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Wii Fit wins as Most Memorable New Product Launch of 2008
Annual survey finds technology products and twists on familiar brands most remembered by Americans, but recession “crunches” new product recall to all-time low

Chicago (November 18, 2008)—It’s looking bleak for advertisers and brand managers as Americans are less aware of new product launches than ever before. That’s the key finding from the annual Most Memorable New Product Launch Survey (MMNPL), conducted by Schneider Associates, Mintel and IRI.

When asked about new products from 2008, 69% of survey respondents could not remember a *single* new product launched during the year. Even the most memorable new product of 2008—the Wii Fit—was recalled by only 22% of respondents in aided recall*. Rising food and gas prices, fear of economic recession and attention-grabbing political campaigns are all to blame:

“2008 was a year of distractions, with the average American’s attention pulled in many different directions simultaneously,” comments Lynn Dornblaser, Director of Trend Insight at Mintel. “The fervent presidential campaigns and election genuinely excited many voters. But even more, we saw people deeply impacted by the financial crisis. From higher food prices to unemployment to housing scares, economic struggles seriously affected the way many people lived this year.”

Char Partelow, Senior Vice President, Panel Consulting Group at IRI noted that Americans have cut back on spending, making them inherently less aware of new products. “Because many people can only afford the basics, they’re sticking to what they know, products and services that bring them comfort. We found that ‘a trusted brand name’ ranked as the number one quality respondents looked for when buying new products. Many Americans are simply less interested in ‘risking it’ on a new product.”

“Sticking to what they know” explains the prevalence of familiar food and drink brands on the MMNPL survey winners list. Of the products most frequently remembered in aided recall*, five were new twists on familiar food and drink: Bud Light Lime, McDonald’s Southern Style Chicken Biscuit & Sandwich, Kraft Mac & Cheese Crackers, Gatorade G2 and Yoplait Fiber One. “These brand extensions caught people’s eyes because they offered a new, exciting variation on something familiar,” comments Julie Hall, VP, Schneider Associates.

Technology was another heavy hitter on the MMNPL winners list, as it has been in previous years. The Wii Fit, iPod Touch, MacBook Air and Rock Band all fell into the top 10 most memorable product launches.

The Most Memorable New Product Launch Survey was conducted online among 1,000 respondents aged 18 and over during September 2008. Given a list of 50 new product launches from 2008, people most commonly remembered the following:

1. Nintendo Wii Fit (recalled by 22% of respondents in aided recall*)
2. iPod Touch (16%)
3. Bud Light Lime (15%)
4. McDonald's Southern Style Chicken Biscuit & Sandwich (14%)
5. Kraft Mac & Cheese Crackers (13%)
6. KY Yours + Mine Couples Lubricant (12%)
7. Gatorade G2, Yoplait Fiber One (11%, two-way tie)
8. MacBook Air, Rock Band, Burger King Apple Fries, Neosporin Neo To Go!, Kraft Bagel-fuls (8%, five-way tie)

For more information on the survey or to learn more about the results, visit www.mmnpl.com.

*For aided recall, Mintel gave survey participants a list of 50 new grocery, personal and beauty care, technology and toy products from 2008. This list was selected in advance by Mintel, IRI and Schneider Associates.

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