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Credit Card Snafus! Tons of Dog Food! What's Going On Online?

By **B.L.Ochman**

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Imagine this scenario. You are ordering vitamins at drugemporium.com. You register for the site, put in your shipping and payment information and press "Express Checkout." Up comes an order not for your vitamins, but for the products ordered by Ester Levitts in Kentucky. Her Discover card information is given, along with her name, address and ordered items.

Think it's unlikely? Think again. It happened to restaurant broker Ray Tekosky of New York City on Friday, Jan 28. He had the presence of mind to download the errant order page and fax it to me. I, in turn, faxed it to a reporter at The Wall St. Journal. Was it news? You bet! On Monday, Jan 31 the Journal reported that drugemporium.com had to close down the site for an afternoon while it tended to its database problems.

What happened here? Something that will happen again, maybe in a much bigger way, maybe on your site. "We're still in the early stages of ecommerce," says Tekosky. "There will be much bigger mistakes on a much larger scale. Who's to say it wouldn't happen with a banking situation? That could create the ecommerce equivalent of the Mad Cow scare."

"Donate the excess to charity"

Tekosky is not some ecommerce-basher. He buys online all the time. He bought his Palm Pilot, his printer, many books, vitamins and other goods on the Internet. And he's not the only one who's having trouble with online buying.

Consider the plight of web developer Ira Wexler and his wife, Barry, who is an attorney. They thought they found a great deal for dog food at petopia.com. All they had to do was pay in advance to lock in a

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great price for six 40 pound bags of dry dog food for their yellow Lab puppy. One 40 pound bag would be sent every 8 weeks. They would pay for the first three bags and get the next three free.

Great idea, until the second 40 lb bag arrived one week after the first and the third 40 lb bag arrived a few days later. The Wexlers now have 120 lbs of dry dog food crammed into a closet in their small New York apartment. Duncan, their puppy, sits hopefully in front of the closet door for hours on end, dreaming of the contents. Petopia.com thoughtfully told them that they could donate their excess to charity.

An email to Petopia went unanswered. The first phone call netted no result. Finally someone emailed to say that the remaining three bags in their order have been placed on hold until April first. But that's April Fool's Day and the outcome remains to be seen.

Failure to plan for success

What's going on? It would seem that drugemporium.com has a problem with its secure server and petopia.com has a problem with its shipping procedures. Actually it's a good bet is that they both had the same problem – they skimmed on the back ends of their sites in a rush to get online. My company and many others do a good trade in re-doing web sites that were skimmed on the first time around.

Companies that sell online need to seek out the expertise of ecommerce integrators to design and implement an intelligent infrastructure for their sites. The days of having a brother-in-law who "knows a lot about the net" design a site have gone the way of the dinosaur. The ecommerce stakes get higher every day and budgets must follow.

Instead of planning for success, a lot of companies throw up a site and figure they will beef up the back end once the money starts rolling in. And sometimes that happens a lot faster than anyone planned.

We are likely to continue to live with a variety of snafus caused by poor planning. The way your site can avoid these problems? Plan for success. Build a system set to grow with your business. Or pay the price later. Like poor Ester in Kentucky. And Duncan in New York City.

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Quality Dog Food Is Essential For The Health Of Dogs

By Mike Yeager

Dog food is very important for the health of dogs. It is easy to overlook it, but it is essential to pick the right dog food for your pet dog. People sometimes just pick the first dog food bag they see at the store, instead of considering what is needed for your own dog. Puppies need different types of food than mature dogs, just as different breeds of dogs also require different types of dog food. If your dog seems like it has no energy, consider switching to another type of dog food. If you are unsure what

kind to buy, you should consult your veterinarian.

Dog Food should be healthy and tasty.

If your dog does not like a certain type of dog food, do not force your dog to eat it. Instead, try to find another type of dog food that has all the vitamins that your dog needs, and your dog enjoys eating. Also, be aware that your dog's taste may change over time, and may not necessarily eat the same dog food all of its life. If it does not like its current dog food, then buy some other types of brands, and see which one is its favorite.

Mike Yeager
Publisher

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Quality Dog Food Is Essential For The Health Of Dogs
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Fraud On Credit Cards
Credit Card Fraud

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How to Gain and Retain More Customers
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