



## The YouGov Gift Giving Research 2007, commissioned by The VA

### **Introduction**

The VA (the UK trade body representing gift vouchers, cards and stored value solutions) publishes sales for the voucher and gift card market annually. In 2006 sales reached £3.2bn. Many forecasters predict this figure to rise by over 20% year-on-year as the gift card market in the UK develops. The VA commissioned research in September 2007, undertaken by YouGov, the objective was to gain a view on the attitudes of gift giving amongst the UK population. One key aspect of the research was to identify the trends in unwanted gifts. Unwanted gifts are a waste of money for the purchaser and a disappointment to the receiver. What percentage of gifts are unwanted and would the preference of the receiver have been to receive a gift card or voucher thus enabling them to choose a gift of their own choice?

### **What were the key finds?**

- Most people would not have bought up to half the gifts they received for themselves if they had a choice
- Four out of five people kept the presents they received in the past year – the rest exchanged them.
- Nearly 40% of people would rather have a gift card or gift voucher than a present chosen by someone else.
- Four out of five people have given a gift voucher as a present.
- 90% think that gift cards and vouchers are acceptable to give as presents.
- Freedom of choice is the overriding reason why the giving and receiving of gifts cards and vouchers is considered a good option.
- 82% of those who had received a gift card or voucher agreed that it let them choose what they really wanted.
- The older age categories were less likely to exchange gifts.
- 60% believe that giving a gift card or gift voucher avoids upsetting the recipient with an inappropriate gift.

### **Regional differences**

- Respondents from the East of England are more likely to give gift vouchers.
- 40% of East Midlanders thought that less than half of what they received as gifts were perfect for them.
- The most satisfied region was Wales, where the majority said they were very happy with the gifts they had received.
- West Midlanders are the most likely to exchange gifts.
- Residents of Yorkshire and Humberside are the least likely to exchange gifts.
- Respondents from Scotland were most in favour of gift cards and vouchers, giving them the freedom of choice to choose their own gifts.

## **Conclusions**

It is a concern that as many as half the gifts received would not have been the choice of the recipient. This means a significant amount of unwanted gifts. What is even more of a concern is only four out of five people returned unwanted gifts, so lots of unwanted gifts lurking at the back of wardrobes and in lofts across the country. All this money could be put to better use.

The research follows previous findings in highlighting the key reason for giving gift cards and gift vouchers – freedom of choice. Interestingly cards and vouchers are sometimes perceived as a ‘cop-out’ or last resort gift. One in three recipients stated that it showed the giver really cared about them and over 40% said they would prefer to receive a card or voucher. 60% also believe giving a gift card or voucher avoids upsetting the recipient by giving an inappropriate gift.

This summary was written in January 2008 by Andrew Johnson, Director General of The VA. The research was conducted by YouGov in September 2007; total sample size was 2157 adults.

For press comments or more details please contact The VA on 01344 751613 or [info@the-va.co.uk](mailto:info@the-va.co.uk)

## **About The VA**

The VA was established as a trade body in 1996 to represent the key players in the £3.2bn gift vouchers, gift cards and stored value solutions market. It provides an information and reference point for both voucher and gift card suppliers and customers, and is at the forefront of issues affecting the industry. Its main objective is to raise the profile and use of vouchers and gift cards within the UK, promoting the industry to consumers, businesses, government and other interested parties.

For further details contact Andrew Johnson, Director General on 01344 751613