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## More Americans combine holiday shopping and charity

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More than half of Americans intend to give holiday gifts that give back.

That's the finding of a recent survey by Cone Holiday Trend Tracker, which reports that 59 percent of shoppers aim to support a charity by buying gifts from retailers that support a philanthropic cause. That's up from 52 percent in 2005, the group said.

With the holidays spotlighting the needs of the less fortunate, donating to charity has always been around: "Reach out your hand, Salvation Army-style," said Eugene Muscat, senior associate dean at the University of San Francisco's business school. This year, he said, "Charitable giving is more sophisticated. Now it's become more stealth, subtle and hip."

Some examples: Macy's is donating some of the proceeds from sales of a \$46 Christopher Radko tree ornament to benefit animal care charities. San Francisco's Museum of the African Diaspora is donating a portion of sales from beaded bracelets, necklaces, pins and bags to benefit orphans in South Africa who have HIV/AIDS.

Organic Bouquet, an online organic florist based in San Rafael, returns a percentage of the proceeds from some of its bouquets to charitable causes. In the last two years, Organic Bouquet's charitable initiatives have resulted in nearly \$200,000 in donations to more than 30 non-profit organizations including the American Red Cross, Co-Op America, PETA, Mercy Corps and the National Wildlife Federation.

Cone based its findings on a telephone survey of 1,022 adults conducted from Nov. 3 to 6.

**'ALWAYS A SALE':** About 25 percent of the U.S. adult population was out shopping on Black Friday. What were the other 75 percent waiting for?

The bigger markdowns that will definitely come as Christmas grows closer, according to Phil Rist, vice president of strategy for Big Research.

"There is always a promotion, always a sale," said Rist, whose organization conducts shopper surveys for the National Retail Federation industry trade group. "Consumers are smart. They recognize everyone is competing for their holiday budget."

By the time this weekend is over, shoppers who braved Black Friday will have a lot of items crossed off their list, said Rist. "So, retailers need to focus on the 75 percent who are putting things off and try to target them," he said. "That's why, as the season goes on, I think we will see more promotions to compete for those dollars."

The BIGresearch survey divides customers into two camps: frequent Wal-Mart shoppers, whose average income is \$48,500; and frequent Macy's shoppers, with incomes of \$72,500. While the Wal-Mart customers -- who are more concerned with the potential for rising gas prices -- plan to spend \$764 on holiday gifts, their Macy's counterparts are prepared to shell out \$1,102.15.

The desire for better fashion is driving women from discounters to department stores, Rist said. The number of shoppers reporting they'd buy gifts at discount stores this holiday season declined slightly, from 71 percent to 70 percent, the survey found. But the number of people reporting they'd shop at department stores this year was up (to 61.6 percent from 59.4 percent last year), while more people also intend to buy presents at specialty stores (48.4 percent, up from 46.5 percent in 2005). There's one topic

on which frugal Wal-Mart shoppers and free-spending Macy's customers can agree: The hottest gaming item this year will be Sony's PlayStation 3, not Nintendo's Wii, the survey found.

Ohio-based BIGresearch conducted the Retail Federation's 2006 Holiday Consumer Intentions and Actions Survey by polling 8,090 consumers from Nov. 1 through 8. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus one percentage point.

**HOW MUCH SUPER-RICH WILL SPEND:** Not everyone is trying to stick to a holiday budget.

The ``super-rich'' -- individuals with a net worth of \$10 million or more -- will spend \$25,700 on electronics, \$34,600 entertaining, \$410,600 on yacht charters and \$91,000 on jewelry this holiday season, an increase for every category, according to Elite Traveler, ``the private jet lifestyle magazine."

By comparison, the ``mass affluent'' -- folks worth at least \$1 million -- don't plan to charter any yachts. They will spend \$3,300 entertaining, \$4,100 on jewelry, \$17,400 on villa rentals and \$2,800 on electronics, the magazine's survey found.

About 22 percent of the super-rich jet setters report they'll use a private jet specifically to get their holiday shopping done; just 0.3 percent of the mass affluent reported they planned to fly to Christmas shop.