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Retail Publicity Online Creates Third Party Credibility and Foot Traffic

PIC Corp.'s new resource website comes equipped with free and easy-to-use advertising and public relations tools for store managers and individual owners of retail stores carrying PIC products. One of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reach customers is by building and maintaining a consistent online presence to complement your store.

Developing an online presence is a cost effective way to open up another channel to customers. When you hear the term multi-channel, it means selling to customers via more than just a brick and mortar store using tactics like catalogs and online shopping carts. According to Forrester Research:

- **Multi-channel customers spend more than single channel customers**
- **Multi-channel customers spent \$100 billion in offline spending after researching purchases in 2004**
- **53% of retailers identify multi-channel customers as more profitable shopping across channels**
- **Multi-channel customers defect from brands at a 50% rate**

There are many ways in which to do this, some of them obvious. However, more important than where you post is how, why and when. Consistency is important. If you start to communicate online, do it at a regular and comfortable pace, but do not stop. Ignoring consistency degrades your credibility.

Here are some effective and simple suggestions for communicating online:

Develop an opt-in email marketing campaign

You can collect emails via your website, ask people to provide them (voluntarily) when checking out or offer special discounts to subscribers. However you develop your database, use it to reach customers at regular intervals. Over time, you'll develop a database of loyal followers that look to the store for buying advice. Attaching this database to good quality email software like myEmma or Constant Contact is preferred.

Drive people to your site

Add content to your site on a regular basis and make people go there for more information. For example, if you are offering a two-for one deal on PIC Fly Ribbon and an ad appears in the local penny saver, add a line that encourages people to go to your site to get an extra 10% off coupon. The idea here is to get people going to your site as regularly as you'd have them coming to your store.

Establish many reciprocal links

Reciprocal links are sites that link back to yours and vice-versa. These drive people to your site and allow for other channels of communication to customers. Nowadays, you see many people and organizations doing this with Facebook and Twitter sites, but for local retail stores blogs, local newspaper sites and other community forums are crucial reciprocal links. For example, a link on a local shopping blog can provide much needed eyes on your website as well as provide another forum for you to share store information with regular customers. Also, you will find that brands, like PIC, that you provide in the store will also have online resources you may leverage.

Leverage your online shopping experience

By having both an online and in-store (or, multi-channel) buying presence, you are more likely to engage loyal customers. If you are privately-owned or part of a franchise, no doubt you have access to an online shopping cart feature or at least a means of providing visitors with sales and coupon information. You know that more customers are shopping online, use this appeal to pull customers into your store asking for profitable brands.

PIC has backed its resource site with a group of marketers that can help you navigate through some of these uncharted areas of communication. There is no cost or obligation necessary to take advantage of its advice.

**For more information visit <http://www.healthyhome-smartsolutions.org>.
PIC marketing support can be reached by phone at: (877) 678-8577**