

For Immediate Release

Contacts:

Katharine Carroll
America's Research Group
ktc2000@aol.com
914-715-4777

Sharon Joyner-Payne
Vice President Communications, Inmar
sharon.joyner-payne@inmar.com
336-631-7663

For media on deadline:

Britt Beemer
ARG
843-345-0939

John Ross
Inmar
678-907-8317

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

More Consumers All Done Shopping Last Minute Shoppers Hold Out For 60% or 70%-Off Deals Kids Clothes & Electronics Big Winners Walmart & Amazon Take Lead

Charleston, SC / Winston-Salem, NC (December 16, 2013) -- According to the Christmas & Holiday Shopping Forecast released today by America's Research Group and Inmar, more consumers are completely finished with their holiday shopping. 48.3% report they are 90% or all done, compared with 45.2% this time last year. And the report shows more consumers who are parents say they have finished shopping for their children, with 60.2% all done as compared to 52.6% this time last year.

Of those consumers not yet finished their holiday shopping, a whopping 22.2% (versus 15.9% last year) say it's because they're not getting the really big discounts; and these hold-outs are planning to wait until the last three days to finish up their Christmas shopping.

"It is important to note that of those who shopped this weekend, 40.9% only shopped for a few advertised items," says Britt Beemer, Chairman and CEO of America's Research Group. "The American consumer is still extremely bargain-driven considering that 41% of consumers only shopped for deals and over 20% of shoppers stated the lack of 60%-70%-off bargains is having a major effect on their Christmas shopping."

"Shoppers are using all available means to stretch holiday budgets. In addition to holding out for deep discounts, better than 21% of shoppers are using coupons or rebates to save on holiday gift purchases," said John Ross, president, Inmar Analytics and EVP, Inmar.

Online Christmas shopping has slowed over last year with 41.9% of shoppers buying gifts online last year compared to 40.1% this year. Although, of those who are shopping online, Amazon continues to grow market share from 27.7% last year to 28.7% this year; while Walmart continues to grow (9.1% last year to 11.2% market share this year); and Sears surged this past weekend making the biggest jump in online sales this holiday season moving from 4.1% market share to 9.2% market share this year.

Gift card purchases are down this year, from 54.1% last year to 44.8% this year. And more consumers are using credit cards to pay for their purchases this Christmas season, up from 19.5% last year compared to 27.3% this year. And of those using credit cards, an increase from 45.6% to 56.0% are using their credit cards more than they planned to this Christmas shopping season.

The two big winners this holiday season are electronics, up from 19.8% last year to 39.2% this year and children's clothing, up from 13.6% last year to 17.1% this year. "As we predicted, for those parents who waited to finish their shopping for back-to-school apparel, Walmart is winning big," said Beemer.

Walmart remains the number-one store where consumers are doing most of their shopping this past weekend, up from 72.3% last year to 76.1% this year. Walmart is seeing the biggest sales growth in children's clothing, up from 11.5% last year to 17.5% this year.

More Americans have purchased a TV this year, up from 13.1% last year to 18.9%. And Walmart remains the number-one go-to store for TVs, with Best Buy experiencing serious declines (24.4% market share down to 10.1% market share this year). Computer sales are growing dramatically this year, up from 10.6% last year compared to 17.5% this year. Another big winner this season is video games, showing significant growth from 35.4% last year to 42.5% this season.

This past weekend was not good for mall retailers considering less than one in five shoppers shopped at an enclosed mall. Mall shopping is down this season compared to last year, from 23.5% last year to a 19.2% who visited a mall this past weekend.

"With more Americans finished with their Christmas shopping, retailers will need to pull out all the stops next weekend or they will experience negative sales levels for their stores this Christmas season," says Beemer.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY:

Consumers all or 90% finished shopping

48.3% (2013)

45.2% (2012)

Parents finished shopping for their kids

60.2% (2013)

52.6% (2012)

Consumers holding out for 60%or 70%-Off Deals

22.2% (2013)

15.9% (2012)

Walmart shopping

76.1% (2013)

72.3% (2012)

Mall Shopping

19.2% (2013)

23.5% (2012)

Online shopping

40.1% (2013)

41.9% (2012)

Amazon shopping

28.7% (2013)

27.7% (2012)

Walmart online shopping

11.2% (2013)

9.1% (2012)

Sears online shopping

9.2% (2013)

4.1% (2012)

Gift Card shopping

44.8% (2013)

54.1% (2012)

Credit Card shopping

27.3% (2013)

19.5% (2012)

Children's clothing

17.1% (2013)

13.6% (2012)

Electronics

39.2 % (2013)

19.8% (2012)

TVs:

18.9% (2013)

13.1% (2012)

Computers:

17.5% (2013)

10.6% (2012)

Video Games

42.5% (2013)

35.4% (2012)

The ARG/Inmar research consisted of 1000 telephone interviews conducted December 13-15, 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 December 20-22, 2013. 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.

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