

# CALIFORNIA INC.

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## Sizable Savings Available on the Web

SAN MATEO – Are there large price discrepancies between electronics sold online and those sold at brick-and-mortar locations? You bet, answers Vendio Services Inc., a company that provides services that empower merchants to reach consumers and manage online transactions.

Recently, Vendio conducted an internal survey of price differences between offline and online retailers for a wide range of popular consumer electronics devices. The result: from camcorders and digital cameras to DVD players and videogame consoles, consumers pay an average of 44.2 percent more at local retail outlets than they do in online stores.

“For consumer electronics, there are tremendous price gaps between traditional brick-and-mortar stores and online retailers,” says Rodrigo Sales, CEO and co-founder of Vendio. “This holiday shopping season,

brick-and-mortar stores will garner more last-minute sales because of gift-giving deadlines. Our survey shows, however, that consumers can save money by planning their shopping earlier and making purchases online.”



In the study, Vendio identified more than a dozen of the most popular consumer electronics products on the market today, and, using its own price-comparison shopping toolbar, found the lowest online prices for those products. The company then contacted five local retailers (including some of the largest consumer electronics retail chains in the country) to reach an aggregate offline price for each of those same products. Here are a few of the products included, along with the respective price points:

	LOWEST ONLINE PRICE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE
<b>CAMCORDER</b> Canon Elura 100	\$299.00	\$411.34
<b>DIGITAL CAMERA</b> Kodak Easyshare C643	\$140.95	248.25
<b>VIDEOGAME CONSOLE</b> Xbox 360	\$399.00	\$432.99
<b>DVD PLAYER</b> Samsung HD860	\$89.98	\$107.16
<b>42-INCH PLASMA TV</b> Panasonic TH-42PX60U	\$1,522.95	\$1,984.58

## The Importance of Tenure

MENLO PARK – Chronic job hoppers may bounce themselves out of consideration for future opportunities, according to a new survey of chief financial officers. A whopping 87 percent of CFOs polled said the length of time a candidate has spent with previous employers is an important factor when evaluating that person for an open position.

In the survey, developed

by Robert Half Finance & Accounting, a division of Robert Half International, more than 1,400 CFOs were asked, “How important a factor is the length of time a job candidate has spent with previous employers when evaluating the applicant for a position with your company?” The results: 42 percent answered that it is very important, 45 percent answered that it is somewhat important and 10 percent didn’t feel that it had any bearing on whether or not a candidate would land the position.

An additional 3 percent either didn’t know or had no answer.

“It’s not unusual for someone to change jobs or careers multiple times during his or her lifetime, but holding too many positions in rapid succession and without signs of professional advancement can be a red flag for employers,” says Max Messmer, chairman and CEO of Robert Half International. “Hiring managers place a high value on employee loyalty, in part because it is so difficult to replace top performers.”

## SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS IN SF

SAN FRANCISCO – Small business is taking advantage of a nationwide spirit of capitalism. A record number of small businesses turned for credit assistance to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) over the past year. During the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2006, the SBA guaranteed more than 100,000 loans to small businesses nationally.

Regionally, the San Francisco District Office announced another year of record-breaking lending performance. With final figures in for fiscal year 2006, the San Francisco office achieved a 9.5 percent increase over last year in the total number of approved small business loans. For the 13 Northern California counties served by that office, the SBA assisted 2,675 businesses with loans worth 781.5 million. This compares to 2,443 loans with a value of \$749.1 million in 2005.

There were other eye-catching figures, as well. Loans to African American entrepreneurs increased 60 percent, while loans made to Hispanic-owned businesses increased 15 percent. Loans to women-owned firms also jumped, an increase of 17 percent. The SBA estimates that the financial assistance in 2006 created or preserved more than 22,000 jobs in the region.





## Biotech Roared Back in October

SAN FRANCISCO – Biotech is on a roll—again. “Momentum for biotech companies and stocks continues to build ... in this final quarter of the year on a high note with one of its best monthly performances of 2006,” says G. Steven Burrill, CEO of Burrill & Co., venture capital, merchant banking and media firm specializing in life sciences.

“Biotech is riding a wave of heightened investor enthusiasm driven by an increase in M&A activity, significant clinical data reported broadly and excellent third quarter financial reports. Historically, the fourth quarter has always been a good one for biotech and so there is every reason to believe that it is on target to make up for the beating suffered during the first two quarters of 2006. The biotech industry’s aggregate market cap at the end of October was just over \$488 billion and by the end of the year it

could reach a new record high,” he says.

Fanning the flames of positive investor sentiment was the Dow finally breaking through the psychological 12,000 barrier, closing the month up almost 3.5 percent. And there was plenty of other positive news for the biotech sector.

According to Burrill & Co., after a brief lull, merger-and-acquisition activity picked up big time in October. Eli Lilly announced it was acquiring Icos Corp. for \$2.1 billion, a move that gives it full ownership of the hugely popular erectile dysfunction drug Cialis. And Merck & Co. Inc. enhanced its interest in RNA interference technologies with its \$1.1 billion acquisition of Sirna Therapeutics Inc. Shares of San Francisco-based Sirna doubled on Merck’s announcement and closed October at \$12.63 apiece, up 120 percent for the month.

## Environment-Friendly Robots

HAYWARD – Did you know that, besides consuming up to five times the energy required by newer, more efficient refrigerators, old refrigerators contain a toxic brew that includes mercury, oil and ozone-eating chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) from foam insulation? Shocking! As a result, old refrigerators pose a significant threat to the environment when improperly discarded.

JACO Environmental Inc. recycling plant in Hayward is trying to ensure that old refrigerators don’t have a negative impact on the environment. Through the latest robotic recycling technology, the recycling plant will convert old, energy-wasting refrigerators into reusable materials and even additional electricity.

