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## NEW CONSUMER SURVEY IDENTIFIES KEY WORD-OF-MOUTH INFLUENCERS

### In Financial Category, Small Group of “Big Circle Influentials” Hold Sway

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**NEW YORK, NY, December 3, 2008**—When it comes to word-of-mouth communications regarding personal finance, a group comprising 11.5% of the U.S. adult population are the key influencers of other people, according to a new survey from Mediamark Research & Intelligence (MRI).

On the surface, this segment of approximately 25.4 Million adults mirrors the typical American adult in terms of age and income. Dubbed “Big Circle Influentials” because of their relatively large sphere of influence, these key consumers are at par with the national average age for adults (45.4 years) and have only 4% higher household income than the national average of \$65,500. However, they score well above the national average for key financial and wealth indicators.

According to MRI’s financial Word of Mouth Segmentation, Big Circle Influentials are:

- 33% more likely to own a home valued at \$500,000 or more
- 157% more likely to have made 10 or more investment transactions in the last 12 months
- 109% more likely to own securities with a value of \$150,000 or more, and,
- 44% more likely to have sought financial planning and/or money management advice

“It’s vital for financial advertisers to be able to identify Big Circle Influentials because these thought leaders advise family, friends, neighbors and colleagues, as well as people they don’t necessarily know, through viral and social networks,” said Anne Marie Kelly, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Strategic Planning at MRI. “In this case, targeting on demographics alone would not allow marketers to reach this key segment.”

<b>Profile of</b>		
<b>"Big Circle Influentials" in Personal Finance</b>		
<b><u>Demographics</u></b>	<b>Big Circle Influentials</b>	<b>Total U.S. Adults</b>
Average Age	45.4	45.4
Average Household Income	\$ 67,900	\$ 65,500
<b>Financial Profile</b>		
<b><i>Percent More Likely Than Average U.S. Adult to.....</i></b>		
Own a Home Valued at \$500,000 or more	<b>33%</b>	
Have Acquired Securities and Investments in Last 12 Months	<b>67%</b>	
Have Made 10+ Investment Transactions in Last 12 Months	<b>157%</b>	
Have Securities Valued at \$150,000 or more	<b>109%</b>	
Own an IRA	<b>30%</b>	
Own a 401K	<b>20%</b>	
Seek Financial Planning Counsel	<b>44%</b>	
<b>Source:</b> MRI Spring 2008 Omnibus Recontact Study		

MRI's Word-of-Mouth Segmentation is based on a mail recontact survey of households that previously participated in MRI's *Survey of the American Consumer*, a single-source consumer database based on personal interviews with 26,000 respondents per year. Consumers are categorized by their level of influence in recommending products and services (in the last 12 months) to family and friends, neighbors and colleagues, and strangers they encounter in stores or online.

MRI's Word-of-Mouth data is integrated with previously collected media usage and exposure information as well as usage information on nearly 6,000 brands across 550 categories, so that MRI subscribers can more easily profile and reach these influencers.

MRI also identifies word-of-mouth influencers for Vacation/Travel, Automotive, Food and Technology.

"Word-of-mouth influencers vary from category to category, but among them one thing remains constant: their ability to impact the attitudes and behaviors of the people within their sphere of influence," said Kelly. "MRI not only identifies this key group in several categories, but through our extensive media usage information, we can help marketers build media and promotion plans to successfully reach them."

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## **About MRI...**

Founded in 1979, MRI interviews approximately 26,000 U.S. adults in their homes each year, asking about their use of media, their consumption of products and their lifestyles and attitudes.

MRI is the country's leading provider of magazine audience and multimedia research data. The company releases data from *Survey of the American Consumer* (adults 18+) twice yearly, in the spring and fall. MRI data have become the basic media-planning currency for the majority of the media plans that are created each year by national advertisers and their agencies. The company's 26,000 in-home interviews each year represent the biggest survey of its kind.

MRI Starch, a leader in providing marketing intelligence of print advertising effectiveness, is a division of MRI.

MRI is part of GfK Group AG, Nuremberg, Germany. The GfK Group is the No. 4 market research organization worldwide. Its activities cover the three business sectors of Custom Research, Retail and Technology and Media. The Group has 115 companies covering more than 100 countries. Of a total of approximately 10,000 employees, more than 80% are based outside Germany.

For more information, please visit <http://www.mediamark.com/>.