



For Immediate Release
December 10, 2007

Contact:

Mary Rownd
American Marketing Association
(312)-542-9088
mrownd@ama.org

Christine Heath
Fleishman-Hillard Inc.
(312) 932-2804
christine.heath@fleishman.com

**It's the Chat Room rather than the Dressing Room
where Holiday Purchasing Decisions are Being Made**
Holiday gifts that make a difference are stacking up under the tree

***American Marketing Association: social networking and
cause related marketing top holiday trends.***

Chicago, IL (Dec. 10, 2007) – This holiday season consumers want two things when they are shopping – a good friend and a good cause. More Americans are taking their holiday shopping to social networking sites rather than the mall and the gifts they are buying come wrapped with a bow that supports a good cause, according to a recent American Marketing Association survey.

“We’re seeing more consumers seeking out a chance to use social networking sites as a way to chat and share opinions on holiday gifts,” said Nancy Costopulos, Chief Marketing Officer of the American Marketing Association. “In turn, companies are finding they have the flexibility to more overtly market to those consumers on these sites than they did a year ago. And when consumers are ready to buy, they are flocking more often to companies who use cause related marketing and want to make a difference.”

Social Networking Sites

More than half of those responding to the survey said they would visit a social networking site this holiday season. When they sign in they are looking for holiday gift ideas, scouring for upcoming holiday sales, or downloading coupons.

- Nearly half (47 percent) of all respondents said they would go to a social networking site to download coupons or search for gift ideas if those services were available.
- Nearly as many said they would visit a social networking site to find out about upcoming sales in stores or discounts on products (45 percent); while fewer (31 percent) said they would buy products, if given the option.
- Twenty two percent of respondents would read or write a product review on a blog. Additionally, 26 percent would post or view videos, if those services were available.

“We’re starting to see a new kind of commercialization of social networking sites that didn’t exist even just a few months ago,” said Costopulos. “Consumers are more welcoming now of the

presence of retailers on these sites, but marketers have to bring more than just promotions, they have to create a way to connect and offer something that makes these shoppers feel special.”

Cause Related Marketing

Consumers are influenced by more than what is on the “Hot Picks” list. This year they are showing that cause matters. One out of every three consumers said they would be more likely to buy a product or service if they knew that a certain amount of the purchase price was being donated directly to a cause or campaign. Young people ages 18 to 24 and women are most likely to buy a product or service connected to cause related marketing.

- Forty percent of women versus 30 percent of men were more likely to buy a product or service if they knew that a certain amount of the purchase price was being donated directly to a cause or campaign.
- Forty-six percent of respondents ages 18 to 24 versus 31 percent of respondents 45 to 64 were more likely to buy a product or service if they knew that a certain amount of the purchase price was being donated directly to a cause or campaign.

Best Source for Information this Season

According to American Marketing Association’s consumer survey, more shoppers are choosing the web for information about products and services this season.

When asked to think about how they use media, 44 percent of consumers responded that the best way to connect them with information about new products and services is through online channels, including the Internet, email and e-newsletters, social networking Web sites and user-generated video sharing sites. In 2006, only 30 percent of consumers rated online sources as best.

“With skyrocketing numbers of consumers turning to the Internet this holiday season, the significance of successful online campaigns is clear,” said Costopulos. “Companies that get it right will fully integrate their online strategy with all other aspects of the marketing mix for a comprehensive approach.”

Full Survey Results

For an executive summary of the data, please contact Christine Heath at christine.heath@fleishman.com or call 312-932-2804.

Survey Methodology

American Marketing Association, the largest marketing association in North America for individuals and organizations involved in the practice, teaching and study of marketing worldwide, partnered with Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) to conduct the research on 2007 holiday shopping. Between September 20-21, 2007, ORC conducted online interviews with 1,174 Internet-representative consumers 18 years of age or older in the continental United States. The sample was comprised of 528 men and 646 women.

The sampling error associated with a sample size of 1,174 is plus/minus two to three percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

About the American Marketing Association

The American Marketing Association is the largest marketing association in North America. It is a professional association for individuals and organizations involved in the practice, teaching and study of marketing worldwide. It is also the source that marketers turn to every day to deepen their marketing expertise, elevate their careers, and, ultimately, achieve better results. American Marketing Association members are connected to a network of experienced marketers nearly 40,000 strong.

American Marketing Association offers highly acclaimed Training Series, professional conferences and Hot Topic events focused on the immediate needs of marketers, as well as trends shaping the future. American Marketing Association's website, MarketingPower.com, is the everyday connection to marketing data, articles, case studies, best practices and a robust job bank. Additionally, the American Marketing Association is the source for the field's top magazines and journals, including *Marketing News*. Through local and collegiate chapters, American Marketing Association members are connected with the best people and the best practices.

American Marketing Association is also the creator of Mplanet, the unparalleled industry event that brings together the world's most creative thinkers, including senior marketing executives, top academicians and other thought leaders, to share fresh insights, new concepts, the latest research and solutions for the most pressing marketing challenges and opportunities. Mplanet 2009 will take place in Orlando, Florida, January 26-28, 2009.

For more information on the American Marketing Association or Mplanet 2009, please visit www.MarketingPower.com.

###