser window?”

Too many agents try to do too much with their web site. They think that their web site needs to do everything for everybody. Nothing could be farther from the truth of what they really

need. As difficult as it is for most agents to believe, few telecom prospects or customers are just waiting around to surf our web site just because it exists. The only person or persons who will ever surf our website are those persons in the active process of trying to solve a problem. To develop the perfect telecom web site, an agent must first consider the following three questions when addressing the eight points above.

**A**  
What problem will a person have who ends up at my web site?

**B**  
How will they have found my web site?

**C**  
Will my web site solve their problem in such a way that I get a sale?

So back to question one: People with a problem will only want that problem solved by someone they deem somewhat professional. And since your web site is going to give your prospective customers their first impression of your professionalism, it needs to be professional looking.

What makes a web site “professional looking”? Give yourself a working example by entering the search term that best describes your service into your favorite search engine. Look at the web sites that pop up and sort them into two categories, professional looking and not. What criteria did you use? Most likely they have the characteristics of numbers 2 through 8 from the previous page. Let’s take our example web site FRC and review what makes it professional looking.

To begin with, FRC has proper color contrast. The maroon frame seems to actually frame each web page. The logo and the image have colors that match the frame. The fonts and size of the text are subtle and easy on the eyes. The easiest way for most web sites to achieve a more professional look is to simplify their site by removing the crap that doesn’t add immediately understandable content and to standardize on one font type and size.

Step two in creating the perfect web size (and probably the most important step) is to have “perfect navigation”. It’s good that most web pages have a home page because at least then there’s one page (out of all the rest) where a visitor actually knows where they are. If I had to guess why most web visitors leave a site without buying anything, it is because they get lost in the site and it’s easier to just close the window and find another site. The reason other visitors never venture past a web site’s home page is there is no way of knowing where they need to go to get what they’re looking for. (Remember, except for your mom, web site visitors are trying to solve a problem in the minimum time possible. Does your site help them?)

Standing on the top of your web site’s home page should be just like standing at the threshold of a grocery store. When you go to a grocery store for eggs, milk and beer can you tell what your route will be through the store by scanning the signage you see from the store’s threshold? A shopper with the choice of more than one grocery store won’t often patronize one that requires customers to traipse down one aisle after another to find what they’re looking for.

From the threshold of your web site (the top of your home page) your visitors need to be able to determine on their own if what they’re looking for can be found easily. If they can, expect a sale; if they can’t, prepare for doom. If you’re following TAA’s “M3 Marketing”, the question on your customer’s mind will be answered by the text at the top of your web site’s home page. Look at FRC’s home page. FRC is trying to attract people who want cheap or flat rate conference calling. Does the FRC homepage suggest right away that visitors will find that?

Once visitors believe a site has the main thing they’re looking for, they’ll ask themselves, “How easy is it to get and does this site have all the extras I’ll need if I buy the main thing?” Consider the marketing plight of a gas station owner. Everyone driving by (all prospects) assume that gas is available, but why don’t they stop and buy? Maybe it’s not enough any more to just have gas. Does the gas station have clean bathrooms, cold soda, pleasant attendants and easy access? If so, is that discernable by the prospects driving by at 35 miles per hour?

Our web site visitors must be able to answer the same questions about our web site as they drive by at 35 miles per hour. The quick answers to these questions are usually provided by a web site’s navigational links and page titles. Go to the FRC site and

look at the navigation links, page titles and page footers. They answer 9 questions. The first question they answer is, "Where am I?". The second question they answer is, "How do I get to \_\_\_?". Questions three through nine are, "Does this site allow me to <blank>?" where <blank> is the name of the navigational link. (While many sites do have decent navigation links and page titles, few have decent footers -- what your visitors see at the bottom of every web page.)

The little known secret to perfect web site navigation is numbering the major links and pages of the site. While looking at the FRC site, one is left with the impression there are eight pages, they know what is on each of the eight pages, they know what page they're on and they know how to get to another. The genius in the numbering scheme though is not that a visitor knows where they are, but that the salesperson the visitor is talking to on the phone knows where the visitor is.

Go back to the title of this article. It's not, "The Perfect Web Site", it's "The Perfect **Sales** Web Site". As our cowboy cousins are so fond of saying, "A site that don't help ya sell ain't worth a bucket a spit!" If someone calls you while they're on your web site, will your web site help you sell the prospect by allowing you to easily discern exactly what page they're on and can you easily take them on a tour through the site? If your site is properly numbered the answer to both questions will be yes. "Thanks for calling. What page are you on? Click on link number three please and I'll review our customer service policy with you." When your site is properly numbered, you can sell from it whether you're looking at the site yourself while sitting at your desk in your office or from the bathroom of a truck stop in Kingman, Arizona. (Henceforth, whether or not your site is properly numbered shall be called the "Kingman, Arizona test".)

(Editor's note: Much has been made of the need to "screen share" when selling a remote prospect from your website. Well, screen sharing conferencing is great for those of us who can afford it at 40 cents per minute per caller but, it's a sales expense that would be unnecessary for salesperson's selling from a properly numbered site.)


And speaking of instant human contact, does your site allow for it? Point three of the perfect sales web site requires that it does. People don't buy from web sites, people buy from people

(or their assumed proxies). Most web sites fall far short of allowing for human contact. You can't find a phone number to call, instead you find images of human proxies. The human images on these "not selling" web sites remind me of the images that come with picture frames, they're pretty but they're not real people.

When you do find a "contact us" link on most web sites it doesn't allow for contact so much as the ability to

send a preaddressed email. The really fancy web sites allow you to send an email to get an immediate phone call? Now call me stupid, but I just don't understand the rational behind not just putting your toll free number on your web site with the text, "Call me now!" I mean it's not like people are lined up at your door with big stacks of cash, right? When qualified prospects are trying to contact you about buying your product, why on earth would you not want to speak with them personally when they're ready to buy? (Send an email?! Get the #\$\$%& out of here.)

