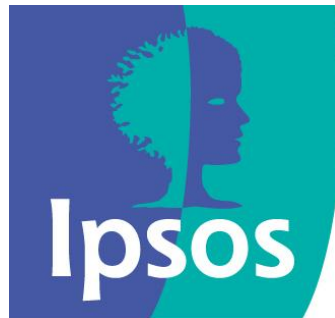


Affluent Optimism about Economy Rises, Rivaling a Four-Year High

Affluent Holiday Spending Prospects Looking Bright

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New York, NY – Affluent optimism is rising, and the result is a positive outlook for holiday spending, according to the Q4 2014 Ipsos Affluent Barometer, a study tracking the lives and spending habits of Americans with at least \$100,000 in annual household income (HHI). The survey found that 49% of Affluent Americans are optimistic about the U.S., up from 45% in Q3, and rivaling a four-year high; in contrast, only 31% are pessimistic about the economy. Optimism is particularly strong among Affluent men, Affluent Millennials, and Ultra Affluents (the three percent of the U.S. population with at least \$250K HHI).

Affluents anticipate spending an average of \$1,939 on holiday gifts this season, comparable to 2013, and maintaining the significant growth seen from 2012 to 2013. While typical spending per individual remained stable, the size of the Affluent population grew 8% in 2014, compounding 6% growth in 2013. The result, according to Dr. Stephen Kraus, Chief Insights Officer for the Ipsos Affluent Survey, is “continued ‘expansion without dilution’ of the Affluent market – five million more Affluents than last holiday season, earning and spending at the same levels. In terms of aggregate spending by the Affluent population, the prospects are bright for a happy holiday season.”

While average spending remains stable, growing Affluent enthusiasm for the holiday marketplace is evident in other ways as well. Nearly half (48%) of Affluents planned to purchase a relatively expensive or high-end gift, nearly double the 25% from a year ago.



Among the hottest gifts Affluents plan to give this year: vacations (on the giving list for 22% of Affluents), fragrances/colognes over \$30 (17%), and smartphones (13%) are all up significantly from a year ago.

Affluent holiday purchases are typically made at retail stores (45% of purchases) or by computer (44%), but one-in-ten purchases are made via mobile devices (6% by tablet, and 4% smartphones) – all figures comparable to a year ago. Among Affluent Millennial men, 20% of purchases are made via mobile devices.

The Affluent holiday travel outlook is similar to their spending outlook – maintaining last year's gains, and growing with the rising number of Affluents. Overall, more than half plan to travel at the holiday season, including 42% planning to travel for Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa, and 28% planning to travel for New Year's – levels comparable to 2013, and maintaining the travel growth evidenced the year before.

According to Evan Borak, SVP and Head of Ipsos MediaCT's Audience Measurement Group, "Today's economic reality is that one-fourth of population holds three-fourths of the net worth. Affluent spending is a crucial factor in mainstream categories as well as luxury ones, both in the holiday season and throughout the year. With the growing size and spending power of the Affluent population, every marketer in every category needs an Affluent strategy."

About the Ipsos Affluent Barometer

The Q4 2014 Ipsos Affluent Barometer USA was conducted online from October 24 to November 4, with 754 adults aged 18+ with living in a household with household income



(HHI) of \$100,000 or more ("Affluent"). The sample included 133 Ultra Affluents (HHI \$250K+). The data were weighted to reflect U.S. Census figures.

About Ipsos MediaCT

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