

CLICKABLE

Classes

By Connie Myers

Online education opens scrapbooking to all



Host Suzanne Walker says Fiskars TV is planned both to demonstrate Fiskars tools and create a fun crafting experience for the viewer.

As high-speed Internet connections become standard in many households, the opportunity to educate scrapbookers in their own homes has grown. With streaming audio and video presentations, scrapbookers can gain knowledge and inspiration without leaving their desks.

Retailers can take advantage of Internet education, too, increasing sales as they help their customers learn skills and find inspiration.

FISKARS TV

Suzanne Fanning has traveled the country teaching and exhibiting at trade shows and consumer shows on behalf of

Fiskars Inc. “We found people had the same questions about the same products over and over again,” says Fanning, sr. manager/public relations for Fiskars.

Fiskars TV (fiskarscrafts.com/tv/) was created as a result. The twice-monthly Web TV series consists of how-to and project videos. Fanning, appearing under the name Suzanne Walker, may demonstrate a Fiskars tool. Guests join her to make special projects. “We never limited [the show] to just Fiskars products,” says Brian Rubash, Fiskars manager of Web marketing. “We didn’t want it to be a sales tool per se. We wanted it to be a crafting experience.”

“Our whole goal is to connect with customers on a more

intimate level,” Fanning says. “It’s an entirely different level of communication when they can watch something and follow along.”

Fiskars TV started small: the first episodes were literally shot in a closet. With 40 episodes behind them now, shooting is done in a bona fide studio or in front of a green screen on location. “When we taped our last show at MemoryTrends, we picked up our guests in a limousine,” Fanning says. “We had a beautiful suite at Bally’s for filming. It was so hot with our lights on that we kept setting off the fire alarms.”

One of Fiskars TV’s most popular guests has been Donna Downey, who created a mini album with used CDs using the green Fiskars drill. “That was one of our most-viewed episodes,” Fanning says. “That episode made everyone fall in love with the green drill,” Rubash says.

Retailers have taken notice of the Fiskars TV phenomenon and stock up on tools that will be featured in upcoming episodes. “Sometimes they’ll put signs up that say, ‘As Featured on Fiskars TV with Donna Downey,’” Fanning says.

Fanning has learned firsthand the power of both the Internet and word-of-mouth marketing. “It’s quite viral,” she says. “Someone will watch it, they’ll post it on a message board, they’ll tell their friends. It’s amazing.”

PAPER WISHES/ HOT OFF THE PRESS

Paper Wishes by Hot Off The Press (paperwishes.com) began its weekly Webisodes as a promotional marketing tool. Each Webisode highlights a product, demonstrates projects, and features a special rate on the product of the week.

“Teaching and instruction are paramount to the success of our products and the industry,” says Sara Naumann, vice president of sales and marketing. “We were puzzling over how we could reach and instruct more students effectively.” The answer was the HOTP Webisodes. “Internet marketing trends show that audio and video are becoming more mainstream – and they’re highly effective in reaching and teaching.”

Webisodes are based on new product, either from HOTP or another company. “We mainly look at how to present the newest releases, and which products could use instruction,” Naumann says. “We kind of figure out how we can group our new product together to highlight those products and get the PR out on those.”

Online Webisodes can be viewed anytime, anywhere – a distinct advantage over television shows. “The most successful [Webisode] we’ve had so far has been the very first

(more on next page)



Weekly Webisodes from Hot Off the Press won the first ever Technology Award of Creative Excellence (ACE) from *Craftrends* magazine at January’s CHA Winter Show. Issues are archived (below) so users can see their favorite at any time.



one we ever did, which was on sarabinders,” Naumann says. “It’s still getting hits, which is amazing, because it was [filmed] over a year ago.”

Retailers should use Internet education to increase sales, Naumann says. HOTP produces a newsletter for retailers, available through the retailer section of the Web site. Through the newsletter, retailers learn several weeks in advance what products will be featured on upcoming Webisodes, giving them time to order in extra product.

Naumann encourages retailers to pass along the education to their customers. “We hope retailers will use

our Webisodes as the basis for hands-on classes in their own stores,” she says. “They wouldn’t necessarily show the episode to their consumers, but watch it themselves and use it for a class.”

Online education is only going to grow in popularity, Naumann says. “I think online educational video will become more mainstream,” she says. “I’m seeing so many other companies, both within our industry and outside our industry, taking the Web to a whole new level.”

CREATING KEEPSAKES

Creating Keepsakes added a new level of interaction to its

Site Seeing

Many other Internet sites offer scrapbook-related education and entertainment. A search through the Web sites of your favorite manufacturers and publications may yield information you can use in your classrooms and on your sales floor.