“We all know that recycling something is a great way to preserve our resources. But in the case of old refrigerators, we’re not only recycling, we’re protecting the environment and

converting these old energy hogs to produce a little extra electricity. It’s a win-win-win situation,” says Michael Dunham, JACO’s director of energy and environmental programs.

JACO has established a partnership with PG&E to encourage people to turn over old refrigerators for recycling. The PG&E program is mostly targeted at second refrigerators people keep in their garage or basement. According to PG&E, most second refrigerators serve little or no purpose and eat up valuable energy in the process.

## Life-Saving Technology

LOS ANGELES – An I.D. card that fits easily in any wallet, purse or child’s lunchbox is poised to be a formidable safeguard against the approximately 98,000 deaths and 400,000 injuries that occur each year as the result of preventable medical mistakes, as well as an efficient and practical storage and back-up apparatus for all essential medical and personal information vital to cardholders and their loved ones.

Created by Nancy Davis, founder of the Nancy Davis Foundation for M.S. (Multiple Sclerosis), and backed by a 24-hour-a-day, user-friendly service, the My Very Necessary Medical I.D. Card is the first-of-its-kind and may prove to be a personal safety asset that no one would want to live without.

The face of the card is imprinted with vital information that is practical for the cardholder to have on-hand at all times and of critical importance to an emergency care provider in severe instances when the cardholder is incapacitated or unable to communicate. Current medical condition, blood type, allergies, history of surgery and illnesses, as well as insurance carrier and physician’s contact information are all items included in the at-a-glance profile. Additionally, the card is linked to a secure central database that houses the cardholder’s health care history and any personal medical and legal records—MRIs, X-rays, birth certificate, passport, power of attorney and living will—that he or she chooses to store. Similar information is also stored for family members. An annual fee of \$30 is required for a single membership. For a couple, the fee rises to \$50 for a couple; for a child it is an additional \$20.

## Executive Gift Guide

The holidays are just around the corner, and since busy executives don't have a lot of time to create a wish list of gifts they desire, *California CEO* did some research and created our own list of suggestions.



### TIFFANY JEWELRY

How about something for the deserving female executive—what better than the latest offerings from Tiffany and Co.?

Earlier this year, Tiffany and architect Frank Gehry joined forces to create a new collection of jewelry, aptly called The Gehry Collection. Gehry, who says he's had a lifelong obsession with art, has ventured into his first go-around as a jewelry designer. His impressive creations—inspired by structural elements, childhood memories, Renaissance masters and contemporary painters—utilize an unusual array of materials such as black gold, pernambuco wood and cocholong stone, along with sterling silver, diamonds and gemstones.

Notable lines in the collection include Torque and Fish. Torque rings make use of Gehry's familiar linear and curved planes and feature materials like rose gold and ebony-brushed rock crystal. The price of these rings ranges from \$225 to \$1,500. According to Tiffany, the architect's Fish, on the other hand, "express life with a powerful beauty and magnetism." The sterling silver Fish begins at an affordable \$125, whereas the 18-karat white gold Fish encrusted with diamonds is \$2,800.

## AGIS PORTABLE AND MINI HARD DRIVES

They're compact. They're portable. And best of all, they have a minimum 30GB storage capacity. Meet the new all-stars of portable hard drive products, Apricorn's Aegis Portable and Aegis Mini.

Apricorn, a Poway-based company, unveiled a small stable of products over the summer under the Aegis line—products that are sure to please any traveling executive. First up is the Aegis Mini, a pocket sized, 1.8-inch external drive with USB 2.0 or FireWire connection options. Weighing in at a mere 3.5 ounces and smaller than a deck of cards, the Aegis Mini is available in 30GB and 60GB capacities. It features a convenient, integrated cable, which wraps neatly around the Mini when not in use. Compatible with both PC and Apple systems, the product is bundled with Apricorn's Data Protection Suite, which provides backup, synchronization and encryption, and has a rugged shock-mounted enclosure with padded carry pouch for the ultimate in data protection. MSRP of the Aegis Mini starts at \$159 for the 30GB USB 2.0 interface and \$239 for the 60GB USB 2.0 interface. For the FireWire interface, the MSRP starts at \$169 for 30GB and \$249 for 60GB.



Need more storage capacity? The company also offers the Aegis Portable, a 2.5-inch external hard drive for durable and high-capacity storage of large work files, MP3s, videos and photos. Available in storage capacities of 40GB, 80GB, 120GB and 160GB, the Aegis Portable weighs in at 5.5 ounces and like the Mini, its portable design, integrated cable and extensive shock-mounting make it perfect for safe transport between home and office or on travel for business or pleasure. Aegis Portable is currently only available with USB 2.0 interface; the MSRP ranges from \$109 for the 40GB model to \$289 for the 160GB model. Visit [www.apricorn.com](http://www.apricorn.com) for information.



### TESLA ROADSTER

It sounds too good to be true. Sure, there are plenty of vehicles on the market that can boast 0-to-60 mph times under 5 seconds and top speeds of more than 130 miles per hour. So the Tesla Roadster's quickness is not unique. What does separate the ultra fast sports car from its competition is that it is electric powered, not gasoline powered, making it up to six times more efficient than some of the best sports cars on the market. Check this out: according to Tesla, its roadster

can travel for 250 miles before needing to be recharged and it gets the equivalent of 135 miles per gallon. Because of Tesla's innovation, Time Magazine named the vehicle the best transportation invention in its "Best Inventions 2006" report.

The 2007½ model of the Tesla Roadster sold out in four months earlier this year, but there will soon be an opportunity to get your hands on the 2008 model, if you're willing to pony up approximately \$100,000.