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Largest Computer Products & Services Firms Ranked on How They Treat Online Customers in Spring 2004 Online Customer Respect Study

BELLEVUE, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 5, 2004--

Results Mixed: One-Third Don't Respond to Inquiries; Almost One-Third Share Personal Data With Third Parties Without Permission

The Customer Respect Group, an international research and consulting firm that focuses on how corporations treat their customers online, today released the results of its Spring 2004 Online Customer Respect Study of 61 computer products and services firms that rank among the countries largest 1000 companies.

Overall, Hewlett-Packard and Science Applications International scored highest, while Brightpoint scored lowest.

The study is the only one to bring objective measure to the analysis of corporate performance from an online customer's perspective. It assigns a Customer Respect Index (CRI(TM)) rating to each company on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest achievable score. The Customer Respect Index is a qualitative and quantitative in-depth analysis and independent measure of a customer's online experience when interacting with companies via the Internet.

By interviewing a representative sample of the adult Internet population, and by analyzing more than 1000 Web sites across a spectrum of industries in detail, The Customer Respect Group has determined the attributes that combine to create the entire online customer experience. These attributes have been grouped together and measured as indicators of Simplicity (ease of navigation), Privacy (respects customer privacy), Attitude (customer-focus of site), Transparency (open and honest policies), Responsiveness (quick and thorough responses to inquiries) and Principles (values and respects customer data). Combined they measure a company's overall Customer Respect.

Select Sector Comparisons

The Computer Products & Services sector demonstrated strengths in a few areas. Overall, most sites were easy to navigate, 59 of 61 have privacy policies and most did a fair job of explaining their privacy policies fully and clearly. On the flip side, however, surveyed firms fared worse than average in the Principles area, in which they are evaluated based upon how they protect personal data submitted to them online. In fact, a shocking 29 percent of companies share customers' data with unaffiliated third

parties without seeking their permission. Also, many firms demonstrated poor Responsiveness, the sector's lowest scoring attribute. Some 32 percent of this sector didn't respond to any inquires while another 23 percent only responded to half of submitted questions. Moreover, of those firms using AutoResponder technology in which they let customers know that their inquiry has been received and will be dealt with in a timely manner - an incredible 42 percent either never followed up with a response or only responded half of the time.

"Research indicates that 82 percent of Internet users decline to provide any personal information because too many details were asked for that didn't seem necessary," said Roger Fairchild, president of The Customer Respect Group. "And 64 percent decide not to buy online because they aren't certain how their personal data might be used. High-tech firms need to wake up to the fact that sharing information without permission is bad for business. Moreover, since, on average, users abandon 20 percent of Web sites they visit due to an unsatisfactory experience, you have to wonder why more than half of high-tech firms aren't responding to questions directly posed to them. Clearly, being technologically savvy doesn't correlate directly to providing a high-quality Web site experience."

The highest ranked organizations within the sector were Hewlett-Packard and Science Applications International (9.5 out of 10), while the lowest was Brightpoint at 2.6. The sector's average was 6.8. Beyond these scores, the report conveys, in great detail, improvement opportunities for each company. The sector's Spring 2004 ranking is as follows:

Computer Products & Services Firm	Total CRI
Hewlett-Packard Company	9.5
Science Applications International Corporation	9.5
International Business Machines Corporation	9.0
Xerox Corporation	9.0
Lexmark International, Inc.	8.8
Intuit, Inc.	8.7
GetThere	8.5
Oracle Corporation	8.5
Avnet, Inc.	8.4
Western Digital Corporation	8.3
Electronic Data Systems Corporation	8.3
Unisys Corporation	8.2
Microsoft Corporation	8.2
EarthLink, Inc.	8.1
IMS Health Inc.	8.1
EA GAMES	8.0
BMC Software, Inc.	7.9
eBay Inc.	7.9
Dell Computer Corporation	7.9
Pitney Bowes Inc.	7.9
Fiserv Inc.	7.8
Cadence Design Systems, Inc.	7.7
The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation	7.6
NCR Corporation	7.5
Ikon Office Solutions, Inc.	7.3
Perot Systems Corporation	7.3

Compuware Corporation	7.2
CDW	7.2
Sun Microsystems, Inc.	7.0
DST Systems, Inc.	6.9
Symbol Technologies, Inc.	6.8
Adobe Systems, Incorporated	6.8
CellStar Corporation	6.7
Maxtor Corporation	6.6
Novell, Inc.	6.6
Apple Computer, Inc.	6.6
Veritas Software Corporation	6.4
Arrow Electronics, Inc	6.4
VeriSign, Inc.	6.3
Computer Sciences Corporation	6.3
BearingPoint, Inc.	6.2
Agilsys Inc	6.0
SunGard Data Systems	5.9
PeopleSoft, Inc.	5.8
Sabre Airline Solutions	5.7
Computer Associates International, Inc.	5.6
Insight Enterprises, Inc.	5.5
Storage Technology Corporation	5.5
Silicon Graphics, Inc.	5.4
First Data	5.3
Gateway, Inc.	5.3
Siebel Systems, Inc.	5.1
Azerty	5.1
Anixter International Inc.	5.0
EMC Corporation	4.9
Graybar Electric Company, Inc.	4.5
Tech Data Corporation	4.4
Bell Microproducts, Inc.	4.3
Ingram Micro, Inc.	4.3
Affiliated Computer Services, Inc.	3.8
Brightpoint, Inc	2.6

Industry Average	6.8
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Other findings for sector firms include the following:

- Surveyed firms receive the best overall rating (CRI: 8.2) for Simplicity and the worst (CRI: 4.9) for Responsiveness.
- Of those 93 percent that provide a viable means of response, 32 percent of firms did not respond to any online inquiries.
- 45 percent responded to all inquiries. Of these, 89 percent responded within 48 hours, four percent responded within 72 hours and seven percent responded after four days.
- 23 percent of firms responded to half of the inquiries received. Of these, all responded within 48

hours.

- Some 52 percent of all sector firms use Autoresponder technology, in which emails are automatically sent back to users to confirm the receipt of their inquiry and let them know when they should expect a response. Of these, 58 percent followed with a full response, 29 percent followed up half of their Autoresponses with a reply and 13 percent never followed up with a response.
- Some 75 percent of companies provide email forms for online inquiries.
- 18 percent provide email addresses. Another five percent provide online contacts inappropriate to general consumers. An additional two percent provide only offline contacts such as phone numbers or postal addresses.
- Some 82 percent provide a keyword search function on their site.
- 97 percent of sector firms have privacy policies on their sites explaining how customers' personal data is being used. Of those that do, 15 percent need to be more explicit about how they use personal data, 44 percent do not collect data or use collected data only for internal purposes, 12 percent share data with affiliates or subsidiaries and 29 percent share data without permission from users.
- Some 90 percent use cookie technology. Of these, 20 percent provide a full explanation of how cookies can be disabled, 44 percent mention that they can be disabled, 22 percent explain how cookies work and 14 percent don't mention cookies at all.

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Companies can obtain additional information by visiting the Web site, www.CustomerRespect.com, calling 425-454-4151 or emailing info@customerrespect.com.

About The Customer Respect Group

The Customer Respect Group is an international research and consulting firm that uses its Customer Respect Index (CRI(TM)) methodology to help companies improve how they treat their customers online. It provides leadership in the objective and scientific measurement of a customer's online experience. Many of the largest U.S. companies have already adopted the CRI methodology to improve online customer satisfaction and loyalty. The Customer Respect Group is headquartered in Bellevue, WA. For additional information, visit www.customerrespect.com.

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