



Press information

Melanie Mumper-Dickerson
419 725 8560
melanie.mumper@tns-global.com

Bertina Bus
215 500 3298
bertina.bus@tns-global.com

CONSUMER TRUST IN FINANCIAL SERVICES STABILIZES; NO GROUNDS FOR COMPLACENCY

TNS Survey Finds Trust in Large National Banks, Brokerage, and Insurance Companies Has Become Significantly More Stable

New York, NY - AUGUST 25, 2009 - TNS, the world's largest custom research company, today released the latest results of its Trust Survey. After experiencing the biggest drop in the first four months of 2009, levels of consumer trust have rebounded slightly for the nation's large national banks, insurance companies, and brokerages.

Fielded in October 2008 and again in January, April and July of 2009, this survey of 1,000 US consumers charts trust levels across several major industries and provides detailed insight into consumer attitudes toward financial services companies.

Overall levels of trust among consumers, which still remain below previous levels have strengthened over the last few months. "The precipitous drop in consumer trust appears to have leveled off. Though consumers remain cautious about the future, we don't see the levels of distrust we saw in the first six months of this year," according to Trish Dorsey, Senior Vice President, Financial Services Brand and Communications TNS. "Specifically, when comparing results from our previous survey in April 2009, we are seeing that large national banks and brokerage companies have made positive strides in effectively communicating to their consumers and have left them feeling more adequately supported and confident."

Progress had been made, but there is more work to do

In April 2009, 61 percent of consumers said that their trust in large national banks had declined over the previous three months. When asked about their level of distrust in July, the 61 percent fell to 47 percent. These positive trends in consumer trust can also be seen with regard to brokerage and investment houses where the level of distrust has gone from 61 percent in April to 45 percent in July. Every category of financial institution showed an improvement in confidence levels between April 2009 and July 2009.

"The good news here is that overall consumer trust levels seem to have bottomed out in April'09 and are now showing signs of stabilizing as most industries (with the exception of Automotive and Government) show stronger levels of trust in July'09," Commented Dorsey. "However, we do need to be mindful of the fact that these improved levels of trust are NOT driven by more consumers saying their trust is higher. It is more a function of consumers moving to a more "neutral" or stable place. This suggests that there is more work to be done for institutions to engage their customers and make them feel safe with their financial choices."

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