



## **IMshopping Opens Merchant Answers Platform to all Online Retailers.**

*Twenty pilot customers see improvements in conversions and organic traffic*

SANTA CLARA, Calif (September XX, 2009) - Today, IMshopping, a human-assisted shopping recommendation platform, is announcing the general availability of its Merchants Answers service to all online retailers. Any retailer wishing to add a shopping community to their site can now easily sign up at <http://merchants.imshopping.com>.

IMshopping is also announcing that twenty retailers have already launched Merchant Answers service on their websites as a way to increase sale conversions, drive new visitors and offer a better shopping experience online. Retailers such as BargainCell, AMB Furniture and Rainbow Appliance have all created shopping communities powered by IMshopping on their sites.

IMshopping customers realize the importance of human assisted shopping as a key differentiator for this holiday shopping season, where social media and human recommendations are playing an increasing role in shopping purchasing decisions. According to Harris Interactive, 4 in 5 adults who have purchased items online in the last six months (77%) say they would be interested in getting help from a real person before making certain online purchases. However, over 4 in 5 (82%) say there have been times when they have not been able to get help from a real person. Over half of those who haven't been able to get the help they needed from a real person say it's affected their decision to not purchase the product.

### **Leveraging community for pre-sales and organic traffic – How It Works:**

IMshopping Merchant Answers allows customers to ask shopping questions directly on e-tailers' sites via a lightweight widget that appears on any page. Each question is then routed to shopping guides for an answer. Guides can be employees of the e-tailer or recruited from IMshopping's own community of shopping guides. Next, customers quickly receive real answers to their questions with embedded product recommendations. IMshopping's back-end tools make it easy to integrate merchant product catalogs and attach relevant products that fit customers' needs. Customers benefit from a personalized shopping experience and e-tailers are able to convert more customers into buyers. Additionally, the question and answer format creates valuable user-generated content that drives additional organic traffic beyond the initial customer inquiry.

It is also proven that positive customer service experiences yield greater sales. A recent survey from the Society for New Communications Research shows 74% of consumers agree that they choose companies and brands based on what others say online about their customer service experiences.

"After integrating IMshopping on our site, we immediately saw a spike in conversions to purchases," said Jacob Maslow, VP of Marketing for Rainbow Appliance (<http://www.rainbowappliance.com>), one of the largest retail suppliers of household appliances in the US. "This summer season was a critical one for us, and IMshopping helped us compete with the big guys – Amazon and New Egg. We've had our best summer season yet, thanks to IMshopping."



“In just three months we've seen increasing demand for our B2B Merchant Answers platform, proving that consumers want human help when shopping online,” said IMshopping CEO and Founder, Prashant Nedungadi. “With more retailers recognizing the value of human assistance and social media, IMshopping’s easy-to-use customer support platform is core to their revenue models. They’re noticing improved results while saving on costs to support pre-sales efforts.”

Retailers can take a quick look at what the IMshopping widget would look like on their site by visiting the IMshopping demo at: <http://www.imshopping.com/widgetdemo.action?url=<Enter Your Site URL here>>

#### About IMshopping

IMshopping brings a human touch to shopping on the Web. We make finding products easier with the help of real people who search out deals, read reviews and share this valuable information with you and the greater community. The company's Merchant Answers service helps online retailers convert shoppers into buyers, drive additional organic traffic, recruit shopping experts for pre-sales assistance, and connect with their customers through social media like Twitter. The company is based Santa Clara, California and is backed by SK Telecom.