Providing the ability for your prospects to contact YOU is the first step to satisfying perfect sales web site point number four: Be Human. "Who are YOU that you want or deserve my money?"



"Standing on the top of your web site's home page should be just like standing at the threshold of a grocery store."

That's the question I ask while I'm at someone's web site. Call me old-fashioned, but I want to know that my money is going to nice people. Think about it yourself, do you buy or continue to shop at stores staffed with unpleasant people?

It always amazes me that I'll end up at a web site that seems to have what I want, but I can't find out a single thing about the owner of the web site. No address, no phone number, just an email address, info@whocares.com. Either some automaton created the web site or the owner is in the government's witness protection program. Either way, I don't want my money going there.

Let people know that their money is going to help a nice person. Why do you think that many retail stores put a state underneath their salesperson's name on their nametag (e.g. Carol, Maine? It's so customers can say, "Oh, you're from Maine? I visited there last year -- it's beautiful . . .") It allows for exchange of human pleasantries which tends to grease the skids for an imminent exchange of currency. There are plenty of laws on the books that prohibit us from discriminating against selling to certain people, but there are no laws I know of that require people to buy from people they don't like.

Do what it takes to get your prospects to like you. Scan the pleasant image that comes with a store bought picture frame and call it YOU if you have to, but do something about making sure your prospects know that there is a YOU, and that YOU are a real nice person.

About a million years ago, when I first started selling (or trying to sell anyway) I remember leaving a prospect meeting with my sales manager, Jim Cannon. Jim would ask, "So Dan, how do you think that went?" I'd reply, "Went pretty good, they're excited and ready to buy as soon as I bring them the proposal." Then

Jim would ask, "Why didn't they buy during the meeting?". And I'd stammer, "Uh, buy? Uh, because I have to bring back a proposal?" BUZZ, WRONG, EJECT!

Point five of the perfect sales web site -- ask for the order, give them some way to buy what you've got for sale right now. In spite of all the pabulum above about "being a nice human to buy from", some people could give a rat's ass about all that -- they just want to buy and buy NOW. (If they discover later that you're not a "nice person" they'll just sue you.) Don't have a web "shopping cart"? Not a problem. No credit card merchant account? No problem there either.



"...the 'Feng Shui' of your sales web site..."

The only thing your web site needs to "ask for the order" is a link that suggests, "click here to buy now" that goes to a page that says, "print this, fill it in, fax it to \_\_\_\_\_, and then call me at \_\_\_\_\_ to let me know I have an order waiting to be processed". That's as automated as your web site's "eCommerce" needs to be and anyone who can find the on/off switch on their computer can do this

much. If you don't ask for the order you won't get the order. If you don't get a lot of orders, your spouse will make you go get a real job. Ask for the order!

While you can't be invisible while you're selling, those little voyeur customers and prospects of ours love to be invisible while they're buying. They want to know all about you without having to be threatened by a high-pressure sales call from you. The great thing about a good sales web site is the prospect gets to be in total control of the entire sales cycle. They can buy or not buy. They can bookmark your site or not. If your site is good (it imparts useful information), your prospects will want to be

able to find it again without having to properly bookmark your site and then remember later why they did. That's where perfect sales web site point six comes into play - allow for remarketing.

If a prospect visits and then leaves your web site without buying, you're dead - you've created an expensive hobby, Exhibit A in the pending divorce proceedings. Your site must take something from your visitors, if not cash, then something just as good - information. Every page of your web site needs to invite your prospects to leave their email address and enough demographic information for you to sell them something they need later.

Capturing their email address so you can sell them something later isn't bad, it's good. We're not peddling porn to minors here, we're communicating valuable telecom product information to people who need and want information about good telecom services. The fact that a qualified prospect found and canoodled your web site is no minor marketing miracle -- it's a major one that needs to be commemorated by a veiled commitment to staying in touch.

Make sure that you prospects who visit your site know you take your business seriously. By inviting them to "subscribe to your newsletter" tells them several things. First, it says that you're such an expert in your field that your customers demand a regular newsletter so they can stay up to date ("Hey, I want to be the customer of someone who has a lot of other happy customers" -- the old "band wagon" effect.) Second, it says that you'll assume the onus of staying in touch. (Wouldn't it be great if you could continue to get Christmas cards every year without ever having to send any?) Third, it says that you're not simply peddling a one-trick pony. You study the constantly changing telecom industry, you learn what needs to be known by smart shoppers and you pass that information on to your customers and prospects. Finally, the opportunity for a newsletter subscription lets your prospects say, "I didn't buy today, but I'll want to buy in the future so please stay in touch." (Kind of like getting a shot at a second date, remember those days?)

So anyway, that's a long way of saying a perfect sales web site's not perfect if it doesn't allow people to subscribe to your newsletter. How do you do that? Well check out our FRC site. Subscribe to our FRC newsletter to see how it works. The vendor that provides this functionality is Topica. We've used them for a

couple years and I personally believe they're the best in the business at what they do. They allow your subscriber to continue to control the relationship by opting in, updating whenever they want and opting out when they want. Best of all though, a growing newsletter subscription database gives you something tangible to prove to yourself that your web site is doing something right.

Perfect sales web site points seven and eight, "answer all questions" and "tell the whole story" kind of go hand in hand. "Answer all the questions" relates to the immediate transaction at hand, while "tell the whole story" means don't leave any loose ends to the image you've tried to create with your web site.

Have you ever tried to respond to a direct mail piece that forgot to include the price of the product or a phone number to call? Have you ever wanted to buy from a web site but hesitated because you couldn't tell how a purchased product would be delivered? Your web site needs to anticipate the natural "buyer's remorse" that will occur for all your customers and address it properly. State how products are delivered or how services are provisioned. Answer their questions about customer service by providing access to customer service and users guides on the same web site where they buy. If your prospects can envision themselves being your customer before they buy, a lot more of them will buy.

