

Shoppers Bank On Plastic

(NAPSA)—“Paper or plastic?” is no longer just a question at the grocery store. From car washes to barbershops, consumers now have more opportunities to use debit cards when making purchases, as opposed to using cash or checks. And according to one survey, most shoppers go with plastic.

The survey of nearly 14,000 U.S. cardholders found that consumers are turning to debit at an increasing rate, with 80 percent of consumers using their card in the past 30 days and an average of more than 16 times a month.

In addition, when given the chance to use both PIN and signature debit cards, consumers tend to spend more and make more transactions, according to the 2005/6 STAR[®] Consumer Payments Usage Study, conducted annually by First Data Corp.’s STAR Network.

Consumers seemed to like the choice that let them use either their PIN or their signature verification when making a purchase. In fact, those who utilize both payment methods accounted for 75 percent of all debit point-of-sale transactions.

“There are a number of new payments options in the market today, but what will ultimately win out in the long run is up to the consumer,” said Todd Strubbe, president of First Data Debit Services. “The results clearly show that consumers prefer the option to choose either PIN or signature debit at the checkout counter. It’s critical that merchants respond, or they risk losing sales.”

Why Plastic?

Convenience and security were



Consumers also said they enjoy the ability to get cash back at time of purchase when using PIN debit.

named as top reasons respondents used their debit cards. Consumers also said they use their PIN debit card because it allows them to get cash back at the time of purchase.

The Role Of The Web

Respondents reported they use the Internet for activities such as online banking, bill payment and buying goods. In fact, the survey found that consumers responses showed that they’re spending 24 percent of online time engaged in financial activities, which is the same amount of time spent on Internet entertainment.

First Data Corp.’s STAR Network is a coast-to-coast electronic payments network and an expert in secure, real-time electronic transactions. The network serves more than 5,700 financial institutions across the U.S. and provides cardholders with account access at approximately 1.9 million ATM and retail locations. There are more than 140 million cards carrying the network’s logo. Visit www.STAR.com for ATM and retail locations.