

For Immediate Release

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**AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP HOLIDAY FORECAST #5 REVEALS
OF CONSUMERS NOT FINISHED SHOPPING
MANY MORE UNSURE WHAT TO BUY – AT 52.4% UP FROM 18.4% LAST YEAR
SURVEY SHOWS RETAILERS NOT AGGRESSIVE ENOUGH IN FINAL PUSH
TIME BECOMES MAJOR ISSUE AS SHOPPERS MIGRATE TO LOCAL STORES
UNSURE OF WHAT TO BUY AND NOW WHERE TO BUY**

CHARLESTON, SC - According to America's Research Group's fifth Christmas forecast of the 2016 season, many more American consumers are delaying shopping because they are undecided/unsure of what to buy - at 52.8% this year versus 18.4% last year. "Retailers have not been as aggressive as they need to be to get the final push," said America's Research Group Chairman, Britt Beemer. "Because they have not been aggressive enough they have not directed consumers to what to buy."

Americans are still buying deals at a record pace - 37.5% this weekend versus 17.8% this same weekend last year – an all-time high. And more consumers shopped this weekend looking for the them at 65.5% versus 59.6% last year.

Those buying online is down at 46.8% versus 51.7% last year. And Amazon has lost share from 45.1% last year to a drop to 29.4% this year. "Amazon is clearly facing more competitors," said Mr. Beemer.

Other big results include that Walmart is losing out on bigger ticket sales. While TV sales hit an all-time high at 23.9% Walmart dropped share from 61.5% last year to 36.8% this year. More Americans bought a computer at 17.2% versus 9.5%, another all-time high. Walmart again dropped share from 39% to 32.3% and Best Buy "crashed" from 30.5% to 12.8%. Video games are at a 38% purchase rate, up from 27% last year. Walmart is again losing major share at 41.7% this year versus 60.7% last year. The brick and mortar retailer lost shopper share from 46.8% last year this same weekend to 38.4% this year.

Other key results include: There's a new 6.4% of American families buying online this year who never bought online before. Toys were weaker with only 30% this weekend purchasing them versus 34.7% this same weekend last year. Gift cards are being bought at the same rate as last

year but this season is seeing a jump in the \$16 to \$20 range from 3.8% last year to 14% this year, a significant increase.

Mall shopping continues to rebound with 31.6% of shoppers shopping in malls this weekend versus 16.8% the same weekend last year. “Mall shopping is likely benefiting from increased shopping for children with 49.1% spending more on children in general at this point in the season versus 44.7% last year spending more at this point,” said Mr. Beemer.

Of those using cash/check this season, 44.1% reported having to cut back, a high since 2010.

Most important, however, is the delay in shopping due to consumers not sure what to buy. “With two weeks to go, shoppers have only completed 66.9% of their shopping this year, “ said Mr. Beemer, “so these last days will likely see two waves of shopping – this coming weekend and the Thursday and Friday before Christmas.”

Mr. Beemer continued: “There was more negative feedback about Walmart this year on Black Friday than in previous year because lines were long; and, as a result, consumers were displeased with the experience. Additionally, more consumers report that they are shopping at local retailers this year because these retailers have more knowledgeable salespeople and they can also get in and out more quickly. One of the trends this year - and it’s pretty significant – is that one in three people are so hard-pressed for time that they’re shopping in stores that respect their schedules. Because of that trend, a third of all shoppers is migrating to locally-owned stores that have knowledgeable people who help shoppers get out quickly.”

America’s Research Group has accurately predicted holiday season sales in 28 of the last 30 years within a half of one percent.

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For media on deadline, please call Britt Beemer directly at 843-345-0939

The ARG research consisted of 1000 telephone interviews December 9-11, 2016 with adults at ARG headquarters in Charleston, SC. The error factor is plus or minus 3.8%. The next ARG shopping survey will be conducted on December 16-18, 2016. The surveys will continue every week through the shopping season.

America’s Research Group, one of the nation’s foremost consumer research and strategic marketing firms, marked its 36th anniversary in 2015 and its 25th of doing these Christmas Surveys. CEO Britt Beemer is a key resource and advisor to leading brands and top retailers. He is author of *The Customer Rules*, published by McGraw-Hill. Britt Beemer is a winner of the American Business Award for Executive of the Year - Business Services and Company of the Year - Business Services.