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Dear dsmBUZZ Community,

Happy New Year and cheers to things looking up in 2009!

Several months of soul searching and cerebral workouts have culminated in a plan for some changes in the dsmBUZZ program for 2009. This letter is meant to let both merchants and consumers know the details, and replaces the quarterly newsletter which will resume in electronic format with the summer issue.

The primary goal for dsmBUZZ will still be encouraging consumers to buy locally owned in central Iowa but with new energy. Here is an overview of the “state of Buzz” and a call to action.

**The major change:**

The “perk” piece of dsmBUZZ will be phased out in 2009. The idea of selling the dsmBUZZ card to consumers to generate traffic, and help offset the costs of maintaining the site has turned out to be a distraction from the primary mission. The program has created more of an administrative challenge than anticipated too. For those who have purchased memberships, the merchants will honor those perks throughout the remaining time of the membership, but going forward no further dsmBUZZ cards will be sold. This will make way to change the focus on my end and the expectations of what is working for the benefit of everyone.

***The Shop Locally On-Line Focus.***

This means that merchants can sell items on the site and there will only be a 10% commission for anything sold via BUZZ. All I would need from the merchant is photos, descriptions, prices and the typical shipping cost. I ask you to consider doing this if it is

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a good fit for you as a business. If you have an online space this will increase your reach. If not, it's a way to test the online sales without the pain and expense.

**Non-profits will be able to sell products or services commission FREE!**  
This will help the nonprofits and also create a more robust shopping experience.

## **dsmBUZZ gift certificates available.**

These gift certificates are branded with the dsmBUZZ moniker and a thanks for shopping locally owned. I'll write in your name, the amount of purchase, and an expiration date. Gift certificates sold via dsmBUZZ will generate a 10% commission. If this is a good fit for your business please contact me about being included on the list of merchants on Shop Locally OnLine.

## **Education Focus**

The *American Independent Business Alliance* recently sent out a release stating that "buy local" programs do help bolster the local business community. I think there is a value in aligning merchants across neighborhoods, chambers, and communities here in central Iowa.

Going forward I'll spend my time working on content toward spreading the value of locally owned and bolstering the local economy. We are having an impact, recently for example, dsmBUZZ was included as a featured blog on the Des Moines Register. This means that any content created will be posted there as well!

## **BIG NEWS: dsmBUZZ will have a booth at the Natural Living Expo event.**

The Natural Living Expo will be held March 28 and 29 at the Polk County Convention Center. dsmBUZZ is going to have a booth there! If you would like me to have some of your items for sale or information about you, please contact me and we'll make arrangements. [Sherry@dsmBUZZ.com](mailto:Sherry@dsmBUZZ.com)

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**Call to Action:**

**Please spread the word.**

dsmBUZZ is grassroots so spread the word to other merchants. As I grow my business Storied Gifts I would value any mention of dsmBUZZ to other merchants as a tremendous help. It should be even easier for businesses to join now that the perk is not involved.

**Please consider selling an item or two on Shop Locally OnLine and let me know if you would like to participate in gift certificates sold via buzz.**

**Please let your non-profit contacts know about the opportunity to sell their products via buzz commission free.**

**Provide me an update of your status.** What's new? Where are you at in your business? You can send me an email to [sherry@dsmbuzz.com](mailto:sherry@dsmbuzz.com).

Thanks so much for your help and support whether you've done so as a merchant or as a consumer. In gratitude to participating merchants I'll be mailing out this letter with the new decal included shortly. Future merchants that join will be able to get these cool new decals for \$5.

I'm very excited and re-energized about the new direction of dsmBUZZ this year and so grateful for the opportunity to know so many wonderful small business owners and individuals. We all rock and together help create a more sustainable local economy.

Sherry Borzo  
Dsmbuzzer for life  
[sherry@dsmbuzz.com](mailto:sherry@dsmbuzz.com)  
515.274.6703