

B2B? Watch your Mouth!

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**B2B? Watch your Mouth!**

**By Rob Spiegel**

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There was a precious time then business-to-business (B2B) ecommerce was the sweet darling of Internet-based business. Sure, Amazon.com has a great brand name, but B2B was going to change the very nature of how business would be conducted in the future. Proponents scoffed at consumer e-tailers while pointing to the auto-exchange, Covisint, which is projected to handle some \$750 billion in goods annually at some not-to-distant point in the future. And if Covisint saves automakers just 10 percent on procurement, well goodness, that adds up.

Yet the promise of B2B ecommerce is now considered bogus in many business circles, actually in most business circles. B2B has been called a false economy, the heart of irrational exuberance, a fool's gold that leads to broken dreams and crushed dreamers. A surprising number of seemingly bright and sincere executives hold B2B ecommerce responsible for the very downturn itself.

Oddly, there is considerably less contempt for the area of ecommerce that really has shown consistent signs of weakness, mass-market e-tailing. These executives don't scoff at Expedia, eBay or Amazon.com with the same venom they bring to online exchanges or supply chain management solutions. Yet if you examine the list of 600 or so failed dot coms this year, the greater number come from the world of consumer-based ecommerce.

The quiet secret not often discussed is that B2B ecommerce continues to show remarkable signs of both present and future success far beyond consumer Net sales. Consumer e-tailing has some success stories, but most fall into the area of specialty sites that sell to consumer segments with intense special interests such as hot foods, fly fishing, heirloom gardening or extreme sports. These sites live stealth-like below the contempt radar. Most of these

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special sites, when noticed, elicit admiration.

The bile of contempt is saved for B2B, the area of ecommerce that will almost inevitably live up to its transformative promise – in time. And the very executives who look on B2B with such disdain are actively in the process of implementing e-business systems in their companies to assist with logistics, supply chain analytics, inventory management, design collaboration, Web-based conferencing, reverse auctions, customer relationship management, indirect procurement and spot purchases.

So why the heartfelt disdain? Part of the negativity is simply the result of the audacity and arrogance of the young Internet entrepreneurs. The dot coms

showed up in virtually every business sector, announcing they had arrived to turn the industry on its head, all without any depth of experience in the industry. For all their audacity, they were rewarded with sky-high IPO results after just a few quick months. Suddenly these interlopers were valued higher than the decades-old industry stalwarts. If the young dot com smarties had half a brain, they would have purchased some of those traditional dinosaurs. In their arrogance, they didn't see the value of the dinosaurs. Steve Case of America Online was one of the few with the wits of nab a traditional industry leader, Time Warner, while AOL's stock was soaring. Executives of traditional companies had good reason to fear these upstarts. There was a moment when an upstart could become your new boss.

Most of the dot com arrogance is gone, and with it went the swaggering entrepreneurs. Now it falls to the dinosaur companies to implement the transformation. And do it they will, even while they trash the concept of B2B ecommerce.

I recently attended the annual executive conference of the National Electronic Distributors Association. The dot coms that two years ago came to disintermediate and destroy these distributors are now "dot gone." In their place are humble software companies that sell e-business functionality to the industry dinosaurs. The leaders of these software companies are former distribution executives whose start-ups were funded by the very dinosaurs they now serve. Better to buy B2B solutions from a former colleague than a whiz-kid college dropout who knows nothing about your industry.

The executives in this industry won. They're eating their cake. They vanquished the un-scrubbed dot coms and are now happily hiring their former colleagues to transform their companies. Yet the bitter disdain over B2B persists. It likely stems from the quiet anger over the reality that the young no-nothings almost captured the age-old industries.

Rob Spiegel is the author of Net Strategy (Dearborn) and The Shoestring Entrepreneur's Guide to Internet Start-ups (St. Martin's Press). You can reach Rob at [spiegelrob@aol.com](mailto:spiegelrob@aol.com)

## **How to Increase The Sales Of Promotional Products**

**By Josef Baumann**

I have searched for a new way to increase the sales of my promotional products. A good way is to start an affiliate-program with a commission for every customer who buy an product and who came to your page from a webpage of one of your affiliate-partners.

I thought that this is not the only way to increase my sales and there is another problem. You need to have your own online-shop and a webpage.

So I started to look for a webpage that will give me some tips and advices on how to increase selling promotional products. I used a searchengine and tried the keywords "sell promotional products" and "B2B promotional products". I have got a lot of distributors of promotional products as search results but only a few B2B Marketplaces.

I have visited these B2B Marketplaces and found one webpage where you can sell promotional products without having an own webpage. The name is "B2B Marketplace for promotional products" at

How to start ?

First you have to register. There are no fees you have to pay to register. Then you are able to log in and add five of your promotional products without paying any money. If you want to publish more than five products than you have to pay 3\$ monthly and if you want to add more than 20 and up to 100 you have to pay 10\$ monthly.

The best of all you don't need to pay any fees when a customer who have been send to your webpage buy a promotional product. When you don't have a webpage you can publish you telephone number so that customers can contact you by phone.

Where can I find the Informations of my promotional products?

When you have added your promotional product you can find all the information you have made at the "Promotional Products Shop"-page. There customers are able to compare the prices and the informations of promotional products from different companies.

What's my opinion?

I think you should try this webpage and add five of yours promotional products for free. You will see if more customer come to your webpage or not. And there is an another advantage because you will increase your link-popularity at all the searchengines.

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Josef Baumann is an Marketing Expert and the owner of Bender Technology.

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