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New Online Technologies to Consider in 2010

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New online technologies will play increasingly important sales and marketing roles for businesses and retailers in the coming year. With more prevalent adoption of advanced mobile phones, eBooks, wireless notebooks and intelligent GPS devices, users now remain constantly connected to the Internet regardless of the time or location. To keep up and take advantage of this new level of connectivity in the marketplace, leading businesses are adding innovative new communication tools to their day-to-day marketing strategies. **Think "Marketing On-the-Go."**

On-Demand Coupons...Big changes are on the way for traditional coupon distribution and redemption. Businesses will be able to promote and capture last-minute, impulse buying opportunities by offering "digital coupons" that are available for immediate downloading right inside the store. Mobile phone web browsers and plug-in applications allow customers to retrieve verbal passcodes or scan-compatible barcode images for quick, convenient redemption whenever needed. The same idea holds true for administering "reward card" programs, granting customers the ability to carry an unlimited number of electronic redemption cards, without the need to carry numerous plastic cards while traveling. Online coupons can also be restricted for single-use distribution using QR (Quick Response) barcode technology that generates unique identification patterns for each coupon and deactivates the individual coupon once the specific pattern is scanned. Further, web-based discount offers can be automated, anticipating shifting demand based on the time of day, day of the week, GPS location, current weather conditions and other factors.

Voice Command Interaction...Voice activated search, as featured on Apple iPhone and Google Android telephones, is rapidly expanding how and when customers locate and exchange information online. Many browser-based applications "read" printed text out loud and support basic speech-oriented commands, such as "yes/no," "next," "send" and "call." No longer tethered to a visual display, touch screen, mouse or keyboard, users may more easily access and purchase services while they are on the move. This will impact how information is presented within your website. Consider adding a pre-recorded narrative or an audio/visual blog to help promote your products.

Promotional Text Messaging...Text messaging is going "commercial." Bypassing traditional email clutter, smart businesses are also offering to push critical information to consumers using basic text messaging. Usually, broadcast texting campaigns have a better chance of being read and will reach consumers more quickly. While businesses must first secure permission from recipients, text messages drive higher customer response rates. Consider offering customers the option to receive ongoing service alerts, exclusive discount offers, and breaking news directly through their texting devices.

For more information about emerging online technologies, visit <http://smartblog.cccommunications.com>.

About the author:

As one of the region's earliest pioneers in the field of online communications, *Kip Cozart*, along with CC Communications owner/partners *Russ Husky* and *Loretta Cozart*, have consulted with hundreds of businesses and organizations to enhance and produce effective web, email, multimedia marketing initiatives and business process improvements for fifteen years. Contact kcozart@cccommunications.com or call CC Communications at 704-543-1171.