

For Immediate Release

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**AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP HOLIDAY FORECAST #2 REVEALS
AMERICANS SAY IT WILL BE EASY TO FIND A JOB TODAY – WAY UP AT 62.9%
RESULT OF “TRUMP EFFECT”
AMERICANS FEEL BETTER ABOUT THE FUTURE AT 60%
ECONOMICALLY HOLIDAY-WISE CONSUMERS SAY FACING TOUGH TIMES
VAST MAJORITY SAY IF SHOP WILL DEPEND ON SALES
NUMBER OF AMERICANS EXPECTING BIGGER DEALS WAY UP**

CHARLESTON, SC - According to America's Research Group's second Holiday Shopping Forecast of the season, American consumers are far more optimistic about the future because of the election with 62.9% saying that they believe it would be easy to find a job today compared to 53.6% a year ago. And 60% say they are better off today than a year ago.

Americans additionally report a cautious approach to the shopping season due to their current economic situations. Americans report holding back on credit cards because of debt concerns with only 24.6% planning to make purchases using one this season compared to 28.9% last year. Americans also report that the optimism they feel about the future is not evident in their current work environments where they say they are not yet seeing hiring, raises and overtime. Only 31.3% say they are seeing fellow employees get overtime, down from last year.

As reported in last week's Holiday Survey and reinforced now again, the shopping season will depend more than ever on what retailers choose to do. If they offer unprecedented deals Americans will shop; if not, they will stay home. Deal fever is at an all-time high with 77.8% of Americans telling us last week that they will buy the early bird specials.

Deal-wise, 32.4% say they will buy when items are 40% to 50% off, up 11 points from last year. Those consumers looking for deal-based ads and buying when they see them is at an all-time high at 44.7%, up 6 points from last year.

The greatest percentage of Americans ever will opt for gift cards, at a very high 62.7% but in the affordable \$21-\$25 range. And those planning to purchase a computer or laptop is much lower with only 11.5% planning to buy one compared to 19.3% last year. The number of consumers buying online in September and October was the lowest since 2012 at 44.5%.

The number of consumers buying online overall is not growing but the consumer who does shop online is buying more gifts online at 43.2% compared to only 7.8% who said they were purchasing fewer gifts online.

Black Friday is a winner crowd-wise – as long as retailers provide unprecedented early bird specials. With more than ¾ of Americans depending on them, it could be the biggest Black Friday in history.

But once again as reported last week and emphasized by Americans this week: “It all depends on the retailers,” says Britt Beemer, Chairman of America’s Research Group.

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 November 16-21, 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 November 27, 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.