

# Small Business News & Notes



## Online Retailer Gives A Boost To Small Businesses

(NAPSA)—In the business world, an opportunity can sometimes come from an unlikely source. Recently, for instance, a major online retailer has taken steps to create opportunities for smaller stores.

### A Troubling Trend

While the success of “big-box” and online retailers has been a boon for employees and shoppers, not all businesses have benefited.

In fact, many believe that the success and growth of chain stores has, in many cases, come at the expense of the smaller brick-and-mortar retailers whose market is much smaller.

Historically, these smaller businesses have been part of America’s economic backbone, but the presence of big-box retailers in an area can often be linked to a decrease in the number of small businesses in that location. Given the big role that small businesses have usually played in economic recoveries, many see this trend as a troubling one.

### A Revolution On Main Street

In 2010, Patrick Byrne, CEO of online retailer Overstock.com, decided to do something about the state of business on Main Street. The result is what he calls the Main Street Revolution initiative. He describes it as an effort to give small businesses that sell handcrafted products access to millions of his company’s loyal online customers.

Said Byrne, “It’s in everybody’s best interest to see that small businesses not only survive, but thrive. Our economic recovery depends on it. That’s what our



**A number of smaller brick-and-mortar stores are getting access to customers thanks to an online retailer.**

Main Street Revolution initiative is attempting to accomplish.”

Mariana Schechter is one such “revolutionary” success story. While on vacation in Southeast Asia, Schechter came upon a unique style of handcrafted furniture made entirely of old, weathered boat wood. Upon her return to the U.S., she launched a business that imports reclaimed Indonesian boat wood for use in her own furniture line, which she calls Ecologica.

### Access To Loyal Customers

Ecologica maintains a Los Angeles-area showroom, but most of its sales now come via the Main Street Revolution initiative. Access to Overstock’s customer base has led to impressive growth, and today, the company employs 10 workers. Said Schechter, “Overstock.com’s Main Street Revolution changed my business.”

To learn more about the initiative, go to [www.overstock.com/MainStreet](http://www.overstock.com/MainStreet).