

4 Easy Ways to Save Money

Get control over your costs in the new year by making sure you never pay too much for all of those technology gadgets or products you need to run your business.

ShopSmart, a Consumer Reports publication, offers the following tips:

Check the cost: Before you buy, use the search engines to find the lowest cost. ShopSmart's top three favorites (out of 25 reviewed): PriceGrabber.com, Google.com/products, and Nextag.com. Or if you're at a store, use your smartphone to check whether it's a deal. Bar-code-scanner apps, such as RedLaser and ShopSavvy, allow you to instantly compare prices of the store with those online.

Change the font: Stop using 12-point Times New Roman to print all of your documents and try Arial. ShopSmart found that using 12-point Times New Roman font resulted in 27 percent more pages per ink cartridge than using the more ink-friendly option of Arial. Calibri was another ink-saving font, whereas Tahoma and Verdana were found to be ink wasters.

Phone coupons: Get coupons delivered right to your phone. Coupon Sherpa, MobiQPon, and major retailers are now jumping on the bandwagon of offering coupons for discounts delivered right to your phone.

Become a friend and get insider deals: Add some companies to your social networking connections to find more deals. For example, "like" a company on Facebook or sign up for e-mail alerts on their Web site to be notified about special sales and freebies. ShopSmart also notes following Twitter's @EarlyBird service for limited-time offers.

Reprinted from **REALTOR® Magazine Online** January 2011 with permission of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. Copyright 2011. All rights reserved.