



Sign of the Holiday Times: Survey Reveals 45 Percent Who Receive a Gift of Cash Would Use it to Cover Daily Expenses

Seventy-Eight Percent Find Cash a Smarter Way to Spend Money

Western Union Provides Sensible Solutions for Holiday Gift Giving

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., Dec 01, 2009 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- The Western Union Company (NYSE:WU), a leader in the money transfer segment of global payments, found in a consumer survey* that cash is the gift topping holiday wish lists this year, with 45 percent of respondents indicating they would use a gift of cash to pay for daily expenses, such as gas, groceries, and other household bills.

"The importance and desirability of cash cannot be underestimated. More than half of the consumers we surveyed (53 percent) know someone who wants cash as a gift to help cover daily expenses this holiday season," said Jorge Consuegra, senior vice president U.S. product management, Western Union. "The best gifts are the ones most wanted and needed, and this year, that gift is cash."

While 52 percent of those surveyed expect to send a gift to someone who they will not be seeing in person this holiday season, six in ten Americans say the cost of shipping gifts, especially during the holiday season, are too high.

A majority on those surveyed said they were planning to skip Black Friday sales that were held last week, citing crowded stores as being a discouraging factor. Although retailers reported large crowds coming early for door busters, early retail reports indicate overall sales were below expectations.

Recognizing that consumers want a convenient holiday shopping experience, this holiday season Western Union is providing consumers with \$50 for a \$5 fee¹, when sending the gift of cash through December 26.

Another option are Western Union prepaid gift cards. The recently launched line of Western Union^(R) Visa^(R) Prepaid gift cards² and greeting cards are custom-tailored for just about every gift-giving holiday and occasion.

Western Union found that 69 percent of American consumers are planning to give the gift of cash, check or a gift card to friends and family this holiday season. Furthermore, 79 percent of consumers would prefer to receive a gift card this holiday season that could be used anywhere traditional credit cards are accepted.

Cash as a gift isn't just practical, it's an on-trend gift as well. According to the same Western Union survey, consumers are utilizing cash more often in their day-to-day finances, where in the past they may have relied on credit cards. Seventy eight percent of consumers find cash a smarter way to spend money. And, seventy seven percent of consumers also reported that using cash helps them stick to their budget, particularly useful when every penny counts.

"Consumers are rediscovering the practicality and convenience of cash, and so it's logical for an increased acceptance of cash as a gift during the holidays as well. And when it comes to sending cash, Western Union is the 'gold' standard," added Consuegra.

To learn more, visit www.westernunion.com.

* The survey, commissioned by Western Union and conducted by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, polled 1,000 people 18 years old and older between October 16 and October 18, 2009.

¹ Funds availability subject to terms and conditions of service, including Agent location hours and differences in time zones. See Send form for Restrictions.

² The Western Union(R) Gift Card is issued by MetaBank(TM) pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. INC. MetaBank; Member FDIC. A \$2.50 per month servicing fee applies after 12 consecutive months of non-use.

About Western Union

The Western Union Company (NYSE: WU) is a leader in global payment services. Together with its Vigo, Orlandi Valuta and Pago Facil branded payment services, Western Union provides consumers with fast, reliable and convenient ways to send and receive money around the world, as well as send payments and purchase money orders. Western Union, Vigo and Orlandi Valuta operate through a combined network of more than 400,000 agent locations in 200 countries and territories. In 2008, The Western Union Company completed 188 million consumer-to-consumer transactions worldwide, moving \$74 billion of principal between consumers, and 412 million consumer-to-business transactions. For more information, visit www.westernunion.com

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SOURCE: Western Union

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