



News Release

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N.G.A. and Retail Survey Group Introduce Connection™ Customer Feedback Tool for Independent Grocers

ARLINGTON, VA, -- The National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) is pleased to introduce a powerful and affordable tool for getting immediate customer feedback, tailored specifically for independent grocers. **Connection™** was developed by **The Retail Survey Group (RSG)**, a leading provider of feedback solutions to supermarket retailers.

Connection™ meets a need for independent grocers to affordably collect and respond to feedback from their customers about the various aspects of their shopping experience. Customers visit a website or call a toll-free number to rate their store visit on factors relating to meat and produce quality, grocery variety, store cleanliness, personnel courtesy, checkout speed, and pricing/value. They can also provide open-ended comments, so retailers hear specific and actionable feedback in the customer's own voice.

Store managers can access the customer feedback in real time, using an online reporting platform (or via a daily fax report). They can track their store's ratings and read or hear customer comments. "Because a customer is providing such detailed feedback, a store manager can respond quickly, directly, and appropriately," says **Doug Madenberg**, President of RSG. He adds, "When customers are contacted by the store about anything from a poor checkout experience to a product request, we've seen how dramatically it can improve loyalty and goodwill. It's the kind of service experience they share with family and friends."

Automated feedback systems have been used by large chain supermarkets and other retailers and restaurant chains for several years. While these tools are more cost-effective compared with traditional survey methods, their price tag often discourages smaller retailers from implementing them. RSG has specifically designed Connection™ to meet the needs and budgets of independent grocers.

Two retailers have been piloting Connection™ since December. **Eric Anderson** is President of Fresh Encounter Inc., which operates 32 supermarkets in Ohio and Indiana. "Connection can be an invaluable tool," says Andersen. "Our managers are responding directly to the customer feedback, and they can take corrective action immediately. They can also praise an associate if a favorable comment comes in."

Wray's Food and Drug, a 3-store grocer based in Yakima, WA, believes that Connection™ is consistent with their community focused message. "We pride ourselves on customer service, and

this gives us the ability to stay more focused on the shopping experience at our stores,” says owner **Chris Brown**.

“N.G.A. retailers understand the importance of listening to customers, but typical surveys can be costly and difficult to act on. Connection™ is a concrete tool for getting actionable customer feedback on an ongoing basis”, said **Frank DiPasquale**, Executive Vice President, of the National Grocers Association.

Make sure not to miss out on a number of opportunities at this year’s 2009 N.G.A. Annual Convention and Supermarket Synergy Showcase (S³).

- On **Wednesday, February 4, 2009 at 9:15 a.m.** the workshop ***Building Trust and Loyalty by Listening to Your Customers***. No one likes complaints or indications that they aren’t doing a good job, but complaints offer opportunities. They offer a chance and a challenge to greatly improve on how you are operating your business and also a way to show your customers that you really care. It is estimated that 91% of people do not seek resolution when they have an issue with a store. They simply take their business elsewhere. By listening to your customers and relaying the problems to your staff, you develop a line of communication to build a bond of trust and loyalty. In this session, you will learn how to process complaints, log them for future evaluation, identify any weak areas, notify the key people who should be responsible for corrections, ways to handle the complaints and ways to follow-up with customers. You will also learn ways to share the pride when things work well. Join **Doug Madenberg**, President, Retail Survey Group; **Evan Juro**, Principal, Juro Marketing; **Brian Numainville**, PRC, Senior Director, Research and Public Relations, Chair, NFC Foundation, Nash Finch Company and **Dave Meyer**, District Manager, Coborn’s.
- Stop by the Retail Survey Group (RSG) pavilion on the Concept Show Floor, Wednesday, February 4th and Thursday, February 5th between noon and 4 p.m. to enter a drawing to win **One Free Year of Connection™**. For more information about Connection™, see the attached flyer or email connection@rsg.com or call Silvia Proano at RSG (800) 600-6084, ext 113.

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The Retail Survey Group is a leading provider of customer and associate feedback solutions. For 35 years, RSG has specialized in helping grocery retailers listen and respond to their key stakeholders.

N.G.A. is the national trade association representing the retail and wholesale grocers that comprise the independent sector of the food distribution industry. An independent retailer is a privately owned or controlled food retail company operating a variety of formats. Most independent operators are serviced by wholesale distributors, while others may be partially or fully self-distributing. Some are publicly traded but with controlling shares held by the family and others are employee owned. Independents are the true “entrepreneurs” of the grocery industry and dedicated to their customers, associates, and communities. N.G.A. members include retail and wholesale grocers, state grocers associations, as well as manufacturers and service suppliers. For more information about N.G.A. and the independent sector of the industry, see the N.G.A. website: www.NationalGrocers.org.