

For Immediate Release

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America's Research Group & Inmar Christmas & Holiday Shopping News

Target Not Dramatically Affected by Security Breach

Lowest Number in 10 Years of Retailer Retention

One-Third Americans Still Not Done Shopping

Charleston, SC / Winston-Salem, NC (December 23, 2013) -- According to the Christmas & Holiday Shopping Forecast released today by America's Research Group and Inmar, only two-thirds of Americans are all or almost finished their Christmas shopping now, with only two days until Christmas.

"This is the worst Christmas season in the last ten years when it comes to retailers getting their customers to return to their stores to shop again this year....and many retailers are in grave danger because of it," says Britt Beemer, Chairman and CEO of America's Research Group.

Of the 24 retailers surveyed, only three retained 70% or more of their customer base, with Walmart topping the list at 88.1% followed closely by Dollar Tree at 80.4%, and Target at 72.1%.

Regarding shopping levels of return customers, the following retailers all saw increases: CVS (+42.6%), The Gap (+33.9%), American Eagle (+22.5%), Macy's (+21.5%), Best Buy (+16.9%) and Sears (+7.7%); while declines were shown at Target (-3.4%), JC Penney (-22.6%), ToysRUs (-25%), TJ Maxx (-30.4%), Ross (-33.1%), and Marshalls -57.3%.

"Target weathered the storm from the credit card security breach amazingly well," says Beemer, "largely due to a smart move on their part by giving consumers an additional 10%-off this past Saturday and Sunday."

Of those not finished shopping, those holding out for bigger bargains is up to 25.1% from 20.8% last year. "Twenty-two percent of shoppers said they were waiting for 60% to 70%-off sales to finish their Christmas shopping...and they didn't see it," says Beemer.

Of those who are shopping, consumers doing 75% or more of their holiday shopping at Walmart this year jumped to 28.8% this year from 20.6% last year; while enclosed shopping malls experienced another decline falling to 23.7% this year from 26.3% last year.

“Deals continue to make the difference this holiday season,” says John Ross, president, Inmar Analytics, and EVP Inmar. “Despite 78% of shoppers being finished with their holiday gift buying, there are very active shoppers still out in the marketplace and they’re looking hard for bargains. Among those shoppers who haven’t finished their holiday buying, better than 25% are holding out for even bigger sales – looking to top the deep discounts that fueled the season’s quick start and pushed many shoppers past planned budget limits.” Adds Ross, “Responses to survey questions from those shoppers who spent more than they originally planned reveal almost 15% attribute their additional spending to the great deals they found.”

The survey also reveals that consumers ordering gifts online is down from 41.7% in 2012 to 37.9% this year. And of those ordering gifts online, Amazon is down to 25.3% from 29.3% market share last year and Walmart is up to 8.7% from 6% market share last year. Gift card purchasing is surprisingly down this year to 46.4% from 60% last year.

Children’s clothing is up from 15.8% last year to 18.3% this year; and electronics increased from 21.7% last year to 27.6% this year.

“Retailers failed to excite shoppers this season,” says Beemer, “due to a conservative advertising strategy by only giving consumers 50%-off sales rather than the 60% - 70%-off deals they wanted.”

The ARG/Inmar research consisted of 1000 telephone interviews conducted December 20-22, 2013 at ARG headquarters in Charleston, SC. The error factor is plus or minus 3.8%. This concludes the most extensive study of Christmas shoppers by any research firm in America – seven national surveys from the first of November through this past weekend. The next ARG/Inmar shopping survey will be conducted in October 2014. The surveys will continue every week through the shopping season of 2014.

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About America’s Research Group

America’s Research Group, one of the nation’s foremost consumer research and strategic marketing firms, marked its 30th anniversary in 2009. 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 2012 American Business Award for Executive of the Year - Business Services and Company of the Year - Business Services.
www.argconsumer.com

About Inmar

Inmar is a technology company that operates intelligent commerce networks. Our platforms connect offline and online transactions in real time for leading retailers, manufacturers and trading partners across multiple industries which rely on Inmar to securely manage billions of dollars in transactions. Our Promotions, Supply Chain and Healthcare platforms enable commerce, generate meaningful data and offer growth-minded leaders actionable analytics and execution with real-time visibility. Founded in 1980, Inmar is headquartered in Winston-Salem, North Carolina with locations throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada.
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