

For Immediate Release

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America's Research Group and Inmar Forecasting Significant Increase in "Black Friday" Shopping

Results from latest Holiday Shopping Survey point toward an increasingly active retail season with shoppers more willing to spend and use credit cards but still looking for big bargains.

Charleston, SC / Winston-Salem, NC (November 13, 2013) According to the Christmas & Holiday Shopping Forecast released today by America's Research Group and Inmar, retailers can expect an increase of nearly 20 percent of Black Friday shoppers over last year, and indications are they're willing to spend more. Of those shoppers surveyed, 50 percent reported they would be in stores on November 29 – willing to spend but also looking to save.

Even with desire up, it will require deep discounts from retailers to close the deal. Almost a third of shoppers (31.2 percent) say they will be motivated only by 40-50% -off sales. Big bargains were important last year at 25.9 percent, but this year they're even stronger.

"If retailers give consumers mega discounts throughout the season, it will be a very strong season," says Britt Beemer, Chairman and CEO of America's Research Group.

Shoppers will also be more active online this year, with 25.8 percent describing themselves as shopping "often" via the Internet. This is up from 17.6 percent making the same self-designation in 2012. But, it won't be all high-tech when it comes to looking for deals and opportunities to stretch holiday budgets. More than two-thirds (67.2 percent) of shoppers will look at newspaper inserts as part of their pre-shopping preparations.

"The circular is still an important tool for shoppers when planning their purchases," says John Ross, president, Inmar Analytics. "Newspaper inserts are convenient, transportable, visually informative, very useful for product and price comparisons and effective in creating excitement regarding a prospective purchase."

According to the Forecast, consumers are loosening up on credit card usage. When asked how they expect to pay for most of their purchases in the coming months, 22.9 percent reported they'll opt for credit card spending – compared with the 16.1 percent willing to borrow last year. This coincides with Americans feeling less pressured from debt. This year, 13 percent described themselves as having to cut back on spending due to bills and debt. Last year, 21.8 percent were taking the same position. The impact this change will have on holiday gift buying will be significant.

(more)

“Good news for retailers! Consumers are feeling better overall this year about their debt, their jobs and they’re willing to pull out the plastic,” says Beemer. “We’re seeing a greater sense of freedom when it comes to spending money, and more saying ‘if I like what I see, I’ll buy it.’”

As for targeted purchases, electronics will, again, be at the top of many holiday shopping lists. America’s appetite for flat panel TVs remains strong with 19 percent of households planning to make a television purchase this year; this number holding steady from last year.

“The big winner is computers,” says Beemer, “with 20 percent of shoppers planning to make a PC or laptop purchase in the next three months. That’s a big increase over the 14 percent with the same plan last November.”

More consumers in the market for these premium consumer electronics will be heading to Walmart for their purchases. Walmart also wins against other retailers when it comes to layaway. Of those shoppers planning to make purchases this season by using store layaway programs, nearly half are choosing to do so at Walmart.

“The success of retail sales for Christmas 2013 now rests in the hands of the retailers who must decide whether getting shoppers in their stores is more important than higher earnings and fewer discounts,” says Beemer.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY:

More shoppers active on Black Friday:

50.0% planning to shop November 29
43.2% (2012)

Large increase in number of people making purchases online “often:”

25.8% (2013)
17.6% (2012)

Big bargains growing as a requirement for purchase:

31.2% (2013) describe themselves as, “want to buy when see items on sale at 40%-50%.”
25.9% (2012)

Debt pressure felt by shoppers declining:

13.0% (2013) describe themselves as, “cutting back on spending due to bills and debt”
21.8% (2012)

Shoppers voicing greater sense of freedom to spend money:

24.6% (2013) describe themselves as, “if I like what I see, I buy it.”
17.4% (2012)

More consumers willing to use credit cards to pay for most of their purchases in the coming month.

22.9% (2013)
16.1% (2012)

Shoppers increasing credit card use for Christmas/holiday gift shopping:

22.6% (2013)
17.9% (2012)

(more)

Improved shopping opportunities for consumers:

9.5% (2013) shop most often “when I get a paycheck”
18.0% (2012)

More shoppers willing to use credit cards if deals are “good enough:”

42.2% (2013)
33.4% (2012)

Shoppers expressing greater sense of freedom to purchase:

12.3% (2013) shop for and buy only for things “I must have”
23.2% (2012)
31.2% (2013) shop for and buy what “I want to buy”
18.7% (2012)

The ARG/Inmar research consisted of 1000 telephone interviews conducted November 8-11, 2013 at ARG headquarters in Charleston, SC. The error factor is plus or minus 3.8%. The next ARG/Inmar shopping survey will be conducted November 29-December 1. The surveys will continue every week through the shopping season.

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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. www.inmar.com