

# SOS syndrome set to hit irish shoppers this Christmas

## The Gift Voucher Shop delivers stress-free gift giving

November, 11 2006



Gift giving is not something that comes easy to all of us, particularly as the key time for gift giving is Christmas and it is renowned for being the busiest time of year. Research carried out by the Gift Voucher Shop on a sample size of 1,057 respondents aged 15-74 has revealed that Christmas gifting stress or SOS (Stressed-Out-Shopper) syndrome is set to hit Irish shoppers this Christmas.

The research reveals that 46 per cent of shoppers feel stressed, panicked and even angry while Christmas shopping, with 33 per cent saying their biggest worry is not finding something suitable.

Symptoms of SOS syndrome are most prevalent among women with 40 per cent suffering from headaches, sleepless nights and in some cases even fainting. However, it's not only women that are affected, three per cent of men admitted to being reduced to tears on the shop floor during a Christmas shopping trip.

Psychologist Dr Susan Quilliam said; "Forget preparing the turkey or spending time with the in-laws, this proves that present shopping is the most stressful part of Christmas. SOS syndrome is caused by the immense pressure people feel to buy the right gift for the right person. What's

happening here, psychologically, is that we buy gifts not only to show we love others but also to make them feel worthwhile. If we get it wrong the recipient is going to feel not just cheated of a good gift but worthless in themselves. That's why present buying is so crucial and why we get so stressed about it!"

To help combat SOS syndrome The Gift Voucher Shop's Christmas campaign is communicating the benefits of the **One4all**® Gift Voucher. The **One4all**® is a multi-store Gift Voucher that can be spent in over 600 retail partners with 3,500 locations nationwide and available online or in your local Post Office, making present buying easier than ever and ensuring that gifts are never the wrong size or colour.

You can literally get anything you want for anyone you want with the **One4all**® Gift Voucher. The choice is theirs whether they want to use their Gift Voucher to go shopping, to slip away for a holiday or weekend break away, to redecorate their home, go golfing or experience the once and a lifetime thrills available from the range of experience providers. Retail partners from Ireland's leading brand names to smaller independent retailers including Arnotts, Argos, Boots, Brown Thomas, DID, Debenhams, Great Southern Hotels, Habitat, Shaws, Tub & Tiles, Sunway Travel, Woodies and hundreds more.

The same research shows that 70 per cent of people surveyed buy Gift Vouchers and the popularity of Gift Vouchers was underlined with more than half of respondents (62 per cent) buying a Gift Voucher on average every few months.

The Voucher Association in the UK has revealed that the Gift Voucher and Gift Card business in the UK is now worth €3 billion a year with 45 per cent attributed to business to business sales and 55 per cent to consumer sales. The Gift Voucher Shop believes the overall growth in the market is attributed to the change in attitudes toward Gift Vouchers in recent years. The survey indicated that Gift Vouchers are now a valued and sought after gift, with 38% of respondents saying they purchased Gift Vouchers because of the choice they give. When asked whether they would prefer to receive a gift voucher, Gift Card or present 45 per cent said they would rather receive Gift Vouchers with only 28 per cent wanting to receive a present.

78 per cent of respondents rated choice for the Gift Voucher recipient as being extremely or very important when buying Gift Vouchers. 54 per cent rated presentation of Gift Vouchers as being extremely or very important and 32 per cent rated online buying as being extremely or very important



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The survey further reveals that people find it most difficult to buy presents for their partner, with their biggest worry being that they won't be able to find something suitable.

Aoife Davey, Marketing Manager for The Gift Voucher Shop said "The process of thinking of what you can get someone is one thing and then shopping for the gift on top of that can lead to one big headache or a lot of unwanted gifts! So this year we are communicating the benefits of getting someone a gift they actually want and hopefully diminishing the amount of unwanted gifts that can pile up under the Christmas tree".

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### **Note to Editors:**

The Gift Voucher Shop Ltd.

The Gift Voucher Shop is a unique and unrivalled service that eliminates all hassles normally associated with gift giving and offers consumers and recipients ultimate choice and flexibility. Through each country's Post Office network, web and telesales channels, GVS offers the most comprehensive range of Gift Vouchers for an extensive and attractive array of top brands as well as smaller independent retail partners.

In early 2002 The Gift Voucher Shop formed a strategic partnership with An Post and launched in Ireland that September selling its Gift Vouchers through 1,000 Post Offices nationwide in addition to its online shop, [www.giftvouchershop.ie](http://www.giftvouchershop.ie), and its call centre service. The Post Office channel gives the company a unique national distribution capability unmatched in the Gift Voucher market. GVS has over 550 of Ireland's shops and services with 3,500 outlets across the 32 counties in the Irish portfolio. Leading stores such as Argos, Arnotts, Brown Thomas, Champion Sports, Easons, Great Southern Hotels, HMV, Roches Stores and Smyths Toys benefit from the service's unique distribution system.

In September 2004 The Gift Voucher Shop launched the **One4all**® Gift Voucher which is now their leading Gift Voucher product. The **One4all**® is a multi-store Gift Voucher that can be spent in any of the retail partners signed up to the scheme, giving the recipient of a **One4all**® the choice of 3,500 outlets to spend

their voucher.

Over 50% of the Gift Voucher Shop's business is now generated by its highly effective Corporate sales division that provide a whole range of facilities and services to the corporate sector including staff incentives, HR support services, trade promotions and specialized software solutions for the management of the employee BIK allowances.

Following The Gift Voucher Shop's success in Ireland, they have begun to develop internationally and the first of its markets was with Maltapost in November 2004. In Malta The Gift Voucher Shop's Gift Vouchers are available in all 31 Maltapost branches throughout Malta and Gozo and for nearly 200 retail outlets on the two islands.

In October 2005 The Gift Voucher Shop and the Post Office Ltd launched in all of the 14,600 Post Office branches across the UK giving the 28 million customers who visit the Post Office every week access to an extensive range of high street retailers including B&Q, Comet, Debenhams, Habitat, Halfords, Goldsmiths, Mothercare, River Island, Woolworths and the Arcadia Group. GVS UK also offer Enjoyment and Experience Gift Vouchers, all of which may also be purchased from [www.giftvouchershop.co.uk](http://www.giftvouchershop.co.uk)