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**KELLER FAY'S TALKTRACK™ REVEALS WORD OF MOUTH ALL-STARS**  
**- Toyota Receives Most Net Positive Mentions in Consumer Conversation,**  
**with Wal-Mart, Honda and Apple/iPod Following -**  
**- Study Reveals Winning Marketing Strategy of Leading Word of Mouth Brands -**

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ, June 22, 2006 – Who's winning at word-of-mouth? New research from the Keller Fay Group ([www.kellerfay.com](http://www.kellerfay.com)) has identified the top ten word-of-mouth brands.

Number one on the "Word of Mouth All-Stars" list is Toyota, whose fuel-efficient, reliable vehicles have been making significant in-roads in the U.S. auto market. Next on the list are Wal-Mart, Honda and Apple/iPod.

**Following is the complete top ten:**

- 1. Toyota**
- 2. Wal-Mart**
- 3. Honda**
- 4. Apple/iPod**
- 5. Chevrolet**
- 6. Target**
- 7. Sony**
- 8. Home Depot**
- 9. BMW**
- 10. Verizon**

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The findings are a product of TalkTrack™, the Keller Fay Group's continuous study regarding which brands Americans are talking about, the content of those conversations and where, how and with whom the conversations take place. The Word of Mouth All-Stars are those brands with the largest number of "net" positive references – that is, positive references less negative ones. The ranking is based on more than 30,000 word-of-mouth brand mentions recorded in April-May 2006 by 3,600 TalkTrack™ survey participants.

The ten most favorably referenced brands represent a variety of domestic and international brands, as well as a diverse mix of industries, including automotive, consumer electronics, high-tech, telecom and retail.

"Word-of-mouth has become a growing focus of business and is increasingly considered a leading indicator of future brand performance," says Ed Keller, chief executive officer of the Keller Fay Group.

Designed to be a tracking and diagnostic tool for marketers to understand and improve their brands' word-of-mouth, TalkTrack™ illustrates certain common traits shared by the "All-Stars." As can be expected, brands featured on the top ten list boast a share of positive word of mouth that is 10 percentage points higher than the average for all brands. Similarly, their share of negative word of mouth is half the average.

Among the biggest surprises is the central role of marketing in the leading brands' word-of-mouth results. While iPod's attention-getting TV ads are frequently mentioned, many consumers also cite the brand's in-store displays and Web presence.

"Contrary to the dire pronouncements you often read, marketing can be *highly* relevant," Keller says. "Almost six in ten conversations about the iPod reference the brand's marketing. That is almost one-third higher than the average for all brands. Marketers can increase their effectiveness by becoming a part of consumer conversation."

iPod also stands out as an example of how successful word-of-mouth can expand a brand's audience. Just over half of those talking about iPods are women – a very different profile than the heavily male skew that technology companies often have.

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Toyota's position as a leader in hybrid engines is a frequent theme in auto-related conversations. In addition, leading word of mouth has a strong foundation in USPs – a brand's unique selling propositions. "What they teach you in Marketing 101 is true: It's important to create a strong, clear position," Keller says. "Quality, reliability and economy are often referenced in conversations regarding Toyota."

Perhaps most important, leading brands' word-of-mouth reflects a clear bottom line. Seven in ten conversations about Toyota include recommendations to at least consider its vehicles, and roughly four in ten include recommendations to buy the brand. Both ratios are double digits above the auto industry average.

TalkTrack™ is the first continuous monitoring system of all marketing-relevant conversations, from e-mail and blogs to phone and face-to-face, providing nationally representative measures on word-of-mouth for every major consumer category and thousands of individual brands.

For additional information about the TalkTrack™ data or to obtain complete survey results, please contact Ed Keller at 732-846-6800 ([ekeller@kellerfay.com](mailto:ekeller@kellerfay.com)).

#### **About TalkTrack™**

The Keller Fay Group has developed the first continuous monitoring system of all marketing relevant conversations in America, in whatever form they occur, including face-to-face, telephone and internet. TalkTrack™ 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. Interviewing a fresh, nationally representative sample of 100 Americans ages 13+ each day of the year - that's 700 interviews per week and 35,000+ each year - TalkTrack™ studies over 250,000 conversations about brands annually across all major consumer categories.

#### **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. 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.

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