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TECHNOLOGY

Staples acquires Runa to improve its e-commerce conversion rates



Demos Parneros, Staples' president of North American stores and online, demonstrated a new store concept designed to better integrate online sales, earlier this year. The company's latest step is the acquisition of Runa, a California e-commerce technology startup.

By Galen Moore
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Staples has acquired Runa, a San Mateo, Calif., startup making software designed to induce online browsers to buy more.

It's the latest step the company has taken toward improving online sales, even as its performance has slumped amid weakening demand for office supplies. Staples in September announced the opening of an R&D center in e-commerce giant Amazon's Seattle backyard. In June, the Framingham, Mass., company unveiled a new store format, designed to integrate its Staples.com online sales platform.

Terms of the deal weren't disclosed in a news release announcing the acquisition. Founded in 2009, Runa raised \$9.2 million in 2010, but didn't say much about who was involved in the funding. Runa added another \$1 million in funding last November.

Its co-founder and CEO, Ashok Narasimhan, is a limited partner and advisor at e4e, Mobius and Waltham, Mass.-based Battery Ventures, according to his bio on Bloomberg Businessweek.

“Runa has a unique platform and outstanding talent with experience in e-commerce and online marketplaces,” said Ronald Sargent, chief executive officer and chairman, Staples. “With Runa, we’re adding technology to better serve our customers with personalized items, offers, and delivery estimates, all in real-time. Runa will allow us to tap into the

wealth of engineering and e-commerce expertise in the Silicon Valley area.”

According to its [Crunchbase profile](#), Runa "allows online merchants to more than double the conversion rate of visitors."

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