"Answering all the questions" means don't leave out the answers to obvious purchase or purchase follow up questions. In the old days, the sales consultants would challenge a new CEO to "staple a new order to your forehead" to experience their company's ability (or lack thereof) to properly sell, provision and service a new customer order from A to Z. Do the same at your web site from your customer's point of view. (Call it the, "What are all the questions the world's stupidest customer would ask?" test.) You'll soon discover they aren't stupid questions at all but obvious ones. It's amazing how much your web site is missing when you look at it from your prospect's point of view.

And don't take the "lazy way" out by posting an FAQ or "Frequently Asked Questions" page. An FAQ page is a list of obvious questions that aren't answered in the site where they should be. By posting an FAQ page you're basically stating that you're stupid or you think your customers are -- either way, that's bad.

Continues on page 16...



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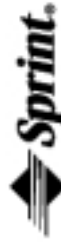
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# Vendor Directory

## Telecom Agent Association Members

The Telecom Agent Association's Vendor Directory is designed specifically for Agents to access quickly when researching a new product or service. Simply consult the chart to determine who has the services you need. Then look them up in the address listing below, jump online to their Web site, e-mail them, or give them a call.



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Phone: 888-239-3969  
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E-mail: mikeb@nwpros.com  
Web site:  
<http://www.aplusconferencing.com>

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Access Integrated Networks  
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WAN connections. Additionally, the connections can be from multiple ISPs or access providers. The basic RX model is targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises; the RX-VPN is ideal for branch office deployment with an option for connecting to a virtual private network. Both models have three 10/100 Ethernet WAN ports, a single 10/100 Ethernet LAN port, static routing and a stateful firewall.



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Web site: <http://www.dancris.com>

# Vendor Directory

Telecom Agent Association Members

	Data Point-to-point Private Line	Data Co-location	Dedicated Access	Hosting	Dial-up Access	Switched Long Distance	Dedicated Long Distance	Residential Long Distance	International Tollfree/11FS	International Specialty	Conference Calling	Stand Calling
A+ Conferencing, LLC											•	
Access Integrated Networks						•			•		•	
American Telesis, Inc.	•	•	•									
Amplify.net												
Band Wave Systems			•									
BTI Telecommunications Services	•	•	•		•	•	•				•	•
Capsule Communications, Inc.	•					•	•	•		•		
Covad												
Covista Communications	•		•			•	•	•			•	
Dancris Telecom			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Epoch Solutions, Inc.												
KMC Telecom	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Line Systems, Inc.					•	•	•					•
Masergy Communications, Inc.			•				•					
MicroCorp, Inc.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
New Edge Networks	•		•	•								
Norcom							•	•			•	•
POWERCOM	•	•	•			•	•			•	•	
Quan Capital Corporation/Data-Pages												
Qwest Communications	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
SBM Communications	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Solarcom Partner Services	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sprint	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
StarTouch International, LTD (ESA)												
TECHtionary.com												
TelCan Inc.								•				•
Telemetrics Communications, Inc.	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
TelePacific Communications		•	•	•		•	•					
Telnet Worldwide												
TMC Communications	•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Trans National Communications	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Univance Telecommunications	•		•			•	•	•	•	•	•	
Universal Broadband Communications												
Verb Exchange, Inc												
Wholesale Carrier Services, Inc.	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	
WorldxChange Corporation												
XO Communications	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	



one	800 Access	Local Access	Prepaid	ISDN-PRI	CLEC	RBOC-UNEP	RBOC-Resale	Agent Web Site	Referral/Affiliate Program	Unified Messaging	Integrated Access	Other
												Reservationless Conferencing
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					.	.	.				.	WAN
									.			Amplify IP Networks & Broadband
												DSL Aggregator
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												High-speed ISP
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	.	.	.					.	.			101-xxx, 0+, Hospitality
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	.	.		.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	WAN, VoIP
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	.		.	.				.			.	WAN
	.	.		.				.			.	WAN, VoIP, Media Streaming
	.		.	.				.	.		.	Hospitality
										.		Powerful Unified Messaging System
												Animated Technical Dictionary
	.		.									International Callback
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												Integrated Communications
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Dancris Telecom  
**DANCRI TELECOM QUIZ:** Pass and start making more money today! Directions: Circle the all the items that are important to you. Personalized service and support Reliable Long-distance, Operator Service and Internet Services On-line solutions Rewarding commissions- Reliable and On-time Incentives for your customers Bonus Programs and other rewards Circle one? Then contact Robyn Milder at Dancris 805-597-1907



Epoch Solutions, Inc.  
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 100 Menlo Park  
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KMC Telecom  
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 E-mail: acg@kmctelecom.com  
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Line Systems, Inc.  
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Masergy Communications, Inc.  
 Contact: Joe Kleckner  
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 600 E. Las Colinas Blvd.  
 Suite 1340  
 Irving, TX 75039  
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 Web site: <http://www.masergy.com>

Masergy Communications, Inc.  
 MASERGY specializes in providing businesses with the autonomy of an in-house network and the inherent

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MicroCorp, Inc.  
 Contact: Brad Miehl  
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 Suite 200  
 Marietta, GA 30062  
 Web site: <http://www.microcorp.com>



New Edge Networks  
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 Web site: <http://www.norcomld.com>

Norcom  
 Norcom offers .049 switched interstate, .025 inter/intra dedicated, and unified messaging.



POWERCOM  
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 E-mail: herb@powercom.com  
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POWERCOM  
 Get out of commodity voice sales and provide complete solutions to your clients for integrated voice/data/Internet applications. Having an organization like Powercom as your partner will dramatically increase your sales of dedicated telecommunication services that takes expertise to close. Not only are we more experienced and qualified than the best dedicated carrier account team, our years of experience will help you sell your client. The level of service and knowledge that we bring to your client will allow you to compete with a national account team from one of the major carriers. Now is a unique time in our industry the major carriers have abandoned accounts billing under \$50,000 per month. Use the Powercom's team approach to selling that is proven extremely effective.