Clique TV (mycliquetv.com) offers scrapbook-centered entertainment and education to scrapbook enthusiasts. Downloadable videos include a typical morning at Stacy Julian’s house and Lisa Bearson’s account of the founding of *Creating Keepsakes* Magazine. A weeklong education series shows how scrapbookers can use video, not just photos, as they scrapbook.

ScrapbookLifeStyle.com (scrapbooklifestyle.com) posts a new three- to five-minute Internet video-show each week-day. Shows are filmed in front of audiences in scrapbook stores. In each episode, designers create gift albums for show guests: a Christmas album, themed birthday album, a princess album. Additional video and archived episodes are available with a membership fee. ❖



The Big Picture Scrapbooking Team is creating a real community as well as online education. From left: Paula Wessells, Stacy Julian, Kayce Rehn.

popular site with the addition of its Online Video Technique Gallery. Created by Web hostess Erin Lincoln, the three-minute videos include Fun Stuff, Tips, and How-To.

Lincoln’s videos are shot at her dining room table – a decidedly low-maintenance approach. That non-studio feeling helps viewers connect with her on a personal level, Lincoln says. “I’ve heard people say they feel like they’re just sitting down at my dining room table and scrapping with me,” she says.

Lincoln conceives most of the video ideas herself. “Usually what happens is I sit down to scrapbook, and I think, this needs a video,” she says. “I have only three minutes. So I have to convey how fun it is and how easy it is in under three minutes. It’s all about a clever way of doing something, or a new twist on a product. I want

people to say, ‘Why didn’t I think of that?’ I want people to associate the videos I do with useful information.”

Retailers familiar with Lincoln’s how-to videos can use them to help their customers, Lincoln says. “If someone comes into a store and says I don’t know how to use this, they can refer them back to the site,” Lincoln says. “The store owner can either go and learn themselves or refer customers.”

BIG PICTURE SCRAPBOOKING

Big Picture Scrapbooking (bigpicturescrapbooking.com) has developed a full curriculum of courses ranging from a one-week inspiration class to a year-long workshop in creativity. Courses include printable color handouts, online chats, and streaming audio lessons from some of the best teachers in the business.

(more on page 70)



Erin Lincoln, *Creating Keepsakes*' Web hostess. Her online videos include tips, how-tos, and other fun stuff.



Stacy Julian's personal letters and sound clips from instructors at Big Picture Scrapbooking disprove the theory that online education is dry and impersonal.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about products from these companies, use the E*Trends Rapid Reader Response at www.craftrends.com or the Reader Service Card on page 58A.

BIG PICTURE SCRAPBOOKING

Reader Service No. 345

CREATING KEEPSAKES

Reader Service No. 346

FISKARS TV

Reader Service No. 347

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Reader Service No. 348

Stacy Julian, founding editor of *Simple Scrapbooks* Magazine, founded Big Picture Scrapbooking after a scrapbook event trip to South Africa. "Almost immediately after coming home they e-mailed me and said, 'Wow, you were a hit. Can you come back next year?'" Knowing that an annual trip to Africa wasn't practical, Julian pondered the best way to reach the largest possible audience. Online education was the answer.

Julian had written *The Big Picture* to expand scrapbooking beyond pictures on a page. She founded Big Picture Scrapbooking to expand education beyond the classroom. "It's a solution for a teacher to reach more people," she says.

Big Picture Scrapbooking focuses on the value of education, Julian says. Students will not walk away with a bag full of freebies; instead they'll take away knowledge and inspiration and a new attitude. "The education isn't just making something but changing the way you think," Julian says. "We want to give [students] confidence and motivation or whatever they need in their scrapbooking."

The site's popularity has grown at an amazing rate. Julian's 12-week Library of Memories workshop and Heidi Swapp's 52-week A Year to Remember class each have more than 1,000 people enrolled. "We know that we're doing something different here," Julian says. "It's exciting."

Big Picture Scrapbooking has plans to help retailers with their in-store classes through bpsretail.com. "It's in the development stage," Julian says. "Right now our material is copyrighted. A retailer can't copy my handouts and distribute them in her store. But at BPS Retail she can download and copy that file. And I'm going to tell her in my own voice how to teach the class effectively. I'll give her a generic supply list so she can go into her store and pull either new product or product that frankly hasn't sold well."

Julian wants to partner with retailers to expand the scrapbook industry. "We don't see ourselves as competing with [retailers]," Julian says. "We're another gateway to scrapbooking." ■