

For Immediate Release

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**NEW AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP RETAIL REPORT
REVEALS BEST AND WORST RETAILERS OF 2012 SEASON
ONLY THREE RETAIN 80% OR MORE OF CUSTOMER BASE -
WAL-MART, SAM'S CLUB, DOLLAR TREE
SEVEN RETAIL LOSERS LOSE OVER 40% OF CUSTOMER BASE
BARNES & NOBLE AT BOTTOM**

CHARLESTON, SC - America's Research Group's Updated Retail Report released December 24 and based on research concluded Sunday, December 23, 2012, shows the best and worst retailers of 2012. Of 25 retailers surveyed only three retained at least 80% of their customer base with Wal-mart at 93%, Sam's Club at 80% and Dollar Tree close at 79.7%, Big Lots at 76.1% and Amazon at 75.9%. Barnes & Noble, BJ's, The Gap, Lowe's and Costco were the worst with 47.8%, 49.5%, 53.1%, 53.9%, 56.2% customer retention respectively.

The Complete Best and Worst of the Holiday Shopping Season includes: Wal-Mart 93.0%; Sam's Club 80%; Dollar Tree 79.7%; Big Lots 76.1%; Amazon 75.9%; Target 75.7%; Ross 72%; Marshalls 70.9%; Sears 67.4%; JC Penney 67.1%; Walgreens 69.9%; Old Navy 66%; Best Buy 63.6%; Macy's 62.8%; TJ Maxx 62.6 %; Kohl's 62.2%; American Eagle 61.5%; Toys R Us 61.1%; Home Depot 57.9%; CVS 57.7%; Costco 56.2%; Lowe's 53.9%; The Gap 53.1%; BJ's 49.5%; Barnes & Noble 47.8%.

Winners and Losers by category: Wal-mart (93%) beat Target (75.7%); Sam's Club (80%) beat Costco (56.2%); Ross (72%) beat Marshalls (70.9%) and TJ Maxx (62.6%); Sears (67.4%) edged out JC Penney (67.1%); Walgreens (69.9%) beat CVS (57.7%); American Eagle (61.5%) beat out The Gap (53.1%); Home Depot (57.9%) beat Lowe's (53.9%).

"A well-marketed, well-merchandised retailer needs to retain 80% or more of its customer base," said ARG Chairman and CEO Britt Beemer, "but only three made that list in 2012. In previous years, at least seven or more did so. If you're losing one-third or more of your customers, you've got serious problems.

"The Survey also says a lot about the mindset of the American consumer. In the top five, one is a discount store, one is a member warehouse, one is a dollar store, one offers closeouts and one is an online retailer. Consumers were very frugal this year as we said all along. They wanted deals

and this is what happens when everyone wants a deal - record numbers of retailers were unable to keep up and they lost large numbers of customers.

"It also tells us which retailers have momentum moving forward, which have excess inventory for after-Christmas sales and which won't survive next year. How can you survive if you're giving away one-third of your customer base? Barnes & Noble was last on the list. Sears at 67.4% lost at least one-third of its customer base four or five years ago; and JC Penney at 67.1% lost all of that this year. You never want to give away one-third of customers and most did this this year."

Christmas retail sales should rise 1.8% to 2.8% this year.

Media on deadline, please call Britt Beemer *directly* at 843-345-0939

The ARG research consisted of 1000 telephone interviewed December 22-23, 2012 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 Christmas shopping survey will be conducted in October 2013. The surveys will continue every week through the shopping season of 2013 as they did in 2012.

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.