Dear CPOnline Merchant,

Integrated Ecommerce is a significant part of the value proposition we offer. When CPOnline was first released, it was ahead of its time. There were no other retail technology solution providers offering an integrated solution.

Fast forward to today ... there are still no other retail technology solution providers offering a fully integrated solution. There are, however, many providers offering robust Ecommerce engines. Over the last several months, the CPOnline team has taken a very hard look at our business and the value we offer you. The result of our analysis was very clear -- the value we can add is in the integration. We can utilize a powerful open source Ecommerce engine and focus all of our efforts on a seamless, valuable, tight integration.

Later this year, we will introduce a completely new Ecommerce solution. This new Ecommerce solution will be based on one of the top Ecommerce products available today with approximately 110,000 sites in operation. The product is open source, which allows us to fully support your needs. In addition, it is so feature rich that we will be able to focus our attention on activities that add considerable value to your business such as: improving integration with CounterPoint SQL, reducing the amount of time you spend managing Ecommerce, and adding capabilities that take your online stores beyond what your competitors can offer.

We're certain this change is going to be a major step forward in our Ecommerce offering, and we understand it will take some time for you to digest and contemplate what this means for your business. To help you get comfortable with this new direction as quickly as possible, we've created an FAQ (below) that we think will answer most of your questions. You'll notice there are some questions that we don't fully answer. We sincerely apologize for that, but we feel that you deserve to know this important information now rather than wait until we have an answer to every question. We want you to be able to make the most informed decision possible as you plan your Ecommerce strategy for 2012 and beyond.

Sincerely,
The CPOnline Team
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What Ecommerce product will you use?

We have chosen to base our Ecommerce offering on the Magento Ecommerce product. Magento is open source and has approximately 110,000 users worldwide. It is currently the 3rd largest Ecommerce solution in use today and is growing very rapidly. You can find out more about Magento at www.magentocommerce.com or by searching YouTube or Google for "magento". Note that there are multiple versions of Magento ranging in price from free to $13,000/yr in licensing fees for the Enterprise version. We plan to use the free open source version and add advanced features ourselves to save you the extra $1,000/mo in software licensing fees.

2. When will the new Ecommerce product be available?

We expect to have our new hosting environment operational in Q3 of 2012.

3. Can I move sooner than Q3 2012?

As you can imagine we are extremely busy getting our new hosting environment set up and everyone trained on the new platform. In addition, until we have our new environment and processes in place, on-boarding a new site will be resource intensive. Therefore, we will not be able to help you move from CPOnline to the new Ecommerce solution sooner than Q3 2012. However, the new Ecommerce integration agent (the software that will allow CounterPoint SQL to talk to Magento) will be ready sooner than Q3 2012. It is possible we could make this software available before we are ready to start hosting sites if we can work out some technical details. We will not be able to offer a high level of support or help in migrating and running your site until we have our new data center up and running.

4. How will the new Ecommerce offering be priced?

We do not have details yet but fully expect to change the way we charge for Ecommerce. The current pricing scheme bundles all charges into a single metric based on bandwidth and number of delivered orders. We understand this makes it difficult to compare our prices with other solutions and can cause confusion. Our goal in developing the new pricing scheme is to charge a fair price that is easy to understand. We want you to be happy with the value you are getting for the price you are paying.

5. Will my site be automatically moved to the new Ecommerce platform?

Our goal will be to make moving to the new Ecommerce platform as simple as we can make it, but it is not possible for us to fully automate the process. We will provide tools and step-by-step instructions to help get you through the transition quickly but we want you involved so that you have a good understanding of the new Ecommerce platform.
6. Will I be required to move to the new Ecommerce platform?

No. If you are happy with CPOnline today there is no reason to move. We have no plans to tear down the CPOnline environment currently in place. However, you must understand that our focus going forward is the new environment. We have no plans to continue adding new features to the current environment. That being said, we will continue to strive for maximum uptime and performance for your CPOnline environments, particularly during peak season -- this will not change.

7. Will feature X be available in the new Ecommerce platform?

The new platform has many features not available in the standard CPOnline product today. Here are just a few of them:

- Layered navigation
- Item- and Category-specific promo codes
- HTML transactional emails
- Ratings & reviews
- Shared wish lists
- Product comparisons
- Recently viewed items
- "View All" link on thumbnail pages
- Downloadable products
- Ship to multiple addresses

8. Can I use the new Ecommerce integration software if I don’t host my site with you?

We are working out the details of how we might be able to offer this as an option.

9. Will you continue to work on customizations for CPOnline?

Yes we will. Our goal is to put you in the best position to be successful. It is possible that a feature requiring customization in CPOnline is already available in the new Ecommerce platform. If that is the case we will work with you to determine the most cost effective course of action -- customize CPOnline or move to the new platform.

10. Should I continue to invest in customizations for an existing CPOnline store?

This is a difficult question and one that only you can answer. The answer will be different for each CPOnline merchant and depends on factors such as cost of the customization, amount of time you expect to stay on CPOnline, and the extra revenue you expect the changes to bring. Our expectation is that customizations of CPOnline will taper off between now and Q3 2012.
11. Will existing CPOnline customizations port over to the new Ecommerce solution?

Possibly. One of the reasons we decided to go in this new direction is that many customizations we have written in the past are offered as standard features in Magento. Additionally, Magento has a very active community of developers that have built free and paid extensions that add additional features to Magento. We estimate that about 90% of the customizations we have developed for CPOnline are either available as a standard feature in Magento or as an existing extension. Finally, Magento has a very robust extension API that will allow us to customize it in the event it doesn't offer the functionality needed as a standard part of the product.

12. Will the new Ecommerce product work with both CounterPoint SQL and CounterPoint V7?

While we will support older versions of CounterPoint SQL using the existing interface files, we do not plan to support CounterPoint V7. The V7 version of CounterPoint is nearing end of life and we are focusing all of our attention on the current version of CounterPoint SQL.