



## For Immediate Release

### New Keller Fay Study Debunks Word-of-Mouth Myths

*Real Products Filling Real Needs Key to Word-of-Mouth Success*

**(New Brunswick, NJ) July 20, 2006** – The Keller Fay Group today released a report that challenges several commonly held beliefs regarding word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing. Titled *The Steak is the Sizzle*, the study finds that products determined by consumers to be easy to discuss and recommend are more likely to achieve WOM success than goods solely perceived to be new and innovative.

Keller Fay, the first full-service market research company focused exclusively on WOM marketing, completed a comprehensive survey of consumers who had recently participated in WOM marketing programs. CEO Ed Keller believes the resulting report dispels two of the most prevalent myths in the young industry, namely that breakthrough products are discussed at a higher rate than others and high profile marketing stunts are required catalysts for WOM success.

According to Keller, “Marketers have strong beliefs about what drives word-of-mouth success, but until now conventional wisdom has been the dominant source of information. This study challenges much of what we have come to believe about consumers when it comes to their recommending behavior. Word of mouth is not reserved for revolutionary products; rather it can also be harnessed by marketers in many categories and at various stages of the product lifecycle.”

WOM marketing and media firm BzzAgent provided Keller Fay researchers with access to its community of engaged consumer volunteers. Findings contained in *The Steak is the Sizzle* were derived from online interviews with more than 3,200 BzzAgent community members. Respondents supplied Keller Fay with insights into which types of products were most compelling, how often they discussed the items, why they joined the WOM community, and what motivates their social activities.

The report finds a clear linkage between a product’s ability to solve a consumer’s problem with that individual’s willingness to discuss it. “Surprisingly, effective word of mouth is not all about ‘the latest and greatest,’” added Keller, “It’s about real products filling real needs.”

Researchers also segmented survey respondents by WOM activity level and compared the values of the two groups. The report states active consumers to place a greater emphasis on products they find easy to discuss and recommend. It also determines that engaged WOM volunteers prioritize learning about the latest products and being among the first to discover products when joining campaigns. Regardless of activity level, however, the study concludes that WOM drivers are largely product related.

Complimentary downloads of *The Steak is the Sizzle* are available at [www.kellerfay.com](http://www.kellerfay.com). The Keller Fay Group expects to release a follow-up study, also conducted on the BzzAgent network, next quarter. The forthcoming paper will address consumer-related drivers of WOM, focusing specifically on identifying which personality traits are best suited for spreading product awareness.

#### **About BzzAgent, Inc.**

BzzAgent Inc. is a word-of-mouth marketing and media firm that helps companies to organize and manage honest, real-world conversations among everyday consumers. BzzAgent's innovative process, platform and programs enable the acceleration and measurement of word-of-mouth as a marketing medium. Using such systems, BzzAgent's clients can generate awareness and shape perception about their products and services either via BzzAgent's growing community of 200,000 trained, volunteer brand evangelists or by way of their own client-branded word-of-mouth networks that are customized, hosted and built by BzzAgent.

#### **About The Keller Fay Group**

The Keller Fay Group is the first full-service market research company focused exclusively on word of mouth (WOM) marketing, using a full suite of best-in-class research techniques. The company measures word of mouth trends and campaign effectiveness; tests concepts, ads, and messages to maximize their WOM potential; and offers a complete array of custom research and advisory services related to WOM. In April 2006, Keller Fay launched TalkTrack™, a service that monitors all marketing-relevant conversations in America. The firm was founded by Ed Keller, former CEO of RoperASW and NOP World Consumer and co-author with Jon Berry 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. For more information, visit [www.kellerfay.com](http://www.kellerfay.com).

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