



Press Release

Consumer portal protects The Uttermost Company's distribution Channel

For immediate Release

Rocky Mount, Virginia and Plymouth, Massachusetts – The Uttermost Company, an industry leader in wall décor and portable lighting and PLMresearch, a leading Small to Midsize Business (SMB) eBusiness consulting firm, will launch the first phase of its Internet based customer service portal system designed to facilitate the administrative needs of Uttermost's sales channel.

"The Consumer Portal is available to anyone interested in The Uttermost Company and its products, stated Mark Withington, Principal of PLMresearch. The site offers a complete, up-to-date catalog for product research and selection, a "closest Uttermost retailer" locator and answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

"We're very excited about the opportunities that the Internet poses for Uttermost, but are *not* losing sight of its limitations", stated Mac Cooper, President of the Uttermost Company. "Some companies have dabbled with going direct to the consumer", Cooper added, "*not* Uttermost. Our Consumer Portal will "push the consumer" toward our established retailers".

"PLMresearch worked very closely with us to ensure the technology protected our distribution channel", said Cooper. "We're even developing a program to offer "Internet connectors" from our Portal to our approved retailers websites".

"The Internet connectors will be a Web Service available to any Uttermost retailer, whether their site is eCommerce enabled or not", explained Withington. "Web Services link computer systems together without the need of human intervention – very much the direction that Business-to-Business (B2B) computing is heading today".

This is the first of three releases for the Portal. Future releases will offer Uttermost's retail dealers password protected access to a complete, up-to-date catalog that lists wholesale prices, useful retail selling information, access to a best sellers list, suggested complimentary items that have sold well in their region, see their sales order history/status *and* even place new orders on the factory. Finally, Uttermost's independent sales representatives will also have password-protected access to the Portal which will list their sales history as well as the sales history for each of the representative's dealers. Additional feature will include the ability to place new orders on the factory, create ad hoc "personalized" catalogs, and place Hold For Confirmation (HFC) orders.

About The Uttermost Company

The Uttermost Company is the largest manufacturer of framed mirrors servicing retail stores in the United States, and one of the largest manufacturers of framed prints, decorative plaques, oil reproductions and portable lighting. The name Uttermost is taken from Acts 1:8, and expresses both a personal belief and

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the company's marketing plan to spread the gospel and sell its products "to the uttermost parts of the earth".

Founded in 1975 by Bob and Belle Cooper, Uttermost is still 100% family owned today. Its culture is founded on the concept of mutual respect for all of its partners in business: from the person in their plant running a mitre saw to the retailer who selects and merchandises that perfect mirror, "we're all dependent on each other".

Today's Uttermost has grown to include over 300 employees at the factory in Virginia, 120 sales representatives and thousands of retail partners throughout the world. Its growth is primarily due to their commitment to three things—superior service to retailers, maximizing the value of its products, and treating its employees and sales representatives as partners in business.

About PLMresearch

PLMresearch assists midsize enterprises evaluate, design and deploy cost effective eBusiness initiatives - Internet technology that automates their current inter-business processes.

PLMresearch works with its clients to help them understand how the Internet can leverage their current internal IT systems such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Materials Resource Planning (MRP), to accelerate sales and marketing channels, promote product design collaboration, foster materials sourcing and facilitate supply chain management.

PLMresearch is a privately held company founded by Mark Withington in 2000. It is a virtual organization of principles whose background covers application, database and web design, security, systems administration, and business process consulting.

The company is a strong advocate of the open source¹ movement and is a frequent contributor to the foundries and forums of the packages that it uses. It feels that the flexibility and low cost that open source provides *promotes* vendor independence and therefore reinforces PLMresearch's position as a trusted technical advisor to its clients.

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¹ Open source refers to a development and distribution model that promotes design stability and cost by making a software program's source code – the "human-readable" computer code before it is compiled into "machine code" - freely available to outside programmers. This process fosters "global collaboration" amongst developers, allowing them to critique the code and contribute their own enhancements and bug fixes.