Quan Capital Corporation  
 Data-Pages  
 Contact: Chuck Hinnenkamp  
 Phone: 952-403-7003  
 Fax: 952-403-7006  
 1224 Canterbury Road  
 Shakopee, MN 55379  
 E-mail: [chuck@your.net](mailto:chuck@your.net)



Qwest Communications  
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 Web site:  
<http://qwest.com/partners/>

Qwest Communications  
 Ride the light!



SBM Communications  
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Solarcom Partner Services  
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 E-mail: [smoody@solarcomps.com](mailto:smoody@solarcomps.com)  
 Web site: [www.solarcomps.com](http://www.solarcomps.com)

Solarcom Partner Services  
 Solarcom Partner Services, a Master Business Partner Agency Program, provides technology offerings and services to telecom agents interested in growing and expanding their businesses. Backed by 25 years of industry leading technology expertise and know-how, SPS provides growth-minded agents access to a complimentary array of offerings and services to assist them in providing a total solution to their customers.

By leveraging the broad array of offerings, comprehensive services and technical expertise, SPS agents will be empowered to distinguish themselves from the competition, build stronger customer relationships and achieve greater financial success. SPS recognizes that success of a partnership is measured by an agent's ability to win deals and increase profitability. A dedicated SPS account team helps our agents overcome any resource limitations in becoming "total solution providers" and meeting the growing demands of their customers.



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<http://www.sprintbiz.com/programs/>



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 Web site: <http://www.esaonline.com>

# Vendor Directory

## Telecom Agent Association Members

StarTouch International, LTD  
Introducing ESA/E, the most powerful one number, unified messaging communications system available today. ESA/E is the most feature-rich, well-designed and comprehensive service of its kind available on the market.

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Contact: Tom Cross  
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E-mail: cross@gocross.com  
Web site:  
<http://www.crosstouch.com/techtionary/custom/taa>

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<http://www.techtionary.com/> \*\*\*Let us show you how TECHtionary.com can:  
- Animate your products/services for faster time-to-market, fast-track learning cycles, accelerated revenue growth - Train the customer and you can train sales, partners, agents at the same time - Create visually exciting and compelling WEBinars, we call them TECHinars! - Integrate with your White Papers, PDF docs into a simplified user interface - Link all your information resources together - Create "Flash Cards" as hot email tips to customers - Build your own private label version of TECHtionary - Provide a CD version of tools, tutorials and terms



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Web site: <http://www.telcan.net>

TelCan Inc.  
TelCan Inc. is a value-added telecom service provider of enhanced voice services such as dial-around, callback, Advanced toll free solutions. Online agent program: A no fee, no risk program that instantly provides your own URL and access to Online Manager. Telesoft Partner: ASP based telecom management software switchless resellers.



Telemetrics Communications, Inc.  
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Telemetrics Communications, Inc.  
Low rates, great commissions & a free trip (airfare/accommodations) to Hawaii for two plus \$3,000 cash and prizes for putting on \$10,000 of new business by 8/1/2001.



TelePacific Communications  
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Web site: <http://www.tpacagents.com>

TelePacific Communications  
TelePacific Communications is a full service, broadband, telecommunications provider delivering converged services, including local and long distance voice, data and high-speed Internet access to businesses in the California and Nevada marketplace.



Telnet Worldwide  
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Universal Broadband Communications  
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Web site: <http://www.ubcom.com>

Universal Broadband Communications  
UBC is a leading integrated communications provider offering professional, friendly customer service and an assortment of products and services unsurpassed in the telecom industry.



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Wholesale Carrier Services, Inc.  
aka G3 Networks, LLC  
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Fax: 888-282-4927  
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Web site: <http://www.wcs-online.com>

Wholesale Carrier Services, Inc.  
WCS puts you in control without complex end-user contracts and unfavorable terms. YOU DECIDE THE COMMISSION BECAUSE YOU SET THE RATES ON THE BILL. Ask about our TAA-exclusive \$0.039/min switched LD product with a 15% commission!



WorldxChange Corporation  
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XO Communications  
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Web site: <http://www.xo.com>

XO Communications  
XO Communications is a leading provider of broadband communications services, offering a growing portfolio of voice, data, and Internet products. The XO Indirect Channel program fully embraces the philosophy of Agent programs offering excellent commissions and earning potential as well as comprehensive support and training resources, including Channelink, the XO Agent extranet.

## The Perfect Telecom Sales Web Site ...Continues from page 9

Finally, point eight, “tell the whole story” addresses the “feng shui” of your sales web site. A quick jump to Dictionary.com defines feng shui as, “The Chinese art or practice of positioning objects, especially graves, buildings, and furniture, based on a belief in patterns of yin and yang and the flow of chi that have positive and negative effects.” As our web sites are concerned, feng shui asks the question, “Is there anything here that is out of place, incomplete, extraneous or diverts ones attention away from buying now (or at least very soon)?”

We’ve all seen commercials on TV that just don’t make sense and some that make perfect sense. Two current car commercials beautifully illustrate good and bad marketing feng shui. The first commercial with bad feng shui features a coughing rooster. When I first saw the commercial after the first couple of seconds of seeing a rooster coughing instead of crowing at sunrise I thought it was one of these anti-cigarette commercials (albeit a lame one.) No, after several rooster coughing fits, the rooster goes over to a car with an open window on a farm and starts beeping the horn to wake everyone up since he couldn’t muster a proper cock-a-doodle-do (because he had a bad cough).

Well at the end of the commercial, the idea of buying a car from the company was completely lost on me because I couldn’t get past the image of a coughing rooster. I can’t remember what make or model the car being peddled was but I can’t shake the questions, “Do roosters actually cough? Would I leave my windows rolled down on a brand new car if I lived on a dirty farm? Would I be very happy about having a sick, hacking rooster in the driver’s seat of my new car?” Too many unanswered questions, bad feng shui -- bad commercial.

