



## **Cautious but Climbing: Synchrony Financial's Third Annual Major Purchase Consumer Study Shows Confidence on the Rise**

*Value remains top priority, with online and mobile capabilities increasingly important*

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STAMFORD, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Consumer confidence and willingness to make a major purchase is on the rise, according to Synchrony Financial's 2014 Major Purchase Consumer Study<sup>\*</sup>. Of all shoppers surveyed, four out of 10 indicate a willingness to make a purchase of \$500 or more within the next 12 months, up from 33 percent last year. A quarter of random shoppers surveyed are open to using store credit or financing to make their major purchase, a 12 percent increase year-over-year.

**“For the third consecutive year, our Major Purchase Consumer Study has tracked the importance of digital tools for research, and these latest findings confirm more consumers and omni-channel shoppers are now purchasing bigger ticket items online”**

Contributing to greater confidence in the buying decision is the time major purchase shoppers spend – an average of 80 days total – on their path to purchase. Extensive online and in-store research and information gathering is conducted, including product, retailer, best price and special offers. Value overwhelmingly drives purchase decision, with 88 percent of accountholders, indicating they *“always seek the best deal,”* and more than half believe that *“the best price trumps convenience.”*

This third annual Study continued to underscore the critical role of digital tools at every phase of the purchase cycle, showing 80 percent of all major purchase shoppers surveyed started their research online; 60 percent visited retailer websites; and 42 percent consulted review sites to find information on a product, brand or retailer. Nearly half of all respondents are using mobile devices in their research; one in five do so while they are in-store – a 16 percent gain. Surveyed shoppers are increasingly comfortable making a major purchase online. In fact, 15 percent of shoppers surveyed purchased online, up from 10 percent reported last year.

“For the third consecutive year, our Major Purchase Consumer Study has tracked the importance of digital tools for research, and these latest findings confirm more consumers and omni-channel shoppers are now purchasing bigger ticket items online,” said Toni White, chief marketing officer of Synchrony Financial. “At the

same time, related opportunities emerged to increase consumer satisfaction with retailer websites and the reliability of online reviews as well as the visibility of promotions and financing options – considerations for retailers as they focus on providing the best shopping experience.”

Additional key findings of the 2014 Study include:

- Depending on category, the **entire purchase cycle** ranges from 38 to 135 days.
- On average, **major purchase shoppers surveyed visited four unique retailers** – participating in an **average of eight dealer interactions** – before making their purchase.
- Among random shoppers, **61 percent agreed that financing makes large purchases more affordable**, yet only **46 percent were aware of available promotional financing with the retailer**.
- Of cardholders surveyed, **76 percent always seek promotional financing options** when making a major purchase and **56 percent would choose another retailer** or not make the purchase if a promotion was not available.

“These insights can help guide merchants in crafting promotional offers and digital marketing strategies that are attractive and relevant to consumers and integrated across every shopping channel,” added White.

The 2014 Major Purchase Consumer Study explored the shopping habits of 3,859 shoppers nationwide who recently made purchases of \$500 or more in one of the following 12 categories: appliances, automotive, electronics, eyewear, flooring, home furnishings and bedding, home improvement, jewelry, lawn and garden, music, and sports and fitness equipment. Conducted by Rothstein Tauber, Inc. on behalf of Synchrony Financial, results represent the average\* major purchase experience of more than 2,854 Synchrony Bank accountholders and 1,005 random shoppers.

### **About Synchrony Financial**

Formerly GE Capital Retail Finance, Synchrony Financial (NYSE: [SYF](#)) is one of the premier consumer financial services companies in the United States. Our roots in consumer finance trace back to 1932, and today we are the largest provider of private label credit cards in the United States based on purchase volume and receivables\*\*. We provide a range of credit products through programs we have established with a diverse group of national and regional retailers, local merchants, manufacturers, buying groups, industry associations and healthcare service providers to help generate growth for our partners and offer financial flexibility to our customers. Through our partners’ more than 300,000 locations across the United States and Canada, and their websites and mobile applications, we offer our customers a variety of credit products to finance the purchase of goods and services. Our offerings include private label credit cards, promotional financing and installment lending, loyalty programs and Optimizer+<sup>plus</sup> branded FDIC-insured savings products through Synchrony Bank. More information can be found at [www.synchronyfinancial.com](http://www.synchronyfinancial.com) and [twitter.com/SYFNews](https://twitter.com/SYFNews).

\*The 2014 Major Purchase Consumer Study reflects the average experience of consumers making purchases valued at \$500+ and categorized as both need and want, including some product category differences (i.e., appliance, automotive products and services, eyewear and home utility shoppers may have a shorter consideration cycle).

