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5 Things You Need to Know to Avoid an Outburst at the Dinner Table

2009 – LINCOLN, Nebraska – E-commerce, or the ability to sell and buy products or services online, is a continuously evolving service. While certain forms of e-commerce have been around for about fifteen years, it's important for business's to realize that e-commerce is still in its initial phases when deciding to implement this online service. Perhaps it's best to think of e-commerce as the technological equivalent of the average human teenager, a potentially dangerous and unpredictable life form if not handled in the correct way. And let's not forget the familiar angst of someone out bidding you at the last minute on eBay for that autographed, 20th anniversary, collector's edition of Star Trek: The Complete First Season, and right before you were just about to work up the courage to ask her to the prom first!

In order to avoid such scarring circumstances, there are precautions a business can take to make sure that their online store is as user-friendly and profitable as possible based on the current stage of e-commerce in its evolution.

1. Have a Plan – It's important to spend ample time and resources on your e-commerce. Growing up is tough, and the last thing you need is for your e-commerce to fall into the wrong crowd, like those popup ads and spam e-mails, and let's not even think about those nasty viruses. Just like a traditional store, an online store needs to be implemented using a detailed plan. The successful launch of an online store requires a significant investment, so creating a realistic budget is useful. Marketing can be difficult for online stores because there is no direct human interaction, so a specific marketing plan needs to be made for an e-commerce enterprise.

2. Avoid unclear product descriptions – While many online stores are continuously improving the usability of their e-commerce, many shoppers are still leery of ordering products online. The reasoning is simple; it's scary to make a purchase when you can't hold the product in your own hands and inspect it yourself. Therefore it's important to be clear in your product descriptions, including product dimensions, quantity, and functions. After all, you would hate to accidentally order Miley Cyrus's new CD for you daughter's birthday when, like, everyone knew she wanted Taylor Swift.

3. Avoid unclear store procedures – Not only do customers often have concerns with the product; they may also worry about the security of online shopping. E-commerce is a fairly new practice and not all users will feel completely comfortable with handing over personal and financial information and then simply waiting for a package to arrive. Providing detailed information about the purchasing process and return procedures is a useful way to put your customers' minds at ease and convince them that your business is a legitimate retailer. Because identity theft and online fraud are such prevalent issues right now, it is recommended to inform users about security features on your site. For some, online shopping might seem like that darkly handsome kid who should have graduated two-years-ago and hangs out in the alley behind school: intriguing but dangerous. Instead, make sure your online store is the president of the student council.

4. Communication/Customer Service – Sometimes e-commerce purchases forget to tell us where they are going and where they can be reached, leaving us to worry all night long if they'll make it home safely. The worst part is we can't even ground the purchase when it finally arrives. When implementing your online store, create an environment where customers can easily access data and information about their order, so that they know what step in the process their order is in at all times. Make sure that responsive customer

Vipa Solutions partners with advertising, marketing, and PR agencies to deliver industry specific web services in the areas of retail, healthcare, service providers, manufacturing, and community organizations. The Vipa Solutions team specializes in aiding agencies in the shift from traditional media and static websites to dynamic web services by providing proven interactive best practices, robust web solutions, and managed services. With partners across the country, Vipa Solutions continues to expand its sales force and client services team. Visit us on the web at: www.vipasolutions.com

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service is available by providing traditional contact information, such as a telephone number and mailing address, so that clients can reach your business to make inquiries. These steps will help alleviate some of the security concerns clients have with e-commerce.

5. Don't become over-reliant on e-commerce - E-commerce is an incredibly powerful tool when leveraged correctly, and it boasts many advantages over traditional commerce. E-commerce allows for 24-hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year shopping, instantaneous access to a global marketplace, and the ability to compare the prices of multiple vendors from home. However, there are certain situations in which other methods might be a better alternative. Extremely expensive and inexpensive items are often difficult to sell online because customers may feel more comfortable making large purchases in person, and the shipping and handling on inexpensive items could easily double the price of the actual purchase. New or unusual products may also benefit from a more traditional sales route. In essence, e-commerce takes the sales person out of sales, and this is often a crucial aspect of selling new, risky, or unusual products. E-commerce can also make it difficult for businesses to evaluate marketing plans because there is such a small amount of client feed-back.

Through years of research and experience with implementing interactive web-solutions, Vip Solutions has recognized the potential pitfalls of capabilities like e-commerce along with the best practices to avoid them. The internet is constantly changing at such a rapid pace that it can be difficult to know how to best utilize the opportunities it affords, and e-commerce is no exception. Through the proven best practices of Vip Solutions, it's easy to avoid an angry outburst from your customer/teenager as they get up from the dinner table only half way through their meatloaf, flailing their arms and shouting, "You just don't know what it's like to be an online-shopper!"

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