

For Immediate Release

## **Ability Commerce Finds Opportunities for Direct Marketers to Improve Their Ecommerce Sites**

Delray Beach, FL, January 27, 2009 – During the past 6 months, Ability Commerce reviewed and scored more than 56 ecommerce websites for direct marketing companies. Sites were scored in 8 best practice areas including: index-ability, home page best practices, organic ranking, title and Meta description tags, internal site search, linking, site stickiness, and cart functionality. Several common themes emerged, showing opportunities for direct marketers to beef up their ecommerce sites.

One area the sites needed to improve was the internal site search function. Only 2 of the 56 sites reviewed provided suggested search terms as users were typing their keywords into the search box. 68% did a poor or very poor job of addressing common synonyms, misspellings and plural/singular variations. Only 28% had strong zero-results pages (the pages returned when no results are found.) “Improving internal site search functionality is a great way to increase site conversions,” said Terry Jukes, President of Ability Commerce. “Your customers are telling you what they want; you just need to listen to them.”

The online shopping cart was another area that lagged behind best practices. 41% of the sites did not have a perpetual shopping cart and emptied their shoppers’ carts as soon as they left the site. Only 36% offered a guest checkout option, while 64% required shoppers to create an account before checking out. Checkout options were limited to credit card only on 70% of the reviewed sites. “Online shoppers have come to expect more than just a standard checkout process,” stated Anna Slyter, Marketing Project Manager at Ability Commerce, “they want convenience and options.”

Strong search engine optimization was lacking on many sites. 27% had poor or non-existent Title tags, 70% had poor or non-existent Meta description tags and 39% either did not use, or poorly used, alt attributes. Less than 45% of the sites had strongly optimized keywords in their top or left navigation. “If customers cannot find you, they cannot buy your products,” added Slyter.

73% of the sites did not offer customer product reviews or ratings. “With all the studies emphasizing the importance of customer reviews for increasing conversions, we were surprised at how few sites offered them,” added Jukes. “The coming year will prove challenging for direct marketers. Providing all the ecommerce functionality their shoppers demand will prove the difference between success and failure.”

###

### About Ability Commerce

Ability Commerce ([www.abilitycommerce.com](http://www.abilitycommerce.com)) designs ecommerce software and solutions to meet the specific needs of catalogers and direct marketers. Together with their parent company, Marketing Concepts, they employ more than 120 staff members with offices in Delray Beach, Florida and Spicer, Minnesota.