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Announcements

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative's Fall Webinar Series Concludes in December

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative will complete the last two segments of the fall Webinar series in December. These Webinars are meant to introduce Extension Educators and all interest parties to the newest online ecommerce curriculum available. Please join us on December 3rd at 2 p.m. as we formally roll out the online learning curricula *Marketing Food Specialty Products Online*. The series will conclude on December 10th at 2pm, with Dr. Julie Sexton presenting on the online learning curricula titled *Electronic Retailing: Selling on the Internet*. If you would like to join either of these Webinars simply log on to <http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/webinar.html> and follow the link to your preferred session.

Funding Reminder:

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative announced a new round of funding to help foster the implementation of one of its new e-commerce curricula products. These resources are intended to expand the adoption of e-commerce strategies by communities, small/micro businesses, and entrepreneurs across the country. Land-Grant University (LGU) Extension educators or teams (involving both Extension and non-Extension partners) are invited to submit proposals outlining how they propose to implement any of the FOUR new e-commerce educational curricula that the SRDC has released, or is releasing, by Fall 2009. The maximum amount allowed for any proposal is \$3,000 and the deadline is January 15, 2010. For the full RFP please visit our Web site at <http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/program.html>

Happy Holidays from the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative!

Spotlight on Holiday Customer Service

Don't Give Discount Holiday Shoppers Any Reasons to Walk Away

Charles Wiedenhoft

Shoppers are looking for discounts this holiday season, and many will abandon a shopping cart in a heartbeat if they feel they're not getting the deal they expected when the checkout process is under way. There are some simple measures e-tailers can take to optimize the shopping experience, even at this late date, and keep customers engaged until their purchases complete. To keep your holiday online sales on track see:

<http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/Dont-Give-Discount-Holiday-Shoppers-Any-Reasons-to-Walk-Away-68661.html>

Creating Exceptional Customer Experiences, Both Coming and Going

Kristin Hambelton

While technology will never be able to replace the experience of in-person interaction with customers, marketing automation solutions have the ability to make inbound marketing an integral part of campaigns and can support the flexibility to react immediately to a customer's latest action, regardless of the channel. For further information see: <http://www.crbuyer.com/story/68655.html>

An Article for the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

Broadband Internet Service Helping Create a Rural Digital Economy

Peter Sternberg, Mitch Morehart and John Cromartie

Rapid growth in broadband service is providing economic and societal benefits to rural areas. Broadband—high speed Internet—is less commonly used in rural than urban settings due to higher provision costs and more limited availability in rural areas. Rural counties with broadband Internet service in 2000 had greater subsequent employment and income growth than similar rural counties without service. For the complete article please go to: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Amberwaves/September09/Features/Broadband.htm>

Spotlight on Design

Top 10 Blunders in eCommerce Design

Darpan Munjal

So you have built a decent looking eCommerce website, pumped up the marketing spend and you are getting good amount of visitors on the site. However, you are facing a problem that most of the newer online retailers face initially – your conversion rate is extremely low. You are baffled why majority of the visitors are not purchasing anything on the site and you ask your head of marketing to look for the answers. Although having a good marketing plan and execution is necessary in bringing visitors to your site, a lot of times, the answer lies within how your website is designed. To hear about the 10 blunders in eCommerce design that can cause the conversion rate to go south click here: <http://www.commercewiki.com/e-commerce/top-10-mistakes-in-e-commerce/>

Top 10 Low Cost Ways to Improve Site Usability

Darpan Munjal

Very frequently I get called by online retailers who have done significant work in SEO, are driving quite a bit of traffic to their website but seem to have hit a wall in increasing the revenue. They are baffled that despite all the good work in SEO and online marketing, why are they not able to maintain a healthy conversion rate? The one factor that often results in a low conversion rate is site usability. In other words, once the visitors are on your site, are they able to effectively navigate to find what they are looking for and then finally buy the product? To find the answers to these questions go to: <http://www.commercewiki.com/e-commerce/improve-site-usability-top-10>

15 Reasons Why I Wouldn't Buy From Your Online Store

Darpan Munjal

You can make a safe assumption that the reason I am visiting your online store is because I have an intention to buy something from you. All I need from you is to help me find what I am looking for and then take me from point

A (Product Page) to point B (checkout). I am ready to fork over my money if you show me a clear path! So it is up to you to decide how easy or difficult you want my journey to be. Need a few tips? Logon here for a few ideas to consider: <http://www.commercewiki.com/ecommerce/usability-checkout-tips>

Tidbits About Google

Google Brings Enterprise Search to E-Tailers

Larry Barrett

Commerce Search product aims to improve customer experience, boost sales conversion rates. Google on Thursday launched Commerce Search, a cloud-based enterprise search application for e-tailers that promises to improve sales conversion rates and simplify the online shopping experience for their customers. To see if you could benefit from this new search technique logon to: <http://www.internetnews.com/ec-news/article.php/3847036/Google+Brings+Enterprise+Search+to+ETailers.htm>

Google Helps With the Password Juggle

Michelle Megna

Search giant joins Facebook and Plaxo in rolling out new technology aimed at decreasing password rage among users. Google today made available a technology aimed at allowing users to securely register at Web sites without having to go through a lengthy sign-up process. The technology, called hybrid onboarding, was first employed by Plaxo and is already used by Facebook and Yahoo, said Eric Sachs, product manager at Google's security unit in a [blog post](http://www.internetnews.com/ec-news/article.php/3846766/Google%20Helps%20With%20the%20Password%20Juggle.htm). Learn more by going to: <http://www.internetnews.com/ec-news/article.php/3846766/Google%20Helps%20With%20the%20Password%20Juggle.htm>

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