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**TALKTRACK™ SURVEY SHOWS BANKS RECEIVE TWICE THE
WORD OF MOUTH OF OTHER FINANCIAL SERVICES**

*Keller Fay Group Research Reveals That Banks Have Six Times More Positive Word of Mouth
(WOM) Than Negative*

*But Lack of Strong Consumer Recommendations Suggest Banks Not Fully Capitalizing on WOM
Opportunities*

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ, March 16, 2007 – People talk about banks much more often than you'd expect – and more than twice as much as any other financial service category. Yet while most of these conversations are positive, they're less productive in driving business for banks than they could be.

Those are some of the findings from TalkTrack™, the Keller Fay Group's (www.kellerfay.com) measurement program for word of mouth (WOM) marketing. It is the only program to monitor on an ongoing basis the word of mouth conversations of a representative sample of Americans.

The new report, entitled "*Opportunity Missed? TalkTrack Insights on Word of Mouth About Banks,*" shows that on a typical day, 35% of Americans have word of mouth conversations about financial services products or brands. Further, banks accounted for 44% of all financial brand-specific word of mouth, a much greater share of WOM than financial conglomerates (18%), investment firms (14%), general "stock talk" (10%), and credit cards (8%). However, 36% of these bank conversations contained no recommendation, and only 26% contained a strong recommendation to buy or try the brand, 11 points lower than for other consumer categories.

"When you consider the incredibly powerful impact of everyday conversations in influencing purchase decisions and strengthening brand credibility, the implications are clear: Banks should be focusing more resources on leveraging their WOM opportunities," said Ed Keller, founder

and CEO of the Keller Fay Group and co-author of *The Influentials*, the publication of which has been called the “seminal moment in the development of word of mouth.”

According to Keller, the research also suggests that banks could generate even more effective word of mouth by improving customers’ experience, which the research shows is critically important in word of mouth; encouraging loyal customers to make recommendations; and applying a creative, targeted approach in their use of marketing and media, which has a surprisingly important role to play in consumer word of mouth. Interestingly, Bank of America, which received the most word of mouth among all banking brands with a 17% share, plans to sharply increase its ad spending this year and recently launched its new campaign, “Bank of Opportunity,” in hopes of rejuvenating its image among customers, and perhaps stimulating more word of mouth as well.

Following Bank of America for the largest percentage of word of mouth are JP Morgan Chase (9%), Citibank (7%), Wells Fargo (7%) and Wachovia (6%).

Following are other key results from this survey.

- Consumers on average have five conversations per week on financial products and services, and talk about 3.7 financial brands per week.
- The vast majority of financial word of mouth occurs “offline.” Face-to-face conversations (70%) and phone calls (23%) account for more than 9 in 10 of word of mouth conversations.
- 83% of conversations about financial products and services are one-to-one – 10 points higher than the average for all categories measured in TalkTrack™ (73%).
- Six in 10 recipients of bank recommendations rate them to be highly credible, and about half are highly likely to pass along what they’ve heard and to make a buying decision based on the recommendation.
- Only 31% of conversations about banks cite marketing or media, significantly less than the average for all categories about which consumers have word of mouth conversations (48%).

The TalkTrack bank survey included 6,241 respondents 18 years and older whose word of mouth conversations were monitored between August and November of last year. The TalkTrack program is an ongoing study designed to help companies maximize positive word of mouth about their brands, which has been proven to be a leading indicator of brand growth, by quantifying which brands Americans are talking about, what they are saying and the where, how and with whom these conversations are taking place.

Since its launch in spring 2006, the TalkTrack program is the first to closely examine marketing-relevant attributes of actual consumer conversations, whether face-to-face, by telephone or over the internet. It also has already debunked much “conventional wisdom” about WOM marketing. For example:

- While viral marketing and blogs garner most of the publicity when it comes to WOM, the overwhelming majority of consumers talk about brands and products – 90+% – take place face-to-face or over the phone.
- By a six to one margin, word of mouth about brands tends to be positive rather than negative.
- WOM is not just for breakthrough concepts with a high “buzz” quotient, but can also be effective in many categories at various stages in the product lifecycle.
- Since nearly half of all word of mouth conversations refer to ads, or promotions, or something seen or heard in the media, well-planned and executed traditional marketing programs can complement and stimulate WOM.

For additional information about the TalkTrack retail data or the program’s other surveys, please contact Keller Fay at 732-846-6800 (ekeller@kellerfay.com).

About TalkTrack™

Developed by The Keller Fay Group, TalkTrack is the first continuous monitoring system of marketing-relevant conversations in America in whatever form they occur, including face-to-face, telephone and the Internet. It is used by marketers to help maximize positive word of mouth about their brands, which has been proven to be a leading indicator of brand growth. Each week, TalkTrack interviews a new sample of 700 nationally representative Americans ages 13 or older, which amounts to more than 35,000 interviews each year. TalkTrack studies more than 250,000 brand conversations annually across all major consumer categories.

About The Keller Fay Group (www.kellerfay.com)

The Keller Fay Group is the first full-service market research company focused exclusively on word of mouth (WOM) marketing with its full suite of best-in-class research techniques. The company measures WOM trends and campaign effectiveness; tests concepts, ads and messages to maximize their WOM potential; and offer a complete array of custom research and advisory services related to WOM. The firm was founded by Ed Keller, former CEO of RoperASW and NOP World Consumer and co-author of *The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat and What to Buy*, and Brad Fay, former managing director at Roper and NOP World.