



Protean launches Marantz from Consumer to B2B in the blink of a lizard's eye

Establishing Marantz Business Electronics as a key player in the Automatic Optical Inspection (AOI) industry was Protean's brief – in principle, a very straightforward proposition. But, coming from a company whose brand was synonymous with the hi-fi consumer market, Marantz themselves understood that it was extremely ambitious.

Commenting on the initial brief, Protean Managing Director Greg Robinson explains: "The Marantz situation was a very interesting proposition since the brand was extremely well known but not necessarily in terms of AOI systems. We knew the Business Electronics division had a lot of potential since it was already experiencing a level of technical success – despite its relatively low profile in the industry. So, our task was twofold. We needed to make the connection with the established Marantz brand while also raising awareness of its specific capabilities in AOI."

Marantz Business Electronics General Manager, Henk Biemans adds: "Protean not only listened intently to where we wanted to be and what our business objectives were, but they delivered the strategies and implemented the marketing initiatives that delivered real results." Despite having never undertaken any promotions of this nature prior to working with Protean, Marantz gave the green light to promotional activities immediately after an initial meeting with the integrated marketing specialist.

The first phase of the new marketing plan was designed to culminate with the renowned international trade show, Productronica. While integrating the clean, clear cut brand image of the Marantz consumer division, Protean initially set about establishing a corporate image for the business-to-business market. The result was designed to reflect the division's brand integrity while also promoting the company's unique 24-bit colour inspection capability. It comprised an intriguing positional tagline and an appealing chameleon graphic.

Escape the Grey World – from concept to reality

According to Henk, "The introduction of the chameleon image was absolutely inspired – it had a huge and very immediate impact. By highlighting our unique selling point instantly with this visually engaging image, we were immediately set apart from our competitors." The utilisation of an image that would easily represent the flexible 24-bit colour capabilities of Marantz equipment meant that the company's profile was automatically enhanced. And, through both strong visual imaging and well defined messages, the AOI market was clearly 'getting the picture' about this new player.

The tagline, 'Escape the Grey World' was developed and, with the key competitive differentiator well and truly defined, Protean introduced additional elements to the ad campaign that continued the proven combination of natural, striking imagery and well-honed messaging. Using this solid foundation, Protean developed a dedicated web micro-site to become the centre of Marantz's promotional activity during the Productronica show.

Henk explains: "Our key focus for promoting our new range to the AOI market was the trade show Productronica and we knew that if anyone could deliver us the high quality visitors to the stand that we needed, it would be Protean." Using its intrinsic international experience to covering all global bases, Protean registered two urls to support the show campaign – www.escapethegreyworld.com and www.escapethegrayworld.com – recognising that the US spells 'Grey' as 'Gray'.

Ads featuring the chameleon were run three months prior to the show, directing people to the new micro-site, while hard copy adverts were strategically placed in key industry magazines. As well as this, online advertising was created for target e-titles ensuring that Marantz was capturing the attention of the entire AOI audience. The micro-site became the central focus of all activity in the month before Productronica, receiving 2,209 unique hits in November and 1,766 unique hits after the show. According to Henk, these figures demonstrated an emphatic amount of interest in the company and its product offerings from the AOI market.

“We were really pleased, not only with the idea of the micro-site, but with the results too. Often these types of ‘marketing ideas’ look good but they don’t always offer much in return. With Protean it was different; they were able to tell us exactly how many people had accessed the site and what had driven them there. In fact, we’ve been so pleased with the micro-site that since Productronica, we’ve automatically redirected customers to it from our main site.”

The branding initiative continued with imagery around the Marantz stand at Productronica, as Protean continued the successful theme. This ensured that every element of the campaign was brought to the stand and identified by potential visitors who had already been targeted in a pre-show email. Henk concludes: “Ultimately Productronica was a huge success for us, resulting in high quality visitors from the AOI industry. Protean deserves much of the credit for that.”

He continues: “The direct marketing email before and after the show was another touch of professionalism ensuring that nobody missed what we wanted them to see. Plus, as we work very closely with our distributors, we offered them the opportunity to use Protean’s excellent creative writing and design work by adapting the direct marketing email with their individual company branding. Quite a few of our distributors took us up on this offer and they’ve been so delighted with the results that many more have come back and asked if we could do the same for them!”

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