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consumers. Online and in-store.

SmartCircular
Virtual Promotions Discussion Guide

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SmartCircular Virtual Promotions are flexible...

...and this flexibility leaves you with a number of options to choose from when setting up your initial virtual circular. Consider this document a jumping off point for discussions with your sales director and client services director as you begin to explore the virtual circular options appropriate for your business needs.



Question #1: “What’s in the feed?”

In order to turn your product information into an online circular, ShopLocal will need to obtain the listing data that will ultimately populate your virtual pages. Normally a retailer will be able to leverage an existing feed to give ShopLocal all the individual elements needed to create a listing. This feed can be automatically dropped on the ShopLocal FTP site, and then when it comes time to create the promotion you only need to let us know what subset of listings to use via a control file. Here are the data points we recommend be included in the produce feed we would receive:

- Title
- Product number (SKU)
- Price
- Description
- Image path (static URL where image can be obtained)
- Original deal (if applicable), such as “Was \$500”
- Additional deal callouts (if applicable), such as “SALE!” or “This Week Only”
- Optional: other potentially relevant product information
 - Listing valid dates
 - Buy online links
 - Brands
 - Categories

MAGELLAN 3100 GPS Navigation System ← Title

Refurbished 90-Day Factory Warranty ← Additional Deal Description



[View Larger Image](#)

\$89.99 ← Deal Description

each after mfg. mail-in rebate ← Price Qualifier

thru Sep 13 ← Listing Valid Date

+ Add to Shopping List

\$109.99 reg. price - \$20.00 MFG. mail-in rebate = \$89.99
each after mfg. mail-in rebate

#RF980934-01

Product Number

Sales Description

[More GPS & Electronics on page 2](#) ← Fine Print



Best Practice: ShopLocal will display this information exactly as shown in the feed, so it is vital any needed scrubbing occur before the data reaches ShopLocal. HTML tags will not display properly and should be left out of all fields.



Question #2:
“How do we send the feed?”

ShopLocal’s database will be set up to automatically recognize and process the product feed you provide. We have flexibility to accept a number of formats for the product feed; please pass along a sample product feed to your client services director at your earliest convenience for the database team to begin analyzing.

Here are some items that will need to be controlled for consistency to allow for clean processing:

- Filename format
- File type

- Field inclusion and layout within file
- Delivery method (e.g., dropped on the ShopLocal FTP at a regular interval)



Best Practice: In order to make possible the compressed timeline for producing a virtual promotion, all elements of the files ShopLocal receives must be consistent. Any deviation from the established format will likely result in a delay of processing.



Question #3: “How do I control how listings appear on the virtual page?”

The good news is that you have the ability to control the way listings are merchandised within the promotion without sacrificing the quick turnaround of the automated process. In the print world, listings are manually selected and organized according to business and aesthetic needs. As part of the automated nature of virtual promotions, ShopLocal will need to set up this logic ahead of time. There are a number of ways these listings can be organized:

- By category
 - This option uses the existing ShopLocal category tree and can either be lightly or deeply granular by design
 - This category tree is a taxonomy of hierarchal structure that was set up at the same time your SmartCircular site was built. It may or may not resemble the category structure you use on the retail side. Some flexibility exists to update this tree as needed.
- By brand
- Client-controlled manner
 - This is a subjective ordering method. For example, you may choose to place all “Back-to-school” items on a single page, products that span multiple brands and categories.
 - This option would require you to indicate via the control file where each listing should appear, including page number and the position on the page.
 - This control file could be an Excel document identifying each of the products (e.g., by SKU) in one column, the page number in the second column, and the listing order in the third column.

A combination of these, or even some additional options not listed here, may be possible provided they follow a regular logic. Discuss any additional ideas you may have with your client services director or sales director.

Additionally, consider what should happen in the case that a listing is dropped from the promotion for any reason. Consider the following scenario, where six listings appear on two pages, both in the same category:

Page One (Electronics Category)	Page Two (Electronics Category)
TV 1	Computer 1
TV2	Computer 2
TV 3	Computer 3
TV 4	Computer 4
TV 5	Computer 5
TV 6	Computer 6

In this scenario, it is determined by you after the file has been sent but before the promotion has been created that TV 6 needs to be dropped because it is out-of-stock. In this case, should Computer 1 move to the end of page one to take the place of the missing item? Or would you prefer the capacity to “hard-code” listings into certain pages, so that removing a listing does not cause another to take its place?



Best Practice: If selecting the category option, you may need to revisit the ShopLocal category structure and verify it meets your needs for the virtual circular project, including the operational standards ShopLocal uses for category assignment. You must additionally consider the logic surrounding “dropped” listings. Otherwise you may experience difficulties with listings appearing on pages and next to listings you had not intended.



Question #4: “Can I update listings while the virtual promotion is live?”

Yes! One of the most important benefits of the online circular world is the responsiveness to change: unlike the print world, updates to the online circular can be made in a matter of hours, allowing you the flexibility to respond to the rapidly shifting retail environment. Likewise, the virtual circular can be programmed in such a way to allow subsequent data feeds to update the listing information continually. There are three areas where the listing data appears:

- Page view
- Rollover
- Item detail

Once created, the page view is static and cannot be updated without recreating the entire promotion, whereas the rollover and item detail can be updated continually. Although in the print world we are used to seeing all possible listing data crammed onto the page itself, bear in mind that generally with the online experience, the user will only be initially reacting only to the visuals of the image and title on the page. Following that, the most relevant information (including price and description) will come from the user's interaction: mousing over the item of interest to show the rollover, or clicking through the item to show the item detail page. As a result, we have allowed the rollover and item detail screens to be dynamic, allowing continual updates.