Now the other car commercial is equally disgusting and perfect in every way. It’s the “This is my VW” commercial. It starts out with a kinda dorky guy standing next to a new, scarce VW on a

VW new car lot talking to his girlfriend/wife on his cell phone saying, “Yeah, they’ve got the color we want, hurry down!” While standing there protecting his pending purchase, the guy spies another VW shopper coming through the VW showroom door with a VW salesperson who has keys in hand to obviously sell the same car to the other shopper. The camera then goes to several slow motion close-ups of the dork, the salesman, the other shopper, the car keys. Suddenly, the panicked dork bends over and licks the door handle in plain view of the approaching salesman and other shopper. The commercial closes with a wide shot of the horrified salesman and shopper and the expression on the dork’s face that seems to say, “What? Hey! This is my VW.”

While goofy, the commercial is perfect in that every image fits, is necessary and promotes the message that people are very passionate about buying this car. Is your web site this perfect? Does it “tell the whole story” without leaving something out or adding too much that makes visitors ask, “What’s going on here?” or say, “Something’s missing.”

“If your prospects can envision themselves being your customer before they buy, a lot more of them will buy”

It doesn’t take a million-dollar ad budget to achieve the proper amount of feng shui for your telecom sales web site -- just a critical eye. Your web site is composed of a finite number of elements -- so many pages, links, bookmarks and images. Line them all up and consider each one individually. Does it contribute to the site’s mission of succinctly selling today or tomorrow? If not, get rid of it. For those elements you keep,

consider each other element it relates or links to. Are there any illogical relationships? Any dead ends? Any spaces that need filling in? By taking an extra day to consider each web site element and its relationship to all other elements in your web site, you will achieve a telecom sales web site that is indeed perfect.

In summary, by having the perfect telecom sales web site for your prospects to land at, all your marketing efforts will have the greatest efficiency that is possible -- you’ll get the biggest bang for your advertising buck (what you do or pay elsewhere to get people to your site in the first place). But that’s an article for another issue of Telecom Sales Journal/TSJ. ●

## **MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES for 2002**

A partial list of what complimentary members get in exchange for their registration and what vendor members get in exchange for their membership dues



For more information about membership please visit <http://www.telecomagent.org/admin>. For specific methods of accessing listed resources please visit <http://www.telecomagent.org/members>, <http://www.telecomagent.org/vendors>, or <http://www.telecomagent.org/index>.

### Complimentary Members

1. Scan all the important industry news at one website
2. Be the "first to know" by being on TAA's email list
3. Find or sell something with TAA's free agent-to-agent classified ads
4. Build a free, customized, multi-page telecom sales website
5. Build a free logo for a self-replicating website
6. Participate live or listen to recordings of Telecom Talk Radio shows
7. Play with live streaming audio with our free audio streaming utility
8. Read white papers & special reports about how to sell in our library
9. Find a vendor with what you need in our vendor search engine
10. Email a query to all TAA vendors with our vendor email blast utility

### Vendor Members

1. Send a measured email blast to TAA's 3,100+ managed email list
2. Be profiled on TAA's "Telecom Talk Radio" show
3. Have TAA create your own "monthly vendor newsletter" opt-in email list so you can collect & call on warm leads
4. Direct mail or telemarket TAA's 3,100+ complimentary members
5. Get found by being in TAA's printed directories & online search engine
6. With TAA's editorial assistance, write & publish a white paper or monthly newsletter
7. Custom analysis of your firm's distribution program by TAA
8. Custom referral to industry master agents
9. Fill vacant management positions by emailing out job orders
10. Whatever you need, TAA can probably provide or give a good referral

# TAA Product & Vendor Review

## Perfectly Hot

by Dan Baldwin

The following information is not all encompassing. It is our meager attempt to highlight some products and services we think are ihot and name a few companies we think might be worth representing. If your company, product or service is not mentioned in this issue it is most likely because you were mentioned in a previous issue, we are not yet familiar enough with your company or product line or my dog ate it (we forgot). In any event, let us know what you think is hot so we can include that information in future issues.

## Conferencing

What can we say other than conferencing continues to be the hottest product in the telecom distribution game. The conferencing cash cow remains good old-fashioned audio conferencing (flat rate & per minute). Video conferencing is starting to show up on the radar screen for some agents. The almost-here, gotta-have-it conferencing add-on is (or soon will be) publishing.

Conferencing vendors that have caught our eye? Cognigen made the big conference splash early for distributors with 16-ports, international access, web provisioning & double commissions. Mike Burns' A+ Conferencing sets the standard for distributors wanting to maximize conference profits with his buy/sell conference program where distributors can set their own retail rates and keep the entire spread. Verb Exchange is also a hot conference

player with 32-port availability, commissions as high as 33% and full web GUI (graphical user interface) to manage your conference.

Distributors not into conferencing with at least 40% of their marketing efforts are totally missing a unique opportunity (in my humble opinion). The nice margins we're seeing in conferencing today (50% easily possible) won't last but another 18 months (I hope, I hope) so "last one in the pool is a rotten egg".

## Data

Got two or more "anythings" (telephones, computers, etc.) that need to communicate? Then you need "data". It used to be that only medium & large companies needed to "batch" large data files from one computer to another remote computer. Today, all companies have a network that connects all their computers both near and far and therefore they all need "data".

The easiest data sale is usually broadband Internet access since most all companies have it and need it. The easiest time to sell data is when a company moves from one location to another as they can't take what they have with them and they already know exactly what they need.

Think of all the more complicated data sales in terms of Internet access because they are all going to seem to have a design similar to Internet access. When you're computer

# Permanent Contact Numbers (PCCN)

is connected to the Internet you seem to have access to everything in the world from just one Internet connection. Most all data designs will soon follow this same model. Every business will have a single (or multiple if using backup connections) to a wide area network like the Internet but called a VPN (virtual private network) that will give them access to the other computers they need (anywhere on the planet) and good old-fashioned dial tone.

Getting a headache worrying about selling data? Take two aspirins and call your favorite vendor. Odds are the vendor you're already doing the most business with has all the data products you need ready to go at great rates & commissions. In California? Look no further than TelePacific. Their integrated T-1 gives any small or medium business low cost, all-in-one connectivity.

