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**NEW ONLINE MARKETPLACE SPOTLIGHTS SMALL BUSINESSES, FUELS  
CONSUMER MOVEMENT TO BUY FROM INDEPENDENTS AND LOCALS**

*Shustir.com gives local retailers and service businesses customizable, no cost, virtual storefronts optimized for search*

*For consumers, a one-stop destination to buy from and interact with small businesses, in town or across the country*

**BROOKLYN, NY, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009** – Generating some \$1 trillion in annual revenue, small businesses will prove vital to healing the economy. Starting today, consumers can more easily find those businesses on the web, fueling a growing movement to buy from the independent merchants, entrepreneurs, start-ups and professional services providers that drive innovation and still put customers first.

Enter Shustir.com (<http://www.shustir.com>). Though live just today, Shustir.com is an already-thriving, online marketplace enabling small business owners to sell their goods and services, and interact meaningfully with consumers and one another. Developed by two women – former Lehman Brothers colleagues – Shustir.com gives budget-conscious, time-strapped business owners the space and tools to build contemporary virtual storefronts, and a clean search interface and optimization tools so consumers can find them. It requires zero investment and minimal time to capture the attention and dollars of consumers in their towns, and far beyond.

Shustir.com helps small businesses harness web marketing power formerly not in their grasp, helping reverse an unfair disadvantage. Recent research from WebVisible Inc. and Nielsen Online found 44 percent of small business owners don't have a web site. That's a shame, since 92 percent of regularly online consumers surveyed said web research led them to buy something locally.

The idea comes at the right moment – one that despite the recession is seeing online retail sales increase by as much as 19 percent year-over-year, according to IMRG. Making it easier for consumers to find and buy from the small merchants so dramatically underrepresented on the web stands to amplify those numbers and their economic effects.

**Fueling a Movement**

Shustir.com is the brainchild of Shu Kim and Khanh Pham, former Lehman Brothers colleagues who in rethinking their career spotted a nascent trend: consumers choosing to

purchase from small businesses, keeping money in local communities and reaping the rewards of finer products and service.

“With Shustir.com, we’re in essence knitting together many local efforts to support small business into a thriving national movement, through a marketplace that lets you discover and vote your dollars to independent merchants around the block, across town or on the opposite coast,” said Kim.

Those small businesses are critical to the recovery. The 2006 U.S. Census found non-employers or businesses with no employees comprise 78 percent of all U.S. businesses, and that non-employer businesses generated nearly \$1 trillion of receipts. What’s more, up to 80 percent of those dollars are returned to small business owners’ own communities, according to various studies.

“We knew we’d struck a chord when thousands of businesses volunteered to set up storefronts right away, upon just learning about our concept,” said Pham. “What we thought would be the toughest part of building Shustir.com turned out to be one of the simplest. That was proof of concept for us -- evidence of how small businesses have been yearning for better web presence and marketing power.”

### **How Shustir.com Works – For Small Businesses, For Consumers**

There is no cost to design, host, maintain or market a Shustir.com storefront. Simply join the site, and follow a few easy steps. In an hour or less, your business has an optimized web presence, more easily located through not only the Shustir.com marketplace, but through Google and other major search engines. Members can log on anytime to add or edit content and photos, respond to a consumer’s comment or question, update their blog, check their fan status (*a la* Facebook friends) – even upload a virtual video tour of their store or products. E-commerce functionality is available at a modest \$25 monthly fee.

Shustir.com can also eliminate the need for an actual brick and mortar space for entrepreneurs just starting out, offering a no-cost, thriving marketplace to test a business idea. Pham added, “Today’s economy is giving many pause, whether by choice or not, to consider an entrepreneurial Plan B. Shustir.com gives you the tools to reinvent and market your professional self.” In that way, Kim and Pham see Shustir as kind of a Web 2.0 successor to pioneers like eBay, which made fortunes for small businesses by delivering dollars through a virtual door.

The Shustir.com homepage is a clean, easy to use gateway for consumers. Simply click on one of the more than 25 major categories listed on the left side – everything from *Automotive*, to *Legal & Accounting*, to *Wedding* – or just enter a location. All applicable listings culled from Shustir.com member businesses then appear, each clickable to reach a virtual storefront. Or simply enter a search term into the homepage’s upper right-side box and see results from Shustir.com members everywhere.

Businesses opting for the site's e-commerce functionality stand to easily recoup their \$25 monthly investment, as Shustir will pass through all revenues from Google AdSense advertising right through to the owners of storefronts on which ads are placed.

Shustir.com will earn revenue from the \$25 monthly optional e-commerce subscriptions and sale of display advertising.

For more information about setting up a virtual storefront or advertising on Shustir.com, please visit [www.shustir.com](http://www.shustir.com), or email [contact@shustir.com](mailto:contact@shustir.com).

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