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What's
Inside

New Products at Direct Link

[See page 2 for details](#)

Customer Appreciation

[See page 3 for details](#)

Do your customers use Firefox? What you should know.

[See Page 3 for details](#)

Voice Over IP Should you switch?

[See page 4 for details](#)

The Technology Advisor

Don't Get Ripped Off By A Rebate!

Think you're getting a great deal thanks to that unbelievable rebate?
Think again...

The offers are irresistible but misleading; retailers advertise after-rebate prices on hardware and software to grab your attention and get you to buy. But are you really getting the bargain you expect?

They're Counting On You To Forget

According to the NPD Group, a global market research firm, almost one-third of all computer products and twenty percent of all consumer electronics are sold with a rebate. Manufacturers use rebates as an easy way to offer discounts without actually having to take the full financial hit; that's because **thirty to fifty percent of the buyers never attempt to redeem them and therefore end up paying full price for the merchandise.**

Multiple Hoops, More Hassle

But they're not just counting on you to forget. To further tip the scales in their favor of not having to make good on their promise, some manufacturers and retailers are imposing **impossible restrictions**, complicating the process to request a rebate, **delaying payments**, and **creating other barriers** that make it difficult to get your money. **All of these are delaying tactics to get you to give up the good fight.**

Will These New Rules and Regulations Protect You?

With consumer complaints to the FTC and Better Business Bureau piling up, regulators have tightened the rules around advertising rebates.

Last year, the FTC settled its first dispute with a Dallas-based CompUSA store for knowingly advertising rebates from computer peripherals manufacturer Qps Inc., even though they knew this manufacturer wasn't fulfilling on the rebates advertised.

After this settlement, **CompUSA was not only required to advertise the time frame for securing the rebates advertised, but also had to take financial responsibility for any rebates not paid during the promised time frame.**

Event though the government is on your side, getting stuck in the middle of a rebate war is very frustrating and a huge waste of time. If you are going to try and cash-in on a rebate, **here are some tips that will help.**

5 Ways To Get The Rebate Check You Were Promised

1. Follow the rebate instructions carefully. **Many manufacturers will reject a rebate over a tiny technicality.** That means reading the small print and following the instructions to the letter.
2. **Make a copy of all the paperwork, receipts, and documents before mailing them off.** Some manufactures may request the original receipt; if you mail in your only copy, **you could be out of luck if it gets "lost" in the mail.** Which brings me to tip #3...
3. **Mail your rebate via certified mail to have proof of delivery.**
4. Schedule a reminder to yourself to **call the company if your rebate doesn't show up within the time frame promised.** Most companies will have a website or toll-free number to call to track your rebate.
5. **If the manufacturer rejects your rebate or is holding your check, let them know you plan on contacting the FTC or the Better Business Bureau. Ask the people you speak to for their names and ask to speak to their supervisor.**

As a final word of advice, only purchase things you can afford without the rebate. Many rebates take months to process.

Exciting New Products at Direct Link

The Technology Advisor

The Denzel TP420-Sx

Intel® Viiv™ technology is a revolutionary new technology inside of PCs that enhances your digital entertainment experiences.

Home theater meets home computer.

Experience breathtaking high-definition video and up to 7.1 surround sound with easy access to your entire library of digital photos and PC games— all from the comfort of your couch.

Massive Media Storage

The Denzel system boasts **1.2 Terabyte** of internal storage upgradeable to **2 Terabytes**. One of the most exciting features of digital media is the ability to store and organize it in one place. Some types of media, like music, movie, and HDTV content require large amounts of storage space. Two hours of HDTV content takes up to 18GB of disk space. In addition, the it is equipped with a **Dual Layer DVD drive** which means you can burn up to 8.7GB of content on a single removable DVD disk. The Denzel TP420-Si supports high speed external storage devices via a second gigabyte Ethernet port and two FireWire 800 ports **so your media library never needs to be limited by storage restrictions**. Inteset has several RAID configurations available with up to 1.3 Terabytes of usable RAIDed internal storage.

Dual Display Capable

The Denzel is equipped with two independent video outputs. **This means that you can be browsing the Internet on one screen while watching HDTV on another.** Or, you could work on a spreadsheet while watching your favorite movie. **You can slide content from one screen to another.** Video outputs support a variety of connection interfaces including DVI, VGA, component, and S-Video so you can be sure the Denzel will work with nearly any display.

7.1, Dolby Digital EX®, DTS-ES®, THX® Audio

The Denzel TP420-Sx system boasts the same audio processing capabilities found in super high-end dedicated home theater receivers and sound processors. Because the Denzel audio system can process up to 8 distinct audio channels and uses the latest sound technologies, you can **bypass a receiver** and connect the system directly to your 5.1 or 7.1 amplifier. In addition, the audio system has been THX® certified and has a **109dB** per channel SNR , so you know you're receiving the best possible sound output.

Internal RAID 5 Storage Protection

In case of a rare hard disk failure, your data is protected. The Denzel TP420-Sx will continue to run seamlessly even in this case. For the best in speed and capacity, optimize storage using RAID 5. In addition, The Denzel TP420-Sx employs a separate and independent OS drive for additional protection.

Quiet Cooling

With the Denzel, you'll find a whisper quiet thermal cooling architecture to keep your theater room noise-free.

High-End Design

The Denzel line is ISF certified which insures that you're receiving the best possible audio and video quality available. The Denzel incorporates heavy internal shielded audio cabling to prevent audio interference. Inteset designed, oxygen-free, 75ohm rated external audio cabling is included for connecting the Denzel to your high-end amplifier or receiver.

This combination of qualities are not found on any other Media Center system.