Anywhere on the planet? Call Sprint. Pin-drop-network, every data product imaginable & top corporate brass not in prison. Seriously though, with things as weird as they are these days, it's easy to sell a brand name.

Need a high-speed ISP? Call Covad. Yes, Covad is back as a lean, mean connectivity machine. When many companies are still flirting with corporate meltdown, it's nice to be able to do business with someone that's "been there, done that".

Looking for a "data daddy", someone you can trust to show you the ropes? Call Steve Hesling of American Telesis or Herb Levitin of Powercom. Steve is one of the industry's best respected data resellers and has been the data "go to guy" for many years for many of today's most successful distributors. Herb is a data master agent that specializes in providing the data equipment (new or used) necessary to make any data application work properly.

You've probably never heard of PCN because I just coined the term to illustrate an idea that is definitely catching on. In today's mobile society of multiple phone numbers for people (home, work, cell, etc.) and ever changing email addresses (due to job changes & spam), it's becoming increasingly difficult to stay in contact with people. Solution? Have people provide those they want to be able to always contact them with a "permanent contact number" or PCN.

The easiest example of a PCN? A toll free phone number. Unlike toll free phone numbers, regular phone numbers belong to specific phone companies, are tied to specific geographies and are excessively difficult to keep when switching local service providers. Toll free numbers (TFNs) are on the other hand not bound by geography and can be completely independent of specific phone companies. You can even arrange it so you can keep your TFN even if you don't pay your phone number.

How does it work? Almost any long distance company will provision a TFN for one of their existing customers. Once a TFN has been assigned, it can easily be "ported" to another long distance carrier. Through the use of an "independent RESPORG", an individual can own and control their TFN completely free of any one particular phone company so they can always "take it with them" which makes it permanent.

Who are some of the vendors to use when selling PCN? Telcan has a cutting edge TFN product that allows customers to change the ring-to of a TFN over the Internet. Verb Exchange provides all the functionalities a customer could possibly need after the TFN is dialed and after two years, the customer can have his or her TFN. Contact TAA for a list of independent RESPORGs... ●

# Perfect Building Blocks

## FlatRateConference.com Piece Parts

While the perfect web site might be a beauty to behold, the path that led to its delivery is paved with toil & sweat. But not yours! In exchange for your patronage, TAA is sharing with you the 'piece parts' we used to put the FlatRateConference.com (FRC) web site together. Please feel free to contact me at dan@baldwin.net for additional information about any piece parts that seem unclear.

### Web Site Editor Software

I use Microsoft's FrontPage2000. I'll probably upgrade to FrontPage XP as soon as I can get around to it. The retail price for FrontPage (FP) is about \$169. Like all the software we buy, the price seems pretty cheap compared to what we spend on everything else.

I've never seriously used any other web site editor so I unfortunately can't say how FP compares. I can't think of a good reason to switch editors though because FP seems to provide everything I need. I like FP because it allows me to produce web sites even though I know nothing about coding in HTML. FP allows for this because of its WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) web site editing functionality.

With FP, you don't have to start a web site from scratch, you start from the middle. By this we mean open any FP compatible template (from FP's wizard or buy one from the Internet - [www.TheTemplateStore.com](http://www.TheTemplateStore.com) has nice ones, or borrow one from a spammer - don't delete HTML e-mail spam you get, use them) from within FP, save a working

copy and start hacking! Within an hour or so you'll actually believe you're good at designing web sites.

For those of you completely opposed to spending any money on anything ever (shame on you) you can access web site editors for free. FP actually had a 'free' version at one time (that MS no longer supports ñ I wonder why?) called FP Express. I've never used it but you can check it out at <http://www.accessfp.net/fpexpress.htm>. For those of you who want to use a free HTML editor that is strongly supported, look no further than Microsoft's Hotmail at [www.HotMail.com](http://www.HotMail.com) or Yahoo's YahooMail at <http://mail.yahoo.com/>.

Both Yahoo & Hotmail provide free web based e-mail accounts to anyone clever enough to register. With the free account you get the ability to send HTML e-mail using a WYSIWYG editor. Yahoo's editor is probably a little bit handier because for those of you into ultimate hacking it allows you to view & edit the actual HTML code.

Need to prove to yourself just how easy all this is to get started? Follow the following steps which take no more than 10 minutes to do.

1. Open a free Hotmail or YahooMail account and click on 'send a new e-mail'.
2. Go through your own e-mail in-box and find the last pretty

junk HTML e-mail some spammer send you.

3. Put your mouse in the middle of the HTML e-mail and then click the right button and click on 'select all'. Then right click again and click on 'copy'.
4. Now go back to the 'send a new e-mail' page in Hotmail or YahooMail. Put your mouse in the middle of the window that you're supposed to type the e-mail and right click your mouse again and click on 'paste'.
5. Now start changing stuff.

Congratulations. You're now an HTML/web site 'hacker'. You've taken the brave first step of being able to communicate personally with every other web-enabled human on the planet. Of course there's a lot more to learn (like how do I get my HTML to be viewable on the internet) but it's all relatively easy stuff. (Hint: Save your HTML file and then call your local Internet service provider or ISP and ask him for help 'hosting' your HTML file.)

## Web Site Hosting

After you create one HTML file and get it published on the web you'll undoubtedly become 'reborn' as a marketer with all the Internet sales possibilities. ("My goodness, I can sell anything, I can sell everything, The world is mine to command!" <crazy, maniacal laughter> "Ha, Ha, Ha") Well it's kind of true anyway. Once you're site is available for

viewing by anyone on the planet you're certainly off to a good start. Too bad your site has to compete with thirty-seven zillion other half-hacked web sites.

But before we tell you how to compete with all the other web sites, let's share how to get yours 'hosted'. A web site is hosted when it is saved on a computer that's connected to the Internet. Now you can supposedly do that yourself on your own computer but who needs that when there's folks out there called 'web site hosting companies' who do it great and practically for free.

