

## T3 TOOLS FOR TOUGH TIMES

To survive in this troubled economy, owners and leaders are looking for tried-and-true resources to help in key aspects of their business. Based on patterns and trends that partners at Platinum Group see daily in many different businesses, this "Tools for Tough Times" column showcases common needs and a variety of tools that can be applied to help address these needs.

## "How can e-Commerce help my business?"

During tough economic times, small companies are looking for new revenue streams but are uncertain about how e-Commerce can work for them. Online strategy is becoming more mainstream and accessible, but owners tend to view it with hesitancy. Any company that does not have current experience with online selling should definitely take advantage of this strategy to grow sales, according to Darin Lynch, a member of Platinum Group and CEO of Platinum's online strategy firm — Irish Titan. Thoughtful e-Commerce, and overall online strategy can help improve business performance across all channels.

### Challenges:

- Many owners hesitate to try e-Commerce because of the time and cost, in addition to the uncertainty of how it works.
- Small companies usually do not have internal design and/or technology resources, which limits their thinking to basic website design and usage, and limited marketing opportunities.
- A common mistake is not understanding how the web site fits into a company's broader, overall business strategy.

All marketing and sales activities — online and off-line — need to be integrated for greater e-Commerce success. Tools available to help jumpstart the process:

- 1** – Assess your e-Commerce readiness with this e-Commerce Readiness Assessment. [Click here](#)
- 2** – Get answers to common questions by joining an e-Commerce group through Linked-In, the online social networking group. See questions that others are asking and then ask your own. Three groups to check out:
  - e-Commerce Network
  - e-Commerce Solutions
  - e-Commerce Experts
- 3** – Learn how others are successfully using e-Commerce in their businesses by reading trade magazines, such as [www.InternetRetailer.com](http://www.InternetRetailer.com) and [www.WebSitemagazine.com](http://www.WebSitemagazine.com).
- 4** – Increase your understanding on the basics of e-Commerce by reading *eBusiness, A Beginner's Guide*. [Click here](#)

