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## CUSTOMER SERVICE IS A PRIMARY FACTOR IN CONSUMER CHOICE TO BUY AGAIN AND RECOMMEND TO FRIENDS, FINDS SPHERION SURVEY

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla., January 11, 2011 — As consumers are becoming increasingly savvy about where they choose to invest their hard-earned dollars, a recent survey shows that advertising isn't the primary persuasion when it comes to buying decisions. It's customer service, which 72 percent of consumers say influences their decision heavily when considering a product or service to buy.

According to the 2010 Customer Service Survey conducted by Monster on behalf of Spherion, customer service was second only to price and quality when people decide where to put their money and trust.

However, a reputation for good customer service is tough to earn. The survey found that over the past three months, only 32 percent of people have had overall good customer service experiences 80 percent or more of the time. Most people's experiences dipped lower, with 23 percent having good service 60 to 80 percent of the time and 23 percent having good service 40 to 60 percent of the time. About one in five experienced good service less than 40 percent of the time.

"The survey findings illustrate what we have believed for many years, and that is the importance of delivering excellent customer service as a means to establish customer loyalty and literally earn more market share," says Joanie Ruge, Senior Vice President Field Operations. "As demonstrated by the survey findings, providing unmatched customer service requires commitment beyond lip service. In our own organization, we have embedded actionable, measurable components of our Service Excellence Program that hold employees of all levels from account executives to senior management, accountable to meeting customer expectations."

### *Bad Customer Service Has Tough Consequences for Business*

The survey also found that when people experienced bad service, 69 percent of them said they would tell a friend about what happened to them. More than half (59 percent) would tell a company representative, and 37 percent would post their opinion via social networking such as Facebook or Twitter. One in five (19 percent) would choose to write a review online, and eight percent would contact the media.

A bad experience is tough for a company to overcome, too—48 percent of people who experience poor customer service demand an apology, refund *and* incentives or coupons to return. About one in ten (13 percent) wouldn't even find these amends acceptable and would refuse to repeat their business no matter what.

"Clearly, it is simply good business to make every effort to quickly identify customer service issues and respond to them promptly," says Ruge. "In fact, our organization administers more than 500,000 surveys a year to our clients so as to ensure we gain feedback and areas for improvement, because we know a reputation can take a lifetime to build and an instant to lose."

### *Good Service Is Surprisingly Easy to Define*

While earning back lost trust can be difficult if not impossible, keeping that trust can mean a company earns a lot of loyalty. Only one percent of those surveyed said that good or great customer service wouldn't make them more likely to buy a product or use a service again.

*more*

In other words, almost 100 percent of people would want to repeat a purchase if they had a great experience.

Customer service traits that are rated as the most important were also the simplest. Courteous and well-mannered treatment and clear communication were each named most important by 90 percent of respondents. Other major factors in good service were competency and knowledge of the service staff, ability to resolve issues in a timely manner, attentiveness and expectations being met.

### *Word of Mouth is Everything*

Of those surveyed, 73 percent said they would tell a friend if they had a good experience. And the word of a friend counts for quite a lot; 66 percent of those surveyed said they were "very likely" to do business with a company based on a trusted friend's recommendation, and 29 percent were "somewhat likely."

On the other hand, half (51 percent) of people said they were very unlikely to do business with a company if it had a bad recommendation from someone they knew. Only 10 percent were somewhat or very likely to ignore that advice and do business with the company anyway.

### **Methodology**

The November Spherion Customer Service survey was conducted online within the United States by Monster Worldwide on behalf of Spherion between November 19 and November 22, 2010 among a U.S. sample of 566 consumers registered on Monster who indicated they wanted to participate in this online survey.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with non-response, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Monster feels the use of "margin of error" is misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, un-weighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published surveys come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were randomly selected from among those who have agreed to receive communication from Monster, so no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

### **About Spherion**

Spherion Corporation (NYSE: SFN) is a strategic workforce solutions company that provides recruiting, staffing, consulting and outsourcing specialties to meet the evolving needs of companies and job candidates. As an industry pioneer for more than 60 years, Spherion has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in temporary, temp-to-hire and full-time jobs. With approximately 575 locations in the United States and Canada, Spherion delivers strategic workforce solutions that improve business performance. Spherion provides its services to approximately 8,000 customers, from Fortune 500 companies to a wide range of small and mid-size organizations. Employing more than 160,000 people annually through its network, Spherion is one of North America's largest employers, providing general staffing, technology services, professional services and outsourcing. To learn more, visit [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com).