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INDUSTRY INNOVATOR PACKS WWW PUNCH INTO LOCAL BIZ

MyTireMonkey.com wields the world-wide scope of the web to support local retail dealers and streamline the online tire buying experience

EDENTON, N.C. – Jan. 12, 2010 – While the Internet offers access to virtually every type of merchandise, some products' distant origins translate into high shipping rates and late delivery dates for consumers as well as lost revenue for consumers' communities.

But what if the Internet functioned as an e-sourcing tool to locate desired items within a consumer's own neighborhood and thus supported local businesses?

With the help of MyTireMonkey.com, it actually does.

The leading online tire wholesaler has developed a revolutionary business model harnessing the power of the World Wide Web to connect shoppers with tire distributors and retail dealers local to them. For consumers, the resulting network means even cheaper online tire prices, abbreviated delivery dates and absolutely no shipping fees. For distributors and dealers, it means a steady supply of Internet business they wouldn't normally have.

"From the start, we knew we had to focus on improving the tire buying experience if we wanted to have a long-term sustainable advantage over our competitors," said Tully Ryan, president and CEO of Edenton, North Carolina-based MyTireMonkey.com. "So we built our model to complement and support local tire distribution companies and local retail installation centers."

Competing Internet wholesalers miss the mark by ignoring existing distributor-dealer relationships and established shipping routes. Instead, they rely on distribution warehouses located well outside a consumer's community and haphazardly ship tires across the country, making delivery slow and expensive. Often, the order arrives on the consumer's doorstep instead of a neighborhood retail shop already commissioned to perform the installation. The consumer then faces the awkward situation of arranging installation through a shop they didn't order the tires from.

But when a consumer uses MyTireMonkey.com to select tires from a distribution company near them, virtual "monkeys" identify partnerships between that distributor and area dealers. The monkeys then help the consumer select a compatible retail shop where the tires will be promptly delivered and installed. Not only does the consumer benefit from a streamlined tire buying experience but they can feel good about boosting local businesses.

"It makes sense to buy locally for several reasons including convenience and supporting the local economy," said Tom Fisher, special projects coordinator at Delphos, Ohio-based K&M Tire. "Everybody goes to the Web for everything now whether it be for information, whether it be for purchases – you name it. Their first reference now is the Web. So MyTireMonkey.com is a great way for us and our retail dealer customers to reach the end user: the Internet consumer."

K&M Tire is just one of nearly 90 distribution centers to join MyTireMonkey.com since the network's December 2008 launch. MyTireMonkey.com currently encompasses more than 1,600 retail dealers, and enthusiastic members like K&M Tire are encouraging additional retail dealers to sign up as well.

"Partnering with MyTireMonkey.com has added dollars to our already existing sales footprint in the area we deliver to," Fisher said. "It's tires we most likely would not have delivered to these installers (but for) the MyTireMonkey.com orders that have come in."

In addition to tire installation fees from consumers, retail dealers receive a delivery fee from MyTireMonkey.com. More importantly, however, the dealers earn an opportunity to attract a long-term customer.

"Once MyTireMonkey.com gets the customer in the shop, it's the retail dealer's responsibility to keep the customer for life for other services they provide like brakes and alignment work," Fisher said.

A dedication to customer relations and customer service also sets MyTireMonkey.com apart from competitors, said Brooks Harris, wholesale marketing manager for S&S Tire. The Lexington, Kentucky-based distribution company joined the monkey network in the fall.

"We honestly feel that through this channel and MyTireMonkey.com's network we can get tires to consumers quicker than competing online wholesalers while offering a level of service after the sale that's totally different from those competitors," Harris said. "The competitors really have no level of service past the sale, in my opinion."

Ryan believes the secret to the monkey empire's success is easily identifiable.

"A lot of people ask us how we've grown so quickly, and the answer is really simple: We've taken advantage of the natural value propositions the local supply chain has to offer while simultaneously providing the best customer service possible," he said.

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