\*\*The Nilson Report (April 2014, Issue # 1039)

### **Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements**

This news release may contain certain forward-looking statements as defined in Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, which are subject to the "safe harbor" created by those sections. Forward-looking statements may be identified by words such as "outlook," "expects," "intends," "anticipates," "plans," "believes," "seeks," "targets," "estimates," "will," "should," "may" or words of similar meaning, but these words are not the exclusive means of identifying forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are based on management's current expectations and assumptions, and are subject to inherent uncertainties, risks and changes in circumstances that are difficult to predict. As a result, actual results could differ materially from those indicated in these forward-looking statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially include global political, economic, business, competitive, market, regulatory and other factors and risks, such as: the impact of macroeconomic conditions and whether industry trends we have identified develop as anticipated; retaining existing partners and attracting new partners, concentration of our platform revenue in a small number of Retail Card partners, promotion and support of our products by our partners, and financial performance of our partners; our need for additional financing, higher borrowing costs and adverse financial market conditions impacting our funding and liquidity, and any reduction in our credit ratings; our ability to securitize our loans, occurrence of an early amortization of our securitization facilities, loss of the right to service or subservice our securitized loans, and lower payment rates on our securitized loans; our reliance on dividends, distributions and other payments from Synchrony Bank; our ability to grow our deposits in the future; changes in market interest rates and the impact of any margin compression; effectiveness of our risk management processes and procedures, reliance on models which may be inaccurate or misinterpreted, our ability to manage our credit risk, the sufficiency of our allowance for loan losses and the accuracy of the assumptions or estimates used in preparing our financial statements; our ability to offset increases in our costs in retailer share arrangements; competition in the consumer finance industry; our concentration in the U.S. consumer credit market; our ability to successfully develop and commercialize new or enhanced products and services; our ability to realize the value of strategic investments; reductions in interchange fees; fraudulent activity; cyber-attacks or other security breaches; failure of third parties to provide various services that are important to our operations; disruptions in the operations of our computer systems and data centers; international risks and compliance and regulatory risks and costs associated with international operations; catastrophic events; alleged infringement of intellectual property rights of others and our ability to protect our intellectual property; litigation and regulatory actions; damage to our reputation; our ability to attract, retain and motivate key officers and employees; tax legislation initiatives or challenges to our tax positions and state sales tax rules and regulations; significant and extensive regulation, supervision, examination and enforcement of our business by governmental authorities, the impact of the Dodd-Frank Act and the impact of the CFPB's regulation of our business; changes to our methods of offering our CareCredit products; impact of capital adequacy rules; restrictions that limit our ability to pay dividends and repurchase our capital stock and that limit Synchrony Bank's ability to pay dividends; regulations relating to privacy, information security and data protection as well as anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing laws; use of third-party vendors and ongoing third-party business relationships; effect of General Electric Capital Corporation (GECC) being subject to regulation by the Federal Reserve Board both as a savings and loan holding company and as a systemically important financial institution; General Electric Company (GE) not completing the separation from us as planned or at all, GE's inability to obtain savings and loan holding company deregistration (GE SLHC

Deregistration) and GE continuing to have significant control over us; completion by the Federal Reserve Board of a review (with satisfactory results) of our preparedness to operate on a standalone basis, independently of GE, and Federal Reserve Board approval required for us to continue to be a savings and loan holding company, including the timing of the approval and the imposition of any significant additional capital or liquidity requirements; our need to establish and significantly expand many aspects of our operations and infrastructure; delays in receiving or failure to receive Federal Reserve Board agreement required for us to be treated as a financial holding company after the GE SLHC Deregistration; loss of association with GE's strong brand and reputation; limited right to use the GE brand name and logo and need to establish a new brand; GE has significant control over us; terms of our arrangements with GE may be more favorable than we will be able to obtain from unaffiliated third parties; obligations associated with being a public company; our incremental cost of operating as a standalone public company could be substantially more than anticipated; GE could engage in businesses that compete with us, and conflicts of interest may arise between us and GE; and failure caused by us of GE's distribution of our common stock to its stockholders in exchange for its common stock to qualify for tax-free treatment, which may result in significant tax liabilities to GE for which we may be required to indemnify GE.

For the reasons described above, we caution you against relying on any forward-looking statements, which should also be read in conjunction with the other cautionary statements that are included elsewhere in this news release and in our public filings, including under the heading "Risk Factors" in the Registration Statement on Form S-1, as amended and filed on July 18, 2014 (File No. 333-194528). You should not consider any list of such factors to be an exhaustive statement of all of the risks, uncertainties, or potentially inaccurate assumptions that could cause our current expectations or beliefs to change. Further, any forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date on which it is made, and we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statement to reflect events or circumstances after the date on which the statement is made or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events, except as otherwise may be required by law.

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### Third Annual Major Purchase Consumer Study



Mean number of days category shopper spent researching their recent major purchase

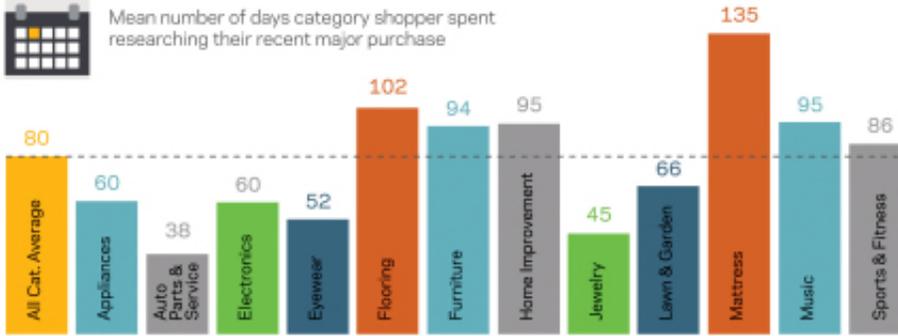


Chart represents the average major purchase shopping process excluding holiday shopping and including shorter need based purchases. N=3,800 major purchase shoppers nationwide.  
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(Graphic: Business Wire)