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**Hitachi Consulting UK seeks to unlock the ‘Shopping Particle’**

*-- New research reveals how UK retailers can best serve consumers on their shopping journey – or else risk losing 86% of transactions --*

**LONDON, UK, October 11, 2012** - Hitachi Consulting UK, a recognised leader in delivering proven business IT strategies and technology solutions, has today released new research that will help leading UK retailers in their quest to unlock the ‘Shopping Particle’ by offering key insights into customers’ buying behaviours and preferences.

The survey of 1,000 UK consumers aged between 18 and 55+ explored their personal views around three key retail areas: the consumer shopping journey, the evolving expectations of the instore environment, and new instore technologies. The research reveals that today’s customers are focused on making more informed purchasing decisions using the information available across multiple channels.

In its research, Hitachi Consulting UK found that 90% of consumers regularly research products online prior to buying them, and 60% of those who own a smartphone use them for researching products whilst they are in store. However, the research also revealed that even if a product is ranged to store at a price the consumers are willing to pay, 86% of customers are willing to walk out, if either the product is not in stock and needs to be ordered in, or if the customer service is poor, or even if they have had a previous bad experience within the store. Having relevant items in stock was seen as the most important way to improve shoppers’ experiences – followed by having competitor price comparisons available in store, improvements to the in store environment, and sales assistants having more information available at their fingertips.

In order to enhance the customer journey and push customers into this ‘conversion funnel’, retailers need to monitor all channels of information and touch points that customers are interacting with. In addition, businesses will also need to monitor the

channels that customers are using, so that the company can establish consumers' preferences and provide a more personalised experience that delivers the right information at the right time. However, with retailers now generating such a huge amount of data, brands need to be able to make sense of this information in order to find and unlock the valuable insight into customer behavior.

Hitachi Consulting's 'Shopping Particle' is the quest for valuable insight from this existing data that can help retailers drive sales, boost profits and increase customer retention. Finding and using the Shopping Particle relies on an innovative approach to collecting, organising and presenting all the data available – making it timely and relevant to the business decision makers, irrespective of whether they represent marketing, buying, finance or retail.

Chris Gates, director of retail at Hitachi Consulting UK explains:

“There is a moment in every retail transaction when the customer makes the decision to buy a particular product, whether online or in-store, at a particular price and from a particular retailer. This is the Shopping Particle - the moment that every retailer would love to understand, and love to be able to influence”.

“Retailers need to do more than ever to influence the choices that their customers are making. Traditional retail models are exploding at the moment, and causing a tidal wave of organisational complexity and insight challenges. Some technology vendors put a lot of emphasis on the innovations that they consider to be the “next big thing”, and yet don't always provide any real clarity with regard to ROI. At the same time, the weak economy is forcing retailers to focus on cost control above all else, and to look to short term payback rather than the infrastructural changes that are often needed. The existing information that retailers already hold in their business is a rich source of insight to help them better understand their customers, which can deliver short term ROI, and can inform customer centric decisions across the organisation. The search for the Shopping Particle is a profitable one that all retailers should be embarking on.”

### **About Hitachi Consulting Corporation**

As Hitachi, Ltd.'s global consulting company, with operations throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, Hitachi Consulting is a recognised leader in delivering proven business and IT strategies and solutions to Global 2000 companies across many industries. With a balanced view of strategy, people, process and technology, we work with companies to understand their unique business needs, and to develop and implement practical business strategies and technology solutions. From business strategy development through application deployment, our consultants are committed to helping clients quickly realise measurable business value and achieve sustainable ROI. Hitachi Consulting's client base includes 25 percent of the Global 100 as well as many leading mid-market companies. We offer a client-focused, collaborative approach and transfer knowledge throughout each engagement. For more information visit [www.hitachiconsulting.co.uk](http://www.hitachiconsulting.co.uk).

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