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Scientific American - Commissioned Ipsos Mendelsohn Study Reveals New "Science-Educated Elite" Consumer Demographic with Distinct Behaviors

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May 4, 2011 – *Scientific American* announces the findings of a commissioned recontact Ipsos Mendelsohn Affluent Survey. The study reveals a new market segment – "Science Educated Elites" (SEEs) – and identifies their distinct and influential purchasing and decision-making behaviors. The data reveals that SEEs are younger, earn higher incomes, and spend nearly twice as much on certain consumer products as compared to other affluent consumers.

The *Scientific American* Recontact Study/Ipsos Mendelsohn 2010 marks the first time a publishing firm has identified a new market demographic based on both field of study and education level using a recontact survey to this audience. The Mendelsohn Affluent Survey is an annual study which focuses on the top 20 percent of U.S. households, with a current household income of $100,000 or higher. Conducted every year since 1977, the Mendelsohn Affluent Survey is recognized as the definitive audience-based research source of the media habits and lifestyles of the affluent population in the United States. The *Scientific American* study was conducted to explore whether there was any difference between science-educated, business-educated, and humanities-educated individuals in this group.

Results reveal that the newly identified SEE demographic is not only a specialized segment, but also illustrate the potential benefits for advertisers and marketers who aim to target this group for their unique behaviors and influence over other consumers. SEEs are detail-oriented, critical thinkers, and seek additional and in-depth information on much of what is presented to them.

Additional highlights from the survey include:

Higher Personal Incomes – SEEs earn 20 percent more in personal income (median) compared to all other affluent consumers.

• **More Online Purchases** – Compared to all affluents, SEEs are twice as likely to make financial trades and purchase gadgets online. They are also twice as likely to download applications to their mobile devices.
• **Often Sought Out For Advice** – SEEs are thought leaders among their peer groups and are more likely to be consulted regarding others' decisions than other affluent individuals. SEEs are 26 percent more likely to be asked for advice in making a significant purchase, 24 percent more likely to be asked for advice on financial issues and investing, and 40 percent more likely to be asked for advice about health issues.
• **Spend Twice As Much** – SEEs spend twice as much as other affluent individuals on a variety of consumer purchases including: computers and technology, fine jewelry, domestic and international travel, sporting and leisure equipment, home décor and furnishings, eco-friendly products, parties and entertainment, and even cosmetic procedures.

"Science Educated Elites are an important and influential demographic with unique spending behaviors and incredible buying power," said Bruce Brandfon, *Scientific American* Vice President and Publisher. "*Scientific American* commissioned this study out of curiosity – we had no expectation of the outcome. To our delight we accomplished something unexpected by identifying and defining SEEs, a previously unrecognized key market segment."

There are approximately 44.1 million affluent Americans. 9.7 million (20 percent) of this affluent population hold a science degree while 11.3 million hold a humanities degree, 8.3 million hold a business degree and an estimated 14 million do not hold a four year degree. "Science Educated Elites" are defined as affluent adults holding four year educational degrees or higher in natural sciences (biological and physical), computer and information sciences, medical and dental fields, engineering, and mathematics and statistics.

Study Methodology
The recontact survey targeted the respondents from the 2010 Mendelsohn Affluent Survey totaling 13,030. A two-page questionnaire and cover letter was mailed to the selected respondents in summer 2010 with a response rate of about 42.6 percent, totaling 5,538 individuals.

To request a full copy of the findings, please contact Rachel Scheer, NPG Corporate PR Associate, at r.scheer@us.nature.com.

Links: **MENDELSOHN AFFLUENT SURVEY**

IPSOS

-ENDS-

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