



FEWER MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN CONSUMERS EXPECT TO GIVE GIFTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON: RBC

Prairie consumers plan to spend less on gifts and other holiday items

TORONTO, November 15, 2012 — Fewer Manitoba and Saskatchewan consumers plan to give [gifts](#) this holiday season (84 per cent in 2012, down four per cent from last year), according to the latest RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook. Prairie residents also intend to curb their overall holiday expenses to \$1,362 from \$1,428 last year

Consumers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan intend to [spend](#) an average of \$664 on gifts this year, a slight decrease from their 2011 spending intentions of \$686. For [other](#) holiday items (such as decorations, clothing, food and drink, travel and entertainment), they also plan to decrease spending to \$698 from \$742 last year.

“Prairie consumers appear to be taking steps to manage their spending, which is key to staying out of debt during the holiday season,” said Chris McEachern, financial planning role strategist, RBC Financial Planning. “Having a budget and knowing how you’ll pay off your purchases will put you in solid financial standing for the new year.”

More than half (56 per cent) of Prairie consumers plan to use savings to [cover](#) their holiday cheer and 20 per cent plan to use credit cards. Yet, nearly one-in-four (23 per cent) say they have not thought about how they will pay for the holiday season.

RBC offers the following tips and secure payment options for holiday spending to help ensure that you stick to your holiday budget while enjoying the spirit of the season:

- **Take control by preparing a budget** – A budget will help you live within your means, during the holidays and throughout the rest of the year, and avoid unnecessary debt. A [Financial Planner](#) can help you put a plan with a budget in place or online budgeting and savings resources available on websites such as www.rbc.com/savingsspot can be of great assistance to help keep holiday spending plans under control. [myFinanceTracker](#) is another online customizable financial management tool that will help keep tabs on your monthly spending so you know exactly where your money is going and how to budget properly.
- **Use cash and credit wisely** – If you plan on using savings for your holiday costs, make your credit card work for you by using it for purchases and then immediately pay off the balance. Many rely on their credit cards for larger purchases but may not use it for everyday shopping instead of using cash. Holiday spending on groceries, gas, restaurants and clothing can add up quickly, but using your card can help you keep track of your expenses and also earn rewards more quickly while taking advantage of a temporary interest-free loan on purchases.

- **Shop online with confidence** – E-commerce sites are a great way to avoid crowds at the mall. Use the [RBC Virtual Visa Debit](#) for shopping online with funds coming directly from your bank account. This is a simple and secure way to make purchases that will be processed over Visa's network, providing the protection of Visa's multiple layers of security including: Visa's Zero Liability Policy, Verified by Visa, E-Promise, AVS (Address Verification Service) and CVV2 (the three-digit code).
- **Have someone that's "hard to buy for"?** – More secure than cash, [RBC Visa Gift Cards](#) can be used anywhere around the world where Visa cards are accepted, including online, giving friends and family more options than traditional store gift cards. RBC Visa Gift Cards are available at all RBC branches.
- **Get peace of mind with purchase protection and extended warranty** – Take advantage of these insurance features on gifts (e.g. electronics) that [RBC credit cards](#) offer. Need help finding the right card? Visit the [RBC Advice Centre](#).

About RBC savings and other financial advice and interactive tools

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About The RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index

The survey is conducted online via Ipsos Reid's national I-Say Consumer Panel to 3,375 Canadians (469 of whom live in Saskatchewan or Manitoba). Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. Data collection was October 1 to 10, 2012. The precision of Ipsos Reid polls are calculated using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 1.9 percentage points of the entire Canadian population.

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