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**The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative Releases New Online Curriculum**
**Marketing Food Specialty Products Online**

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative, in coordination with the Southern Rural Development Center, is pleased to announce the release of *Marketing Food Specialty Products Online*, an online learning module, researched by Stan Ernst and designed by the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative team. The learning module was made for use by grocery store managers and marketers of specialty food products. Whether the food business is large with many employees or a small operation with very specialized sales, all can benefit from this self-paced learning module.  With this new tool, food managers can evaluate the role of that technology in their business, examine the strategies necessary to institute the technology and weigh out cost /benefit measures. If the business is already using technology, the module also presents ideas on how to refocus and improve current uses.

http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/curricula/rural_retailing/index.html

**The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative Announces 2009 Educational Resource Development Grant Recipients.**

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative would like to congratulate the following recipients of our 2009 Educational Resources Development Competitive Grants Program.

- Dr. Brian Whitacre, Dr. Connie Handcock, Dr. David Shideler and Dr. Michael Wilcox for their collective submission *Web Presence Stategies for Small Communities and Local Governments*.
- Dr. Lisa Chase for her curriculum development project *Using Social Networking Tools to Enhance Small Businesses*.
- Stacey McCullough, Dr. Jefferson Miller and Dr. Leslie Edgar for the Project titled *Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Strategies*.

Each project will result in a new online curriculum that will assist in meeting the ever changing technological educational needs of our Extension educators.

**Other Opportunities for Online Education for Artisans.**

*Helping Artisans Reach Global Markets*, the National e-Commerce Extension Initiatives online learning module for artisans has a new and very complimentary counterpart. A new artisan curriculum was presented at the 2009 meeting of the Craft Organizational Development Associate of Minnesota. The released *Ecommerce for Artists* is a fully integrated, modular curriculum that introduces artists to the fundamentals of using the Internet to strengthen their arts-related businesses.  Much like *Helping Artisans Reach Global Markets* it primarily is a tool to help educators working with artists who want to develop their business skills, but it also seeks to support individual artists who want to explore these strategies on their own.  Both learning modules together give facilitators a very complete tool box of resources to review the scope of possibilities the Internet can bring to the artisan or crafter looking for business expansion opportunities.

*Ecommerce for Artists* at http://craftnetglobal.com

*Helping Artisans Reach Global Markets* at http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/curricula/artisans

**A National e-Commerce Extension Initiative Learning Modules Receives International Attention**

Recently, the curriculum development team of Bill Shuffstall, Rae Montgomery, Dana Noonan and Sheila Sager received a request for permission to use their program in Australia and the Asia Pacific region. So *Connecting Rural Communities* is going down under to help organize community efforts geared at broadband adoption. This type of international collaboration not only emphasizes the economic advantages broadband adoption brings to communities all over the world, but is also a testament to the quality of this innovative learning curriculum. Congratulations!

http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/curricula/connecting_communities

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**Business Startup Tips**

**The Top 5 To-Dos Before Kicking Off Your E-Commerce Project**
By Gord Janzen

Successfully kicking off a major e-commerce project can make you a superstar in your firm, but the path to victory is strewn with the wreckage of thousands of ventures that didn't fare quite so well. Taking into account a long list of historic hits and misses, here are five tactics that will help you stack the odds in your favor. For more on getting started go to:

http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/The-Top-5-To-Dos-Before-Kicking-Off-Your-E-Commerce-Project-67439.html

**So You Want to Start a Tech Business**
By Pam Baker

**Part 1**
It's true that recessions tend to breed entrepreneurship, but that's not because it's easier to get startups funded. Venture capitalists are generally forced to pull back too, and only very compelling ideas will elicit any interest. So, suppose you have one of those. Who's likely to show you the money? To find out go to:

http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/smb/67410.html

**Part 2**
It's safe to say that anyone who's serious about starting a business must have a certain amount of built-in intestinal fortitude. So, when the first 100 or so potential sources of funding don't pan out, it's time to get unconventional. That could mean dipping into retirement savings or life insurance policies -- or joining forces with a complementary startup that's already wrangled some cash. For more of the story go to:

http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/67426.html

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## The Customer Service Corner

### E-Coupon Use Growing at Rapid Clip
By Michelle Megna

A whole new demographic is digging digital coupons, spurring huge growth in the online coupon category. Online coupon sites saw strong growth for the month of May, signaling a trend being spurred on both by the recession as well as by the "modern" digital coupon demographic. Click here for the rest of the e-coupon update:

http://www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/3826866/ECoupon+Use+Growing+at+Rapid+Clip.htm

### Live Chat: Your New Online Salesperson
By Paul Sloan

Website operators are tapping the potential of instant messaging as a new powerful sales tool. A year or two ago, it looked like instant messaging and other forms of online chat had reached their full potential as a business tool. Millions of people were using IM to interact with corporate colleagues. Live chat had also become a fixture on websites, giving customers a way to inquire about products and receive answers in real time. To read more:

http://money.cnn.com/2007/10/03/technology/live_chat.biz2
/index.htm?postversion=2007100408

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## Spotlight on eBay

### eBay: Stricter Selling Requirements on Tap
By Michelle Megna

Will the rebounding e-tailer's sellers be happy with new policies or rebel? EBay today announced several major policy changes for sellers including new minimum requirements standards for all sellers and a new top-rated tier for high-volume merchants. For more news about ebay go to:
http://www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/3831946/eBay+Stricter+Selling+Requirements+on+Tap.htm

### Don't Give Up on eBay Yet
By Jessica Shambora

Don't give up on eBay yet. Despite posting a second quarter drop in earnings for the second quarter, the company beat analyst estimates. Merrill Lynch and Bank of America upgraded it to neutral on the news, while Goldman Sachs and Credit Suisse raised their earnings targets. Since the announcement yesterday evening, eBay's stock has jumped over 10% to $21.52. To read more go to:
http://brainstormtech.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2009/07/23
/ebay-ceo-explains-recent-show-of-faith

### EBay Debuts New Math, Opens Hood on Search
By Geoffrey A. Fowler

EBay on Monday unveiled another round of changes to its online marketplace, designed to help turn around slipping sales as consumers have turned to sites with higher levels of customer service. EBay introduced new minimum standards for professionalism in its marketplace, and it unveiled a new designation – and discounts – for what it will now call "Top-Rated Sellers." For the complete article go to: http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2009/07/27/ebay-debuts-new-math-opens-hood-on-search

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