FRC is hosted through an amazing service we accessed through [www.mchost.com](http://www.mchost.com). Mchost is an amazing company based in Canada. Mchost is amazing because not only does it let you host an unlimited number of web sites for as little as \$35+ per month, Mchost allows you to be a web hosting reseller (e.g. buy unlimited sites for \$35+ per month and resell the hosting individually at \$10 per month.) Sure, it's not something that will make you a millionaire but it does let you be a competent web hosting provider for your telecom clients as an added benefit.

One of these days TAA may attempt to model how to be a web host reseller through Mchost, but for now we're just tickled pink to be able to have unlimited web sites hosted for just \$35+. (Don't ask how much we were paying to other providers.)

As an aside, I called the ISP that hosts our TAA site (\$50+ per month for just one site) and asked "What's up with this Mchost offer?" He said they use Apache software on a UNIX box with virtual IP addresses (IP sharing) where his hosting service was provisioned using Microsoft NT software on an Microsoft box using real IP addresses. I only barely know what any of that means, but he said that he wouldn't suggest hosting critical, life-supporting web sites with Mchost, he couldn't deny it was probably a good way to host sales web sites. His only caution was that getting search engine spiders to properly review web sites using a virtual IP address might take some extra planning.

# URL/Registrar Name Service

Many people (myself included) start off thinking that web sites and URLs (uniform resource locator - a web site's web address that which comes after the http://) are one in the same. Not so. A web site is hosted at a real or virtual IP address like 216.27.61.137, which is neither pretty nor easy to remember. The whole 'www' became popular when someone figured out that prospects could remember and then find [www.BuyItHere.com](http://www.BuyItHere.com) a lot easier than "Visit our web site at 216.27.61.137".

So what's it cost to get a cool web address like [BuyItHere.com](http://BuyItHere.com)? About thirty five bucks a year unless you know where to shop. For FRC we used Bruce Galle's [www.orderyourdomains.com](http://www.orderyourdomains.com). Not only is Bruce a TAA member, he offers URL registration for just \$8.95 per year. In addition to URL registration, Bruce's site offers URL & e-mail redirection for just \$4 per year each. His site's URL management functionality is as good if not better than what you'll find at [register.com](http://register.com) or [godaddy.com](http://godaddy.com).

# Web Advertising & Promotion

Even the perfect telecom sales web site won't sell if now one sees it. You've got to get people to go to the site. How? That's the 'golden grail' question. The options are as endless as your marketing budget. Direct mail, telemarketing and word-of-mouth are effective but slow ways of building web site traffic. E-mail newsletters and spam (unsolicited e-mail) are others. There are almost unlimited web sites on the Internet that will tell you for free (but usually for a fee) how to get traffic to your web site. Check out as many as you have patience for.

For FRC, we're trying lots of different methods of driving traffic to the site but the ones that seem most effective for the least amount of money all involve some sort of 'pay per click' (PPC). The PPC we're most familiar with is Google.com's adwords.

With adwords, you build a little four-line classified ad that promotes your web site and choose which Google search terms you want to pay to for so your ad appears in the Google search term results. You can choose to spend your money insufferably slow (a dollar a day or less) or incredibly fast (hundreds of dollars per day).

The best thing about Google's adwords is you won't find cheaper cutting edge market research. Want to know what search terms are hottest for your product & service? Create the most comprehensive list of terms possible and buy them through Google selecting the 'exact search term' option. Google will tell you in advance what the historic hit rate for those terms are and then track them for you day in & day out.

# E-mail/ Newsletter Database

As we mentioned in the main article, we use [Topica.com](http://Topica.com)'s [E-mail-Publisher.com](http://E-mail-Publisher.com) to collect and track e-mail newsletter subscriptions and to send out HTML e-mail to our newsletter subscribers.

Topica has a free version which we used to use but we recently switched to the paid version which "totally kicks ass" for less than thirty bucks a month. What's so good about it? Well to start out with it scrubs the list for bad e-mail addresses every time you send an e-mail blast. It tells you how many e-mails addresses failed, what percentage of received e-mails were opened and how many clicks each individual link within the e-mail got. Pretty heady stuff for \$24 a month!

# Other Perfect Parts

Actually FRC is not yet perfect, as it has not yet made me rich. Also there are many parts that we haven't fleshed out yet but hope to soon. The biggest missing pieces are a good web tracking software (we'll probably try WebTrends) to see where are visitors are coming from, search engine

submission software (we've bought one but haven't started using it yet) and paid directory listings (to get the best positions with Yahoo, etc.)

We'll rereview FRC in a couple of months to let you know how perfect we still think it is. Until then, send us some feedback on our "perfection" to dan@telecomagent.org. ●

## FlatRateConference.com

The screenshot shows the homepage of FlatRateConference.com. The browser window title is "Flat Rate Conference Calling audio-conferencing teleconferencing teleconference conference call - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://www.flatrateconference.com/index.html". The page content includes:

- Site Contents:** 1 Home, 2 Sign Up, 3 Users Guide, 4 Customer Service, 5 Newsletter or Price Guide, 6 3d Pre-Meeting Lanes Distance, 7 Distributors, 8 Contact Us.
- Conference all you want!** There's no need to make a reservation because your very own conference bridge is always waiting for you. As a FlatRateConference (FRC) client, you'll be assigned a conference bridge that's exclusively available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
- Simple Pricing:** Conference a little or conference a lot - the price never changes - just \$10 per month per person with a ten person minimum. Special pricing available to referred prospects.
- Simple Billing:** Never write a check. All conferencing accounts are prepaid via recurring credit card billing using Visa, MasterCard or American Express.
- No Commitments:** Use the service with no long term contract required. You may terminate your account at any time.
- Full Features!** This is not the problem-ridden "free conferencing" you've had trouble with where you never know if the service will work. FRC uses the state-of-the-art conference equipment with all the industry standard features you need for an embarrassment-free conference.
- Questions?** Call Dan Balwin at 800-654-5100 right now!
- Subscribe!** Enter your email to get our Newsletter or Price Guide! [input field] [Join] [HTML] [Text] [AOL]

At the bottom of the page, it says "Home - Page 1" and "Go To Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8". The footer contains "Conference All You Want!" and "© 1999-2002 Dan Balwin".

