January 2009, No. 27

Six Programs Funded for the Program Implementation Mini-Grants

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative is pleased to announced the first recipients of the Program Implementation Mini-Grants for Extension Educators. These innovative mini-grants will fund six implementation programs from across the nation to promote facilitation of e-commerce curricula at the community level, further accomplishing the program goal of greater exposure to the curricula available through The Learning Center. Congratulations to the following grantees: Dr. Brian Whitacre of Oklahoma State University, Dr. David Lamie of Clemson University, Dr. Michael Wilcox University of Tennessee, Dr. Lekan Ayanwale of Tuskegee University, Kathryn Macomber of The University of Missouri, and Julie Melchiori of Michigan State University. More information about the Program Implementation Mini-Grants is available at the Program Overview Web site.

New e-Commerce Curricula to Debut in 2009

In addition to five learning modules featured last fall, 2009 will mark the launch of a whole new series of curricula. With four programs currently in development, the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative will unveil a learning curriculum to address the needs of those interested in Internet sales but have limited Internet exposure. For entrepreneurs who produce or would like to market food and nutritional products online, the topic of food e-tailing introduces sales techniques, packaging and regulations. Also this year, two curricula will be available in both Spanish and English to service the needs of both educators and entrepreneurs. For more information about our currently available curricula and upcoming projects, visit The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative Web site.

Marketing

e-Commerce Marketing Tips for Valentine's Day
By Jennifer Schiff

Ah, Valentine's Day, a time of hearts and flowers, chocolate and jewelry — and some of the cleverest, most heartfelt e-marketing campaigns. Even if your e-commerce business isn't in the business of selling chocolate or jewelry or flowers, if you aren't capitalizing on Valentine's Day, you could find your heart broken and your site abandoned. For Valentine's Day sales and marketing approaches and ideas, login at http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/solutions/advertising/article.php/3798501.

Study: Social Network Populations Tilt Toward Youth
By Barbara Ortutay

People of all ages engage in social networking, and it has been adopted for business as well as personal uses. However, younger people are much more likely to join social networks than older adults, a recent study found, and networkers' personal interests and pursuits still trump business activities. As many plans to use these social networking tools for marketing and sales unfold, attention to this report can help in formulating your approach. To review the article, read it at http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/65837.html.

Sales

Alternative Payments: More Ways to Close the Sale
By Bala Janakiraman

Online customers are increasingly turning to alternative payment methods, and merchants who don't want to miss out on sales should consider accepting some or all of them. Banks also are getting in on the act, creating Secure Vault Payments, which authenticate customers through online banking portals. To learn more about newer payment methods, go to http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/Alternative-Payments-More-Ways-to-Close-the-Sale-65954.html.

Best Sales Practices: Build Lasting Relationships
By Pam Baker

Sales operations have plenty of challenges before them today, but the main focus of sales managers is developing relationships with customers that go beyond selling them a single product. It's a customer-centric, rather than company-centric, approach that's gaining adherents. You have to be proactive and structured about how you engage with your customers. To learn specific tips, please go to http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/Best-Sales-Practices-Build-Lasting-Relationships-65965.html.

Social Commerce Strategies for Small Online Businesses
By Jennifer Schiff

Shopping, in many ways, has always been a social activity. Before the rise of the Internet and online shopping, people would often shop for clothes or go to the mall with friends — and, in the more distant past, were often on a first- or last-name basis with their service providers (their dry cleaner, the grocer, their doctor, etc.). According to new research from Guidance, an e-commerce solution provider based in California, many shoppers miss that social interaction. And, especially now, when market share is more important than ever, including some social activity or interactivity on your site, things like customer-generated reviews and product rankings, and chat or message boards can help improve your bottom line. For a review of these ideas, please see http://www.ecommerce-guide.com/news/trends/article.php/3797916.

Workforce Update

Executive Summary: Improving Quality of Life Through Telecommuting
By Wendell Cox

A new ITIF report shows that the number of jobs filled by telecommuters could grow nearly four-fold to 19 million and deliver substantial economic, environmental and quality of life benefits for the United States over the next 12 years. Spurred by advances in IT, especially the spread of broadband, telecommuting is

already the fastest growing mode of getting from home to work. To review this report, visit http://www.itif.org/files/Telecommuting.pdf. To learn about adding broadband to your community, see http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/curricula/connecting_communities/.

How the Virtual Workforce Is Changing Everything
By Jack M. Germain

In addition to the article above, telecommuting is conspiring to reinvent the traditional notion of a job. No longer is the one-employer model the only game in town. Some companies have found that work done by freelancers may be of better quality than what they were used to getting from their in-house employees. This time around, workers with unique talents ply their trade from home offices and send the products of their work efforts to city-based offices. To learn more about this societal shift in work environment, read further at http://www.linuxinsider.com/story/65744.html.

Upcoming Events:

National Entrepreneurship Week Recognized February 21 - 28, 2009

National Entrepreneurship Week is a celebration of American entrepreneurs and the lifelong learning educational opportunities that prepare the NEW business leaders of the future. The Week is in response to the U. S. House of Representatives Resolution #699, supporting an annual National Entrepreneurship Week and encouraging the celebration of it annually at the local, state, and national levels. Please go to http://www.nationaleweek.org for updates and a listing of events by state.

Learn how to Maximize Your Pay Per Click Campaign

On February 11, 2009, eXtension will host its next Webinar **"Maximizing Your Pay Per Click Campaign" at 2 p.m. EST.** In this session, John Wells President of Web Wise Design & Marketing will focus on Google Adwords, the importance of landing pages, and the use of Google Analytics as tools to increase e-commerce traffic for businesses. John will share his experiences in working with small and large businesses from his corporate office in Fennimore Wisconsin (population 2,500). The Webinar series is sponsored by eXtension: Entrepreneurs and Their Communities Committee and will help business owners and communities think more entrepreneurial as well as provide tips on being wise with internet marketing techniques and e-Commerce applications. For further details and Webinar connection information, please go to http://www.extension.org/pages/Entrepreneurs_and_Their_Communities_Webinar_Series.