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Direct Mail Boosts Online Commerce *Research Shows Catalogs, Shipping Choice Power Online Shopping*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Santa might not be ready to make a list and check it twice yet, but online retailers and marketers gearing up now for the holiday season need to consider two pieces of research from comScore that show important consumer shopping and shipping habits.

According to the “2007 Multi-Channel Direct Mail Study,” direct-mail recipients were nearly twice as likely to purchase from a retail website as those who received only an Internet communication. And when the mail piece was a catalog, the results were even better – influencing more than two-thirds of shoppers to visit the site. That traffic created a 163 percent increase in sales over those who did not receive a catalog.

Catalog recipients typically buy more items (4.1 compared to 3.2) and spend more money (\$88 compared to \$69), the study showed.

“Catalogs can be used to acquire new customers and educate a new audience about brands and products because they allow for longer messages and more detailed information,” said Anita Bizzotto, Postal Service chief marketing officer and executive vice president. “And if they grab attention or have great pass-along value, direct mail and catalogs can reach household decision makers.”

That same research showed that catalogs jumpstart holiday shopping. In November, catalog recipients were significantly more likely than non-catalog recipients to have shopped online for holiday gifts.

Consumers were equally clear in wanting a choice on how to receive their online orders. “Package Delivery Research” found that 63 percent of online shoppers want an option to select the delivery company for their packages. A retailer’s favorability improves with the option to choose. Six out of 10 shoppers said they have a better opinion of companies if they could always select their preferred delivery company.

About 28 percent of business owners and 12 percent of consumers who shop online do not buy from companies that don’t offer a choice. Almost half of consumers who selected a delivery company chose the U.S. Postal Service (46 percent), according to the research.

“Mail and the Internet do indeed work together,” said Bridget O’Toole, executive vice president at comScore. “Successful marketers are using catalogs to attract more shoppers and to convert them to buyers.”

For a copy of the White Paper, please contact Joanne Veto at joanne.m.veto@usps.gov or 202-268-3118.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation, 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$73 billion and delivers nearly half the world’s mail.

