To market, to market, to buy a fat Office service

Applies to: Microsoft Excel 2010, Outlook 2010, PowerPoint 2010, Word 2010, Excel 2007, Outlook 2007, PowerPoint 2007, Word 2007, Excel 2003, Outlook 2003, PowerPoint 2003, Word 2003

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Crabby Office Lady

Microsoft Office is great on its own; you can accomplish most anything with it. But you can never be too productive, too efficient, or too dolled up with features. Let's get accessorized at the Office Marketplace.

Crabby Office Lady columns

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Everyone loves a good deal and everyone loves something new, so let's slap on a pair of comfy shoes, pile the kids into the minivan, and hit the Office Marketplace for some bargain hunting.

NOTE The Office Marketplace is located on the Downloads Home Page on Office Online.

Arriving at the Marketplace

Once we've arrived and parked, you'll notice that unlike the malls you're used to visiting, at this one you don't have to navigate your way through the maze of strollers and gangs of teenage girls. However, you do need to figure out how to get around. This particular Marketplace is divided into categories that define how you work and what you need (rather than by program).

For example, there is a category called **Consulting Services** which offers such things as database solutions and developer add-ins. Another category, called **Mail and Postage** that presents services to print postage from your computer as well as label printing software. All of these categories are available right up front so it's always easy to jump right in and get shopping.

Now that you know how to get here, let's take a peek at some of our most popular services.

Presentation tools

You know, I've overheard so many jokes about PowerPoint being the standard software for presentations. Why don't you step outside the box a bit and make your own presentation more than just "standard?" Some examples of the PowerPoint presentation tools offered by some of our third-party providers are:

- A tool that enables you to add 3D transitions, video backgrounds, and Flash movies to your presentations.
- One that works by helping you add voice via telephone or your own audio file to a presentation.
- Another one that provides more than 50 animation effects to your presentations. No more dull presentations, no more losing your audience.

Charts and Workbooks

These add-ins are for Excel, one of the most popular Office programs. So it's no wonder that a wide variety of tools are available for this versatile product:

- Automate workbook formatting. Design reusable worksheet, chart, and PivotTable formats in minutes and automatically produce identically formatted workbooks for new data in seconds. What used to take a long time to figure out how to do (and then actually do) can now be done in a snap.

- Convert your Excel price list into a sales and marketing tool to showcase products on customers' desktops. This little baby creates, distributes, and updates your product catalog.
- While we offer many templates for Excel, we have a provider who offers a special collection of more than 75 special-purpose templates organized into five products for targeted management positions: CEOs, CFOs, sales and marketing, HR, and office managers.

Calendars and Scheduling

Your Outlook calendar is probably the most indispensable tool you use on a daily basis. Why not give your calendar (and yourself while you're at it) some more get-up-and-go?

- Add sunrise and sunset times, and even moon phase and eclipse schedules, to Outlook.
- Make custom scheduling forms.
- Create your own printable calendars using your Outlook information.

The true standouts

I also want to introduce you (if you haven't already met) to three of the most sought-after services that Office Partners offer:

- vLetter Pro
  Turn your own handwriting into a font! Now I find this service very interesting. We get a lot of comments about fonts — not enough, too small, too large, too ugly — but now you can make your own using your own handwriting. So, if your new font is too small, too large, or too ugly, you have no one but yourself to blame.
- Vox Proxy
  Vox Proxy provides talking animated characters for your PowerPoint presentations. Each character can perform dozens of animations, and you can even use your own recorded voice to carry on interactive conversations with the characters. Characters also speak multiple languages using text-to-speech engines.
- Fotofolia
  The Fotolia add-in for PowerPoint 2007 and Word 2007 lets you instantly add high-resolution photos, vectors, and illustrations using your Fotolia account, without ever having to leave those two programs. And it's free!

NOTE Search for affordable high resolution images on Foltolia.com. As well, you can find Foltolia images here on Office.com.

A final word on shopping and accessorizing

The only way to find out what's available at the Office Marketplace is to drive on over and see for yourself. From providing content management and analysis tools to training and assistance resources, this shopping mall has a whole lot more to offer you than just guilt-laden cinnamon rolls and energy-draining fluorescent lighting.

"I always say shopping is cheaper than a psychiatrist." — Tammy Faye Bakker

About the author

Annik Stahl, the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Did this article help you?** feedback tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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