

The Votes Are In: Product of the Year USA to Announce Most Innovative Products and Brands at the 2009 Awards Night

Phil Lempert, The Supermarket Guru®, to Host Inaugural Event in New York City

NEW YORK – December 19, 2008 – Product of the Year USA (POY), one of North America's largest and most representative consumer-voted programs for recognizing product innovation, today announced that the winners will be unveiled at the 2009 Awards Night. Taking place on January 22nd, 2009 at The Rainbow Room in New York City, the inaugural ceremony will reveal which products and brands have been selected as Products of the Year by 100,000 U.S. consumers. In addition, The Supermarket Guru®, Phil Lempert, will be Master of Ceremonies for this special evening, and joins Product of the Year USA as official spokesperson and consumer expert.

"It's an honor to have Phil Lempert, with his vast knowledge and expertise in the consumer marketplace, joining Product of the Year for this momentous occasion," said Colleen Kelly, Executive Director of Product of the Year. "More than 40 products entered for this opening year, covering a broad range of categories. But the consumers have spoken and the votes have been tallied, leaving only the very best products to earn the coveted POY title."

"With over 40,000 products stocking the average supermarket shelves it is harder than ever for shoppers to find new and innovative products that will satisfy their needs and desires," said Phil Lempert, The Supermarket Guru®. "At the same time they are fearful about wasting money on products that do not deliver on their promises. Product of the Year winners are voted on by a panel of over 100,000 real shoppers - in my opinion, it is the most credible and significant new product award seal that a brand can display."

The road to the Product of the Year title opened with an entry period that closed on August 31, 2008. Competing companies include Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, SC Johnson, Dial, Clorox, Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, Reckitt Benckiser, POM Wonderful, Better Living Brands, and others. In September, the entered products were reviewed by a panel of industry leaders and influencers, led by Jen Klise, the Group Manager of Corporate Innovation for Target Corporation (NYSE: TGT). Completing the process, TNS Market Research conducted an unprecedented survey of 100,000+ U.S. consumers in October, who ultimately rated and selected the winning products.

"Economic uncertainty makes consumers more risk averse and drives them toward better value products," according to Shannon Hazlett, Senior Manager TNS. "The TNS survey found that 41 percent of consumers are seeking new products that offer better value for the money. Recommendation is also really important for new products, with consumer endorsements positively impacting purchase interest amongst close to half the population. POY products are endorsed by real consumers and send a strong message that these are new products worth trying."

Internationally, companies that have earned the Product of the Year title report an average increase of 10-15% in sales of their product after winning, but much larger increases are not uncommon. In 2005, the "hair care" category winner, Pantene, saw a 120% year-over-year increase in sales, Calgon soap saw an increase of 106%, and in 2006 "hair care" winner, Herbal Essences, saw a 135% sales increase year-over-year.

Entry into the 2009 Product of the Year USA program is free, and open to products launched in the U.S. between January 2007 and August 2008. Products are then reviewed by the panel of industry leaders and influencers to filter the entries and ensure that only innovative products continue to the final round. Each finalist, win or lose, receives a consumer-focused research report developed from the TNS consumer survey in exchange for participation. The finalists are then voted on by consumers to ultimately determine those that are Products of the Year.

For more information, please visit <http://www.productoftheyearusa.com/>.

About Product of the Year:

Product of the Year is both a powerful set of words and a simple idea. Every year, thousands of consumers get to vote on the most innovative products launched in the previous 18 months. And every year they pick winners in each product category. With offices in 20 countries around the world and a 22 year track record, we are now ready to make our debut in the U.S. We're here for three simple reasons: We want to help consumers make the right decisions about the products they buy. We want companies to make better products. We want to help brands make money. Product of the Year does all three by letting consumers vote on which products they like best and giving the winners a powerful marketing message. As a result, the winners are happy to see their sales go up an average of 10-15% and consumers are happy to buy a product that 100,000 other shoppers like them said was the best. For more information visit: www.productoftheyearusa.com/.

About TNS:

TNS is a global market information and insight group. Its strategic goal is to be recognised as the global leader in delivering value-added information and insights that help its clients make more effective business decisions. TNS delivers innovative thinking and excellent service across a network of 80 countries. Working in partnership with clients, TNS provides high-quality information, analysis and insight that improve understanding of consumer behaviour. TNS is the world's leading provider of customised services, combining sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of Product Development & Innovation, Brand & Communications, Stakeholder Management and Retail & Shopper. TNS is a major supplier of consumer panel, media intelligence and audience measurement services.

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About Phil Lempert:

Phil Lempert can predict the future – and then help businesses and consumers understand it. For more than 25 years, Lempert, an expert analyst on consumer behavior, marketing trends, new products and the changing retail landscape, has identified and explained impending trends to consumers and some of the most prestigious companies worldwide. Known as The Supermarket Guru®, Lempert is a distinguished author and speaker who alerts customers and business leaders to impending corporate and consumer trends, and empowers them to make educated purchasing and marketing decisions. His website, SuperMarketGuru.com, opened in 1994 and is now one of the leading food and health resources on the Internet, visited by more than 9 million people each year. Lempert is also the author of a number of books, including *Being the Shopper* and *Healthy, Wealthy & Wise*. www.supermarketguru.com