



your money

5 Money Tools to Make Your Life Easier

Stack cash with these bright ideas

BY SHERRI McGEE McCOVEY



There's no time like the present to get your financial house in order. We rounded up five of the best products and plans on the market. They'll have you saving—and stacking—money in no time.

MINT.COM

WHAT IT IS: Money management program

This comprehensive Web site provides an overview of your finances in one easy-to-use location.

HOW IT WORKS: After adding your bank and credit card informa-

tion, you can retrieve account balances, as well as receive an e-mail or a text notification if you go over budget. The site will separate work and personal expenses, joint accounts from individual accounts; record spending on food, gas, groceries and entertainment; and identify ATM fees, spending trends and spending history. New this month, you can also keep track of investment results, as well as student loan and mortgage payments. The site also reviews the best checking, savings and credit card offers.

COST: Free

FOR MORE INFO: Log on to Mint.com.

THE ORANGE SAVINGS ACCOUNT

WHAT IT IS: High-interest savings account

ING Direct, which offers banking services online, by phone and through the mail, has lower overhead and operational costs than traditional banks with brick-and-mortar branches. They pass these savings on to customers. (Annual percentage yields fluctuate continuously; at press time, APY was 3.40 percent.) Deposits are FDIC insured up to \$100,000.

HOW IT WORKS: Apply online or download an application. Link the savings account to your existing checking account at any bank and have 24/7 access. Open the account with any amount—there is no minimum balance required. Use the Automatic Savings Plan to draw a set amount from your checking regularly, and make paying yourself first effortless.

COST: Free

FOR MORE INFO: Visit ingdirect.com or call 800-ING-DIRECT.

account or a check. There's the added convenience of an Obopay Prepaid MasterCard accepted at merchants and ATMs.

COST: Free to sign up; a fee of 10 cents to send money; receiving and withdrawing money is free.

FOR MORE INFO: Go to Obopay.com.

WOMEN & CO.

WHAT IT IS: Financial membership program

This hub of resources can support your money goals.

HOW IT WORKS: Increase your financial knowledge with conference calls on topics that include understanding 401(k) plans, estate planning, protecting retirement assets, and helping kids understand money. Access a library of informative articles, online money tools and a monthly newsletter. Call a toll-free number to get live help with questions and research.

COST: Annual fee of \$125

FOR MORE INFO: Log on to Womenandco.com.

OBOPAY

WHAT IT IS: Mobile payment service

Repay a loan, split a dinner bill, get quick cash, track purchases, check your balance and much more, right from your cell phone.

HOW IT WORKS: Obopay is not a bank. It's a service that stores money in an account until you need it. Just open an account and add money from an existing bank account or a debit or credit card. To transfer funds, provide Obopay with the recipient's phone number and the amount, and notification will be sent to any U.S. mobile phone instantly. Payees can then request a transfer to their bank

MY MONEY MATTERS KIT

WHAT IT IS: Financial organizational kit

This collection of workbooks and other aids guides you in getting organized, eliminating debt, and saving for retirement.

HOW IT WORKS: Included in this box are a money journal to track daily expenses and 26 "money mantra" cards that offer valuable tips to help you develop a healthy money mind-set.

COST: \$24.95

FOR MORE INFO: Visit Mymoneykit.com.