

2nd Annual Better Homes and Gardens Best New Product Awards Winners Announced

Companion Shopper Survey conducted by BrandSpark International of Over 50,000 Consumers Reveals Key Insights into the Minds of Today's American Shopper

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NEW YORK, Jan. 22 /PRNewswire/ -- *Better Homes and Gardens* Best New Product Awards, one of the largest North American consumer survey programs focused on new product development and innovation, today revealed the program's top winners, along with research and insights from its companion second annual BrandSpark American Shopper Study.

Conducted by independent market research firm BrandSpark International, the study surveyed more than 50,000 consumers and uncovered key findings in the areas of: recessionary shopping behaviour, healthy eating, future spending priorities, private labels versus premium brands, organic and natural foods, environmental accountability, money-saving strategies, and more.

The study is used to compile the winners of the 2010 Best New Product Awards where consumers voted upon 135 products, with 42 winners chosen from 55 leading manufacturers.

The Top 2010 Best New Product Award Winners are:

- Best in Health & Beauty Category and Best in Show: **Olay Professional Pro-X Wrinkle Protocol**
- Best in Food & Beverage Category: **Yoplait Smoothie**
- Best in Household Care Category: **Cascade Complete All-in-1 Action Pacs**

For a complete list of winning products, please visit www.BestNewProductAwards.biz

"Better Homes and Gardens and BrandSpark have teamed up once again to bring these survey results to marketers and help them understand how consumers are behaving in these unprecedented times," James Carr, Vice President, Group Publisher of *Better Homes and Gardens*. "We expect these insights to help them make informed decisions on how to reach and influence today's principal shoppers."

At a January 26th New York breakfast presented by *Better Homes and Gardens*, Robert Levy, President and CEO of BrandSpark International and founder of the BNPA will present key findings on:

Recession Impact - More Americans Eating at Home, Not Time Crunched as in Previous Years

"We can see the impact of the recession on attitudes towards the environment and health - with both losing ground in terms of importance," says Levy, "even so - the vast majority of Americans (**69%**) still like trying new products. People have made a big shift to eat at home more and as a result are spending more time and money in the grocery store. Finding new products that really deliver is more important than ever, especially with shoppers demanding greater value for money."

- **69%** of Americans like trying new products.
- **66%** of Americans agree that they "enjoy cooking for myself and my family."
- Only **23%** of Americans agree that they "often don't have time to cook."
- Only **23%** of Americans agree that they "would be happy to never have to cook."

Private Label versus Premium Brands

"Understandably Americans want more value for their dollar," says Levy, "and many are turning to private label or in-store brands to deliver. Although consumer perception of private label quality has decreased slightly, more Americans are still buying private label brands versus premium brands as they perceive they offer extremely good value for money."

- **59%** of Americans think that private label or in-store brand products are just as good as brand name products
- **66%** of consumers believe that private label brands are usually extremely good value for money.
- **56%** of Americans have purchased more private label products in the past 12 months
- **68%** of Americans tend to purchase the same brands on a regular basis

Environmental Accountability

"Over the past number of years, we have seen environmental accountability grow to be a major concern for American consumers," says Levy. "However, we have also seen the impact of the economy on environmental attitudes."

- **77%** of Americans still feel that companies are exploiting environmentally friendly claims for marketing purposes.
- Packaging is still one of the top environmental concerns for consumers;**75%** believe that manufacturers still have a long way to go to reduce the amount of packaging.
- **52%** of Americans feel that it is important that a new product is better for the environment, a decrease from **63%** in last year's study.

Healthier Options in Food & Beverage

"Healthy living is still an important concern for Americans," says Levy. "Consumers want products with added health benefits and they are willing to pay more for products that will help to prevent illness. One of the most interesting things we're seeing is a rising consumer confidence in food safety."

- **71%** of Americans want products that offer healthier option
- **60%** of consumers are concerned about receiving added health benefits from the products that they purchase.
- **61%** of consumers say they concerned about food safety, down from 71% last year

The top five health concerns Americans reported:

- Health Insurance 2. Weight Loss 3. H1N1 4. Diabetes 5. Cancer. Health Insurance rose to the top spot this year, up from # 6 in last year's study.
- **79%** of Americans believe that "there is a lot I can do with food and nutrition to prevent illness."

Although the debate between natural versus organic products rages on,**50%** of American consumers believe that "it is important that a new product is made from all-natural ingredients" and **37%** believe that "it is more important to me that a product is natural than organic." "Part of this can be explained by consumer skepticism," adds Levy. Among consumers who did not purchase organic products, **39%** stated that they "don't trust that all products labeled as organic are actually organic" and stated that they "are confused by what the term organic actually guarantees." "It appears that further consumer education is required in the natural versus organic debate," adds Levy.

What Makes Americans Buy Certain Products?

The BrandSpark American Shopper Study also asks consumers why they make certain purchases. Following are the top five "Purchase Drivers" in the three categories the survey tracks.

Food & Beverage:

- Taste 2. Price 3. Fresh 4. Looks Appetizing 5. Smells Good

Health & Beauty:

- Price 2. Proven Effective 3. Simple to Use 4. Trusted Brand 5. Allergy Tested

Household Products:

- Cleans Thoroughly 2. Price 3. Effective 4. Delivers as Promised 5. Works the First Time

First Annual Global Trends Study

In addition to the BrandSpark American Shopper Study, the company also conducted trend research in several key global markets including Canada, the U.K., France, Germany, Australia, Brazil and China. "What became clear is that on certain issues, shoppers globally had similar views, but on many critical issues the views of the shoppers in these countries differed significantly - especially in the areas of the economy, the environment and confidence," says Levy.

- American consumers continue to be concerned about the economy, as **81%** feel we are still in a recession. The majority of consumers in the UK (**79%**) and France (**71%**) are just as concerned about the economy, whereas only 58% of Canadians are concerned
- Only **59%** of Americans are willing to purchase reusable bags to reduce the amount of plastic, less than Canada (**75%**), the UK (**85%**), Brazil (**88%**) and even China (**92%**).

About the Study

Conducted October 12th - December 8, 2009, the BrandSpark American Shopper Study included key questions about individual product appeal, intent to repurchase, consumer confidence level, expected future spending habits, and a number of other insight provoking queries. This year, **135** products were evaluated, with **42** winners chosen from **55 leading manufacturers** in categories that included cereal, juice, ice cream, anti aging skin care, oral care, shampoo and household cleaners. Each category had a minimum of three products from at least two different manufacturers. In order to win, the product had to have the highest combined score on re-purchase intent among those who had previously purchased the product and product appeal.

About BrandSpark International

BrandSpark International is an independent market research and brand strategy firm with a strong focus on North American consumer trends, innovation and new product research. BrandSpark delivers *Actionable Insights* providing Research with Meaning.

About Better Homes and Gardens

Better Homes and Gardens is America's leading lifestyle magazine for women who have a passion for the home and the life they create there. With a circulation of 7.6 million and a readership of nearly 40 million, Better Homes and Gardens delivers smart, approachable editorial on design and individual style, decorating and gardening, food and entertaining and personal and family well-being.

SOURCE: BrandSpark

Web site: <http://www.BestNewProductAwards.biz/>

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