

Detroit auto show spawns related business

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screened before the client sees them.

"We look for a nice appearance. They have to be smart enough to talk one-on-one. Anyone can learn a script. They have to have a nice personality. They can't be stuck on themselves," he said.

Narrators can earn from \$135 to \$650 per day depending on experience, credentials and what they're asked to do, Rice said.

But because Detroit is still considered the Vatican of the auto business, Rice said, most narrators are hired here in April to work the exhibition circuit through the following March.

"A lot of our people are carry-over from previous years, about 50 percent," Rice said.

Margery Krevsky, vice president for Productions-Plus of Birmingham, will place upwards of 70 floor

product specialists and narrators for Pontiac, Buick, Nissan and Infiniti.

THE FLOOR specialists will earn upwards of \$200-300 daily, narrators \$160-250, she said.

Krevsky expects some travel from her placements. "I won't consider a person who will do just one week," she said. "It's expensive to train talent."

Cynthia Guenther, president of United Talent Agency of Detroit and Dearborn, helped the Detroit Auto Dealers Association select some 80 women to help with public relations tasks relating to the show.

"They will do credentialing. Many women will greet dignitaries from Paris, Tokyo, many women will sell tickets," she said.

Those jobs, which pay \$7-10 per hour, often are used as stepping stones to narrator and product specialist jobs, Guenther said.

Guenther also placed about 20 in

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— GMC Truck manager Jim Wagner

exhibits with Buick, Hyundai, Ford and Pontiac.

THEN THERE are opportunities for local talent with ambitions other than mouthpieces for manufacturers.

"We're doing all the domestic manufacturers parties, 15, easy," Rice said. Most will be afterglows following the charity preview Jan. 11, and the fare varies.

"One party has a 22-piece big

band, another a trio," he said. A large orchestra could command about \$3,000 for three hours work; a piano player \$125-150, Rice said.

Chrysler will feature a five-piece jazz band for its party, said Peter Brown, shows and exhibit specialist for Chrysler. "I told the agency in this particular case what I wanted — a nice piano, bass, drums playing mellow, light music for the 45-65-year-old group," he said.

Entertainment Connection of Southfield has booked a trio for a dealership party and Doug Jacobs and the Red Garter Band for a breakfast, said Karen Hall, a sales agent.

"ONCE WE find the location and type of atmosphere, we'll suggest a certain type of music," she said. "It all depends on what the client is trying to do."

Some exhibitors hire entertainers to supplement the narrators.

"We've got eight dancers for Chevrolet, the Chevy Thunder Dancers, and eight dancers for Toyota, Team Toyota Dancers," Rice said. They can expect to make \$150-200 per day and hit the road for other big domestic shows.

"It's pretty tough to get a job," Rice said of the dancers. "We looked at 160, the client looked at 80."

National talent sometimes supplements local entertainers.

GMC Truck has hired a group from the Up with People troupe, while Chevrolet has engaged Mike Sweet, a comedian/magician and former Detroit, and The Piano Juggler, both from Los Angeles.

"WE HAVE entertainment for one reason only — to attract an audience," said Jim Wagner, manager of

shows and exhibits for GMC Truck. "It (auto show) is a family affair. You have one third who come there basically to be entertained, another one third are interested in concept cars and the other third are true buyers," he said.

But there's another school of thought. Chrysler, not wanting singers or dancers to detract from the vehicles, complements narrators and floor people with simulators and in exhibits.

"We feel to a certain extent it gets people more hands on, involved in products," said Donald Schmidt, display and exhibits manager for Chrysler. "They get into vehicles."

"The industry has become much more technical," said Barbara McIntosh, owner of Affiliated Models of Troy. Her agency will supply 70 narrators and floor people for the Detroit show and another 60 for four other auto shows around the country at the same time.

"Schick has gone to a technical level," McIntosh said. "It's more to inform the public than just entertain."

Working the Detroit auto show is fun but demanding

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cut, but I've been doing it." There's also time for fun. "We're out every morning sightseeing. At night, we go out on the town," she said.

Kulczycki, who expects to graduate from Eastern Michigan University next year, suspects this will be her last time around the circuit.

"We're usually ready to come home when a show is over. But we're ready to go, too," she said.

Kolodziej, 20, of Westland is in her second year narrating for Hyundai. "It's a stepping stone, starting off with what I want to do," she said.

The public contact work also complements schooling at Henry Ford Community College in preparing for an eventual career in broadcasting. "It's exciting. I'm traveling all

over the U.S. It is very good money. You cash your check and say, 'Isn't this great?'" Kolodziej said.

COMPETITION for jobs is tough, with 50 sometimes vying for two or three slots.

"The girls I work with, you get to be close friends," she said. "You live with them, room with them. But I do find myself getting homesick."

Kolodziej works 3-8 hours per day and brings homework on the road.

How long will it go on? "I expect to do this until after I'm out of college and stable in my broadcasting

job, a few more years, definitely," she said.

Guenther of Bloomfield Hills has been a Ford narrator for 14 years. "I enjoy it. It's part of business I'm accustomed to," she said.

Guenther auditioned for Ford after participating in the Miss Michigan Pageant. Now, she runs the Miss Michigan United Pageant and a talent agency.

"You're always looking for new contacts. I've been through this. I know," she said. "This (auto show work) is part of a tree. I've branched out."

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