**VENDOR INVOICE #2002**

To prepay vendor membership dues or other items by company check or credit card.



**TAA Information:** 31500 Grape Street #3-307 Lake Elsinore, CA 92532, 909-245-6645 Tel  
 Attention: Dan Baldwin, TAA President [dan@telecomagent.org](mailto:dan@telecomagent.org) Email <http://www.telecomagent.org/> URL

**TAA Vendor Member Information:**

Company Name:	
Authorized By:	

**Items Selected:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Annual Membership: \$3,500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly Membership: \$995 down & \$250 per month
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website Premium Ad: \$250 per month
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Mail Insert: \$250 per standard insertion or \$450 for "top spot"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazine Ad: \$995 for cover ad or \$695 for internal ad (black & white, full page)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special/Other Per Notes Below

**Notes:****Payment:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Company Check, payable to "Telecom Agent Association"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Credit Card (American Express, Visa or MasterCard)

**Credit Card Information:**

Credit Card Number & Type (Amex, Visa & MC Only)	Expiration Date
Complete Cardholder Name as Printed on Credit Card	Cardholder Phone Number
Complete Billing Street Address for Credit Card	Cardholder Fax number
Complete Billing City, State & ZIP Code for Credit Card	Cardholder Email Address

*"I authorize TAA to charge the credit card listed for the amount(s) indicated on the item(s) selected above."*

Signature Date

Credit Card Authorized Signature

**Remittance Instructions:** Mail a copy of this invoice (with company check if applicable) to:

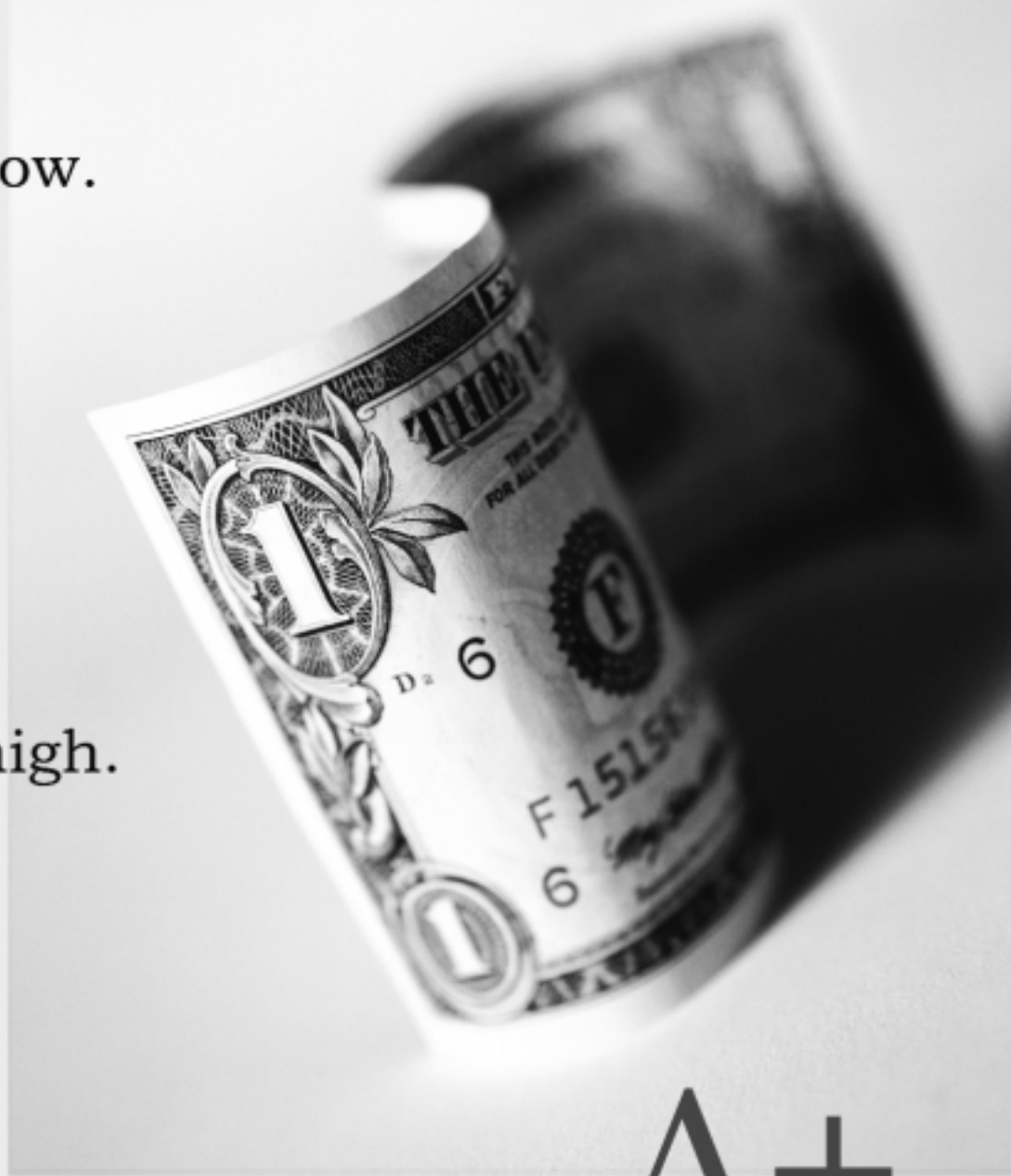
Telecom Agent Association (TAA) 31500 Grape Street #3-307 Lake Elsinore, CA 92532.

If paying by credit card, fax form to 800-558-9043 and call 888-654-5100 to confirm receipt.

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