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LEO BURNETT UNVEILS THE TRANSFORMATION OF ASPIRATION: A FORECAST OF HUMAN BEHAVIORAL TRENDS IN 2012

Report Outlines a New Kind of American Defined By Happiness, Purchase Risk, Healthy Choices, Masculinity and Family

CHICAGO – Dec. 14, 2011 – Today, Leo Burnett Chicago released its first annual study of people and behavior highlighting six key consumer trends that will have a lasting effect on American brands and marketers in 2012 and beyond.

The study, “HumanKind 2012: The Transformation of Aspiration,” forecasts the evolution of American society as we know it. It deviates from the predictable “Big Plan” to go to school, grow up, get married, have kids and climb the corporate ladder. It’s a new kind of America. Men stay at home, women win the bread and nearly 40 percent of all children are born to a single mom. Thanks to daily deal giants, people refuse to pay full price for anything. Food is now viewed as an affordable luxury. The deck is stacked, the system isn’t fair and people are suspicious. They read the fine print. For brands and marketers pioneering this changing environment is challenging.

“From the evolving American family to the rise of collective bargaining and the continuing decline of masculinity, the face of the American consumer has forever changed,” said Stephen Hahn-Griffiths, Chief Strategy Officer of Leo Burnett. “In 2012, successful brands need to adjust to this reality and find relevant ways to connect with new audiences and influencers - or risk losing loyal customers at an alarming rate.”

Below are six key trends brands and marketers should embrace in order to successfully engage with today’s consumer.

- **Sense of fairness declines, happiness inequality rises:** Americans as a population have traditionally been optimistic and happy. Even during the years leading up to the recession everyone was happy, regardless of social class. Since the economic downturn, that’s all changed. Americans are unhappier than ever, especially those with lower incomes. Feelings of inequality and unfairness are rampant and continue to dwindle.
 - **Implication for brands:** This year’s winning brands will be those that consistently deliver acts of fairness and behave with morality. A company that treats all customers fairly will earn Americans’ trust and patronage.
- **The average American family is anything but:** Finish school, get a job, get married, have a family. That plan still exists, but only for some. Forty percent of kids are born to an unmarried mother. More couples have children out of wedlock. People define their own family situation and shape their lives according to their own needs, not their peer group.

- **Implication for brands:** Popular media is slow to catch up to the changing American family. Diverse images of family ring true with consumers and can be a great way to show how your brand fits in to today's reality.
- **Men evolve as masculinity declines:** The universal archetype of masculinity is over. The old rules that define a man's role in the home and office do not apply in today's world. Women are out-earning their husbands and men accept it. In fact, 77 percent of all men are comfortable with their wives earning more than them and 72 percent are okay with staying home to take care of the children.
 - **Implication for brands:** Speak with caution when referring to traditional views of masculinity. Focus instead on shaping identities and transforming individuals, not a specific gender.
- **Healthy is in the eye of the beholder:** Despite the rising obesity crisis, food remains an affordable luxury – a way to treat oneself when being forced to cut back in other ways. Forty-seven percent of Americans say they would like restaurants to offer healthier items, but only 23 percent actually order those items. When given the choice between a burger or a salad, consumers see more value in the satisfaction of eating a burger than a salad, especially on a tight budget.
 - **Implications for brands:** Regardless if you are in the food industry, think about how to satisfy consumers' desire for smaller, bite sized luxuries. A small amount of satisfaction can go a long way.
- **Collective bargaining is a weapon of survival:** Daily deal giants such as Groupon and LivingSocial have paved the way for Americans to score deals on everything and anything. People don't expect or want to pay full price ever again and collectively demand better deals and offerings in the palm of their hand, each morning.
 - **Implication for brands:** Integrate daily deals with customer loyalty programs. To compensate for downward pressure on margins, daily deal technology needs to segment customers that are already bargaining and offer more personalized deals to heavy users.
- **Social/mobile technology: abandon the novel, embrace the practical:** There will be 20 million new smartphone users in 2012. These users want to leverage social platforms and mobile in their shopping and buying repertoire, but they need mobile and social to add value, not noise.
 - **Implication for brands:** To activate shoppers through social and mobile, marketers need to identify the problems shoppers are trying to solve and provide informed solutions. Brands that don't provide practical experiences will be ignored.

“This year's power brands will be those that quickly adapt to changing human behavior and recognize how this shift is reshaping the fabric of American society,” said Hahn-Griffiths.

To view the “HumanKind 2012: The Transformation of Aspiration” video please visit, <http://vimeo.com/33619022>.

About Leo Burnett Company, Inc.

[Leo Burnett Worldwide \(www.leoburnett.com\)](http://www.leoburnett.com) is one of the world's largest agency networks and the parent company of Leo Burnett and its marketing services arm, [Arc Worldwide](#). Leo Burnett, a HumanKind communications company, has a simple and singular approach: put a brand's purpose at the center of communications to truly connect with people. Leo Burnett, one of the most awarded creative communications companies in the world, creates "Acts, not just Ads," for some of the world's most valuable brands including The Coca-Cola Company, Kellogg, McDonald's, Hallmark, P&G, Allstate and Nintendo.

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