

# E-Business Predictions 2013

## By Deborah M. Collier

---



*Further to a difficult 2012, the year 2013 will remain challenging for the West, and filled with opportunities for the East. We see a shift from both sides of the globe, in terms of where and how business is conducted. We'll see changes not only in the relationship between online and offline, but also in import and export particularly both to and from emerging markets.*

*Deborah Collier, President at The Certificate in Online Business, investigates and delivers her top 5 predictions*

With strategies focused on growth in 2013, businesses that haven't done so already will look at expanding their markets and making wiser choices on what products and services to sell. Lets take a look at my E-Business predictions for 2013 and consider how they might affect you:

### 1) Focus on Emerging Markets

Profitable sales are ever more challenging to achieve in the highly competitive and non-favorable EU and US economies. This year will see the West focusing more attention on emerging markets. Entering emerging markets is complex and requires careful planning and risk assessment. Understanding the culture as well as the challenges such as localisation, taxation, cross-border regulations, law, infrastructure, payment processing and fraud, are all key challenges to overcome. However the opportunities for growth are immense.

Entrepreneurs and established organisations from emerging market countries are in a position to innovate new e-business ideas, replicate or improve online business models from the West, for their own territories and regions. There is evidence in recently launched sites such Middle East price comparison web site Souqalmaal.com. This year and the forthcoming years will be an exciting time for e-business in emerging markets.

### 2) Online Retailers Turn to Bricks and Mortar

There's been so much talk over the years about traditional retailers missing out with e-commerce. However, we'll see more and more online retailers opening shops not only to increase sales, support customer service and returns, but also to support branding. FunkyPigeon.com is one such online store, which has opened traditional shops. Have you ever wondered whether charity shops make money? Have you noticed they are usually strategically located where they will be seen? The reality is that many charity stores barely break even – but their presence helps with branding, advertising and trust building.



### 3) Increase in Citizen E-Commerce

Two e-business models rarely talked about - citizen-to-citizen and citizen-to-business will be on the increase. In countries like China this is already this norm, with individuals supplementing their incomes selling through online marketplaces such as Taobao. Ebay of course has been around for some time, and has stimulated innovation to produce and use other bidding web sites such as Qatar's qbay.com. Individuals can self publish and sell their own books and e-books through web sites such as Amazon, sell digital music downloads, ringtones and mobile phone apps, earn advertising revenue from their blogs and license digital photos and artwork through sites such as iStockphoto.com. These are just some of the things individuals can do to supplement their income, and in some cases deliver their full salary.

### 4) Death of the Small Retailer

In the more established online marketplaces of countries such as the UK and USA, we'll see a continued trend for customers to buy from one or few selected online stores or marketplaces.

Industry research and experience demonstrates that while consumers want choice, they prefer the convenience of buying from a few selected and trusted stores. Those who already hold the customers ordering and payment details are in a stronger position, as they can ensure a speedier transaction, and customers are familiar and comfortable with their site. Larger retailers such as department stores are in the strongest position with resources to enable brand loyalty, consumer trust, easier purchases, returns and refunds, as well as competitive pricing.

#### Is there a place for the small online retailer?

Most definitely! The key to success for any multi-channel or online retailer is to pick their products carefully. In general, small retailers avoid competing with the big boys. A small homewares store, for example, will compete with large department stores, unless of course, they sell something very special or unique. Small retail stores should either specialise or offer unique items. There are of course exceptions to this depending on the products you sell. Building your brand will be easier if you have a product range focused store. For example, a store selling accessories and products for the hobby fishing, can offer value-add know-how and experience in products that a larger retailer doesn't have. Small retailers may also consider expanding into new product areas once they are larger and their brand is established.



### 4) Regulating E-Business Takes Centre Stage

In Australia, the EU and North America, e-business regulations are clearly defined, however not always adhered to. Protecting the customer is at the heart of the ensuring any online business adheres to the law, particularly with e-commerce. More recently in the UK, a number of leading retailers were found to be breaking the law. For example, some failed to provide an email contact address on their website, or clearly detailing their returns policy. With competition high, it is absolutely critical to build consumer trust and ensuring a web site is legally compliant.

In some emerging markets there are little if any clear regulations for online business and consumer protection. E-Business legislation is virtually non-existent in many countries such as India. Brazil is focused on finalising their legal framework for e-business this year, and the Middle East have been working and progressing on e-business law quite considerably over the last year, and are continuing to do so. We can expect to see greater understanding and focus from organisations around the globe, to address issues of cross-border trading and the law.

Whether you are an individual, online retailer, pure play e-business, or other organisation, the year 2013 will bring both challenges and opportunities to startup, grow and diversify. The key to success is to always remain agile and open to new ideas in an ever-changing environment.

## Deborah M. Collier

### President & Chief Marketing Officer – The Certificate in Online Business

Deborah is the founder of the Certificate in Online Business™ (COB) series of globally-recognised industry qualifications, which were established in 2008. She developed the reputation of the programs among well-known brands gaining testimonials from Directors and managers at government organisations and leading companies such as Mars, Schneider Electric, House of Fraser and Procter & Gamble. Deborah leads the strategic direction of the training programs and company. In addition, she oversees marketing, partnerships and licensing.



Follow Deborah on Twitter: [twitter.com/deborahmcollier](https://twitter.com/deborahmcollier) Learn from Deborah and her team: [COBCertified.com](http://COBCertified.com)

## Master Successful Online Business



**Learn how to develop a powerful E-Business strategy! Attend a COB Certified E-Business Manager course. Learn:**

- E-Business Strategy, Planning & Management**
- Web Content Strategy and Customer Experience**
- E-Commerce Planning**
- Introduction to Digital Marketing & Advertising**
- COB Certification - Review, Exercises and Exam**

**Visit The Certificate in Online Business (COB) at [cobcertified.com](http://cobcertified.com) for course options**

© Deborah M. Collier 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013



## Get the Competitive Edge



Learn how to develop a powerful digital marketing and advertising strategy! Attend a COB Certified Digital Marketing Manager course. Learn:

- ❑ Digital Marketing Strategy, Email Marketing & Emerging Technologies
- ❑ Web Content Strategy and Customer Experience
- ❑ Pay-Per-Click Advertising
- ❑ Social Media Marketing & Advertising
- ❑ COB Certification - Review, Exercises and Exam

Visit The Certificate in Online Business (COB) at [cobcertified.com](http://cobcertified.com) for further information.

## The Ultimate Online Selling Course



Discover more strategies and tactics to boost your online sales! Have you discovered the COB Certified E-Commerce Manager courses?

- ❑ E-Commerce Planning
- ❑ Web Content Strategy and Customer Experience
- ❑ Web Merchandising for Optimum Sales
- ❑ Online Marketing for Retailers
- ❑ COB Certification - Review, Exercises and Exam

Visit The Certificate in Online Business (COB) at [cobcertified.com](http://cobcertified.com) for course options