Contact us at Direct Link if you are interested in seeing a demo. For more information on Media Center and how we can integrate the Denzel into your Entertainment Center, please email info@dlhelp.com or call John at 800-875-5675 x150

Customer Appreciation

Get an American Express gift Card

Thanks to loyal customers like you, Direct Link is growing faster than ever! We certainly couldn't have done it without the help of our customers referring their friends and colleagues. That's why we'd like to thank you for your referrals with an American Express Gift Card.

All you have to do is refer a business owner or IT Manager to Direct Link who is looking for any of the services we offer. As a token of our appreciation, we'll send you a gift card. Just consider this our way of saying "Thanks!"

To send us a referral, simply call John or send him an e-mail to info@dlhelp.com. Or you can tell your friend to mention your name when they call.

Is Your Website Annoying

This Particular Group of Visitors?

While Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) is still the #1 browser used to navigate the Internet, about **7% of all web surfers currently use Mozilla Firefox**. While 7% may not seem like a lot of people, **that translates into over 140 million people** and growing.

So why should you be concerned?

Since most websites are designed for IE users, interactive site functions such as shopping carts, calculator tools, surveys, and registration forms may not function properly, and graphics and text may appear scattered or disheveled.

Obviously, error messages, timeouts, and poorly displayed graphics can leave a bad first impression to a prospective customer, and may even prevent them from doing business with you.

Why Firefox is Gaining In Popularity

Compared to Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Firefox is far more secure and less susceptible to viruses and spyware. Firefox also has fewer critical flaws, and the flaws that are found are fixed much faster than Internet Explorer.

According to the security firm Secunia*, a website that monitors vulnerabilities in over 9,500 products, "Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.x with all vendor patches installed and all vendor workarounds applied, is currently affected by one or more Secunia

Notable Quotes

"My experience in business has shown me that people who are exceptionally good in business aren't so because of what they know but because of their insatiable need to know more."

- Michael Gerber

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like work."

- Thomas Edison

"As long as you're going to be thinking anyway, THINK BIG."

- Donald Trump

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." - Dale Carnegie

On The Lighter Side...

Sally was driving back from a business trip in Northern Arizona when she saw an elderly native American woman walking. She stopped and asked the woman if she wanted a ride and the woman got in. After a while the native American woman asked what was in the bag in the back seat. Sally said it was a bottle of wine she got for her husband.

After a moment of silence, and speaking with the voice of

advisories rated highly critical." *Source www.secunia.com

Should You Redesign Your Website?

If you sell products online, or if you are spending money to promote your website, **it is a good idea to make sure your website is both IE and Firefox friendly** so you don't prevent Firefox users from making purchases or otherwise interacting with you online.

If you are selling products and services to a highly technical audience, this goes double. According to a recent blog on PC World (www.pcworld.com) almost 20% of their visitors use Firefox. To download a free copy of Firefox, go to www.mozilla.com.

Direct Link

Long Beach Branch-
Direct Link
800 E. Wardlow Rd, Suite C
Long Beach, CA 90807
Riverside Branch-
541 N. Main Street, Ste 104
PMB 147
Corona, CA 92880

Toll Free: 800-875-5675 Ext 150

Phone: 951-479-9480

Fax: 562-684-4315

Visit us online at:

www.reliablecomputersupport.com

or email us at: info@dlhelp.com

Services We Offer:

- Phone system consulting, design, & implementation
- Cabling Infrastructure for Phone and Data Networks
- Computer / Telephony Integration
- Voice over the Internet (VOIP) Implementation
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Solutions
- Software Analysis & Recommendations
- Telephone System Repair, Troubleshooting, & Support
- Call Center Analysis and Product Recommendations
- Accounting Solutions
- Call Detail Reporting for Tracking Usage and Billing
- Call Detail Reporting for Tracking Advertising Campaigns
- On-Site Training for Individuals and Groups
- Contract & Time and Billing Services
- Qualified, On-Site Technicians
- Remote Network Monitoring - Save Money on Service Calls
- Remote Help Desk Support
- Local, Long Distance and Data Services Recommendations - Integrated Services.

Wit and Wisdom From A Pessimist

On the keyboard of life, always keep one finger on the escape key.

Tell me what you need, and I'll tell you how to get along without it.

You can go anywhere and walk through many doors if you walk with confidence

Voice Over IP: Should You Switch Your Home Phone?

There's been a lot of talk lately about people switching their home phone service to Voice Over Internet Protocol, or VoIP service. If you aren't familiar with VoIP, it simply is a way to route calls over the Internet instead of traditional telephone lines.

For around \$30-\$40 per month, VoIP may seem comparable in price to your traditional phone service. However, VoIP providers usually include features such as call waiting, caller ID, and voice mail for free.

Most will also include unlimited long-distance within the U.S. and Canada. If you frequently call friends, relatives, or clients long distance, this is a great deal. However, if you don't make a lot of long-distance calls, you probably won't see much in the way of savings. So, let's look at the costs...

To use VoIP, you must have a broadband Internet connection such as cable or DSL. If you don't already have a high speed connection in your home, that will be an added cost you must consider. You will also need a VoIP adapter to connect your phone to your broadband modem. Most carriers will provide the adapter for a small fee.

Once you cancel your traditional phone service for VoIP service, the telephone jacks around your home will no longer work. **In order to have phones in different rooms, you will need an expandable cordless phone system** where the base unit is plugged into the adapter and all other cordless handsets receive a signal from the base unit. Further, to receive calls and surf the Internet simultaneously, you'll need a router. If you have a home network, you probably already have what you need. Otherwise, budget \$50 for one.

Finally, keep in mind that your phone is now run by the Internet. If your Internet service goes down, your phone and 911 emergency services cannot find you. For emergency purposes, make sure you have a cell phone back up.

Have questions about VoIP?

Call our office at 800-875-5675 Ext 150 or send us an e-mail to info@dlhelp.com.