

Trend Spotting in Today's Online Retail Industry with CSN Stores

With the economy affecting shopping behavior on a weekly basis, **trend spotting** in today's online retail industry has become more difficult than ever. To make it easy, CSN Stores, the third largest online retailer for home goods, recently analyzed over 200 of its e-boutiques to help target and unearth the very latest shopping trends.

With over 50 category-specific specialists that monitor these sites, which include Cookware.com, Luggage.com, Bedrooms.com, TVStands.com, Strollers.com, and many more, CSN has the advanced tracking technology to detect, discover, and analyze trends across the entire home shopping landscape. Recently, we asked our experts to spotlight the hottest, most relevant trends in shopping behavior today. Here's what the CSN specialists discovered:



1. More Telecommuting = More Home Offices. Employment experts estimate that nearly 50 percent of companies are considering telecommuting options this year. Coupling this trend with a major increase in layoffs, it's easy to see why the home office category has skyrocketed over the past six months on CSN sites. Desk gear, ergonomic accessories, organizers and home storage options have been very popular. In some cases, sales have doubled. Recently, the Associated Press quoted CSN Stores' Office Furniture Expert, Joe Noonan, in a feature about home office makeovers: "We've seen that people with shrinking budgets, who can't afford to remodel elsewhere in the house, are instead upgrading a home office. Or they're turning an extra room into one."



2. Gardening to Save on Groceries. One solution to riding out the recession may exist right in our own backyards. Following in the footsteps of Michelle Obama's new White House vegetable garden, consumers are starting to grow their own food to help cut grocery costs. Vegetable seed sales are up as much as 30 percent this year, some experts say, and CSN has seen a significant spike in gardening and outdoor tool sales.



3. Do-It-Yourself Revolution. The DIY trend has been hot for the past decade, but is now evolving into an all-out revolution. “Instead of hiring a handyman for quick fixes and renovations many people are tackling projects small and large on their own, to eliminate labor costs,” says Mike Beaulieu, CSN Stores’ DIY Expert. To meet this demand, CSN recently added 60,000 new tools to CSNSupply.com and launched FlooringSelect.com, a site where you can order new hardwood or laminate floors.



4. The Cash-Saving Camp-cation. For families looking to save this summer, camping is an affordable and appealing summer vacation alternative. Experts say the camping trend jumped 7.4 percent in popularity last year, and continues to be a great way to stay connected with family. “To help get you started around the campfire, CSN has added more camping items to its already extensive list of outdoor essentials,” says Melissa Hammer, CSN Stores’ Outdoor Expert.



5. Tattoo Your Walls with Tapestries and Art. Mood-elevating and comforting tapestries, as well as 3-D art have seen a huge spike in popularity this year on CSN sites, including TheWallArtStore.com. “These items offer consumers an affordable way to tailor rooms to match their personalities, without undertaking a complete and costly room makeover,” says Katie Crowell, CSN Stores’ Wall Art Expert.



6. Say Hello To Yellow. Pantone, the color industry's trend-setter, has declared yellow '09's "in" color. Décor mavens and manufacturers have embraced the trend and shoppers have followed suit, especially when it comes to kitchenware, luggage, and home/office accessories. The goal is to encourage smiles and laughter during tough times with bright, mood-elevating tones and hues.



7. Spring Greening with Eco-Friendly Finds. Meeting the demand for 'green' ideas, CSN recently added hundreds of new eco-friendly finds from toilet seats to trash compactors to its offerings. Many shoppers are choosing options that will make homes more environmentally friendly immediately, while helping them save money in the long-run.