The following changes can usually be made within the matter of a few hours, provided the information lives exclusively in the rollover and item detail page:

- Pricing
- Sales description
- Fine print

The following change involves reprocessing the promotion pages themselves, and may take one business day to fulfill:

- Macro message updates

The following changes involve reprocessing the entire virtual promotion, and may take 2-3 business days to fulfill:

- Product titles
- Product images
- Listing location/categorization

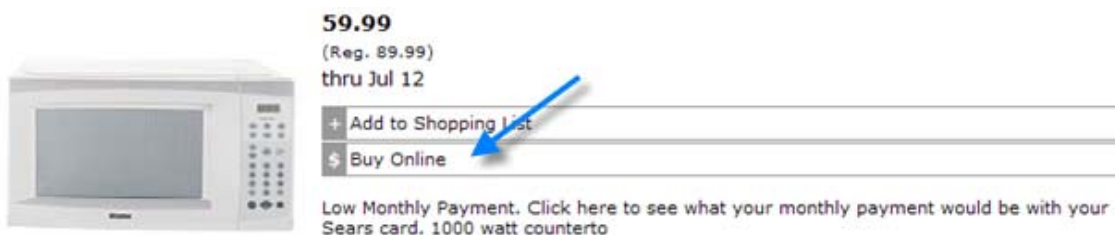


Best practice: ShopLocal recommends placing only non-updating information on the page view, such as title and image, especially if updates to the listings may occur while the promotion is live. The remainder of the listing information will be observable with interaction with the listing (hovering or clicking), and this information can be updated with subsequent product feed drops.



Question #5: “Will ShopLocal be linking to your e-commerce pages?”

Just as with standard SmartCircular site, you have the option within the item detail pages to link to your e-commerce pages. This is achieved through “buy online” links:



To create these buy online links, we only need to know the logic of your item detail URLs. For instance, is there a formula in which ShopLocal only needs to plug the item’s product number? Alternately, are the product URLs included in the feed containing the items for the virtual promotion? Once we have the logic, we can generate buy online links for each item, aiding your existing e-commerce business.



Best practice: In order to track traffic deriving from the virtual promotion, be sure to add site-source URL tagging to identify

traffic source. Your client services director can work with you to integrate these tags as needed.



Question #6:
“How can I insert non-product information, such as legal disclaimers?”

There are a number of options available for handling disclaimer information required by your legal department. Here are just a few options:

- Include this text in the product feed as a separate field. ShopLocal can then display this information in the “fine print” field on the item detail page. *Useful if your fine print must be individualized per product.*
- Place a link at the bottom of the page template which links users to a full legal disclaimer page hosted on your side.
- Provide a page containing only legal disclaimer text, which can then be inserted at a chosen place within the promotion.

These same options apply to any other non-product information you wish to enter, such as special offers, product availability, and restrictions.



Best practice: Talk with your legal department ahead of time to determine what type of disclaimer information must be included with each product or product category. Your unique needs are will need to be taken into account as ShopLocal sets up your virtual promotion process. Your options will be less after the virtual promotion process is established.



Question #6: “Can additional custom pages be inserted into the virtual promotion?”

Although ShopLocal can automatically generate front and back covers per a template, you may also use custom covers generated through your creative department. ShopLocal can integrate these into the virtual promotion at no additional charge.

Also, you may insert individual pages, with or without listings, at any point in the promotion at no additional cost beyond the standard page fee. This is especially useful if you wish to leverage the virtual circular to market additional products or services.



Best practice: To drive traffic to your virtual promotion, consider working with your creative team to produce eye-catching covers and bonus pages, which can be seamlessly inserted as needed.



Question #7: “What custom options are available?”

All of the options included above would be included as part of a standard virtual promotion project. There are several additional options and services available for a custom fee. This list is by no means exhaustive; feel free to brainstorm additional options, and your sales director will be able to tell you whether they would be considered standard or custom:

- Scrubbing product data to make more presentable
- Custom timeline (including increased preview period)
- Dynamically editable/updatable virtual pages
- Template display logic (e.g., different template page per category)



Best practice: If you have any requirements and ideas not included in this document, just as your client services director or sales director.



Question #8: “What’s the next step?”

Naturally the next question is *How much?* and *How soon?* The answers to these questions will depend upon a number of factors:

- Volume of promotions
- Number of updates needed
- Cycle time required
- Number of templates created/used
- Customization
- ShopLocal’s resource capacity

As a general rule of thumb, virtual promotions will require 6-8 weeks to setup from the moment all assets are received by ShopLocal to the moment the first virtual promotion goes up. This can vary, of course, depending on the amount of back-and-forth interaction required to fine tune the process.



Best practice: Once your sales director and client services director has all the needed requirements and assets, they will be able to provide you with precise timing and pricing. The more of the questions within this document that can be answered upfront, the more precise an estimate can be given early on. When the timing and pricing is known, ShopLocal will produce a statement of work for your review, and project work will begin as soon as this is signed.

With all of these options...

...know that it is much easier for ShopLocal to make custom changes while the process is initially being designed. To avoid unnecessary costs and delays, we recommend asking all questions you may have and reviewing each option prior to the processing of your first virtual promotion. Your client services director and sales director will do their best to cover all of these possible options and make it easy for you to understand and choose. Meanwhile, never hesitate to pass along any questions or concerns you may have. Allow us to make this process meet your unique needs!