

For Immediate Release

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NEW RESEARCH INDICATES THAT CONSUMERS' FINANCIAL SITUATIONS ARE FINALLY POISED TO IMPROVE

Manhattan Beach, Calif., December 2nd, 2009-For the first time since before the Great Recession, Americans are finding their financial situations aren't worsening. A research study conducted by the nation's leading financial education firm, Financial Finesse, has found that not only are consumers' financial situations leveling but consumers are also showing greater levels of commitment toward improving their finances.

The research comes from Financial Finesse's quarterly research report, an analysis of primary data including calls made to the company's financial helpline and online usage of its financial planning platform during the third quarter of 2009. The study is compiled by tracking financial questions and issues posed by employees of the company's 300+ corporate clients nationwide.

Financial Finesse's second quarter research report identified a trend in increased consumer financial responsibility, and in the third quarter, this trend gained momentum. According to the study, 22 percent of calls made to its financial helpline in Q3 2009 were return calls from employees who had called previously, and wanted to continue the progress they'd already made towards improving their finances. This is the highest percentage the company has seen since it began tracking this figure when the recession began.

"Employees are taking back control of their finances," says Liz Davidson, CEO and Founder of Financial Finesse. "They've experienced a major reality check with this recession and now they want to reevaluate how to reach their goals. Most employees we talk to are no longer looking for short cuts or band-aid solutions; they are ready now to do the heavy lifting and change the way they manage, spend and invest their money."

The research revealed that many employees have already taken significant steps towards improving their finances, with plans to continue the progress they've made so they can "fireproof" their finances in the event that the economy worsens again. While debt calls have stabilized indicating that debt problems may be bottoming out, budgeting and savings calls continue to increase as employees focus on the components of their finances that they can control—namely, cutting expenses and increasing savings:

- For the first time since the company began tracking callers' financial questions in 2001, budgeting and savings calls nearly equaled debt calls—indicating that consumers are becoming much more proactive with respect to how they manage their

money so that they don't encounter financial problems in the future.

- Calls about budgeting and savings questions reached 37%, up from 32% in Q2 2009 and just 21% a year ago.
- Even more revealing, 55% of online users said they regularly pay their credit card balances off in full vs. 41% year to date.
- 44% of online users indicated they have an emergency fund in place vs. 38% year to date.

As a result of employees taking more initiative to improve their finances, financial wellness and retirement preparedness scores are finally beginning to level after declines in the first and second quarter. According to Davidson, the trend towards increased financial responsibility bodes well for the long-term health of the US economy, a natural counterbalance to the debt bubble that precipitated the current financial crisis.

"We're seeing a return to basic financial principles that typically stabilize the economy," she says. "There is growing evidence that this is a long-term trend and that we are entering a new era of financial literacy which will herald better financial decision making and prevent dangerous financial bubbles like the recent mortgage crisis and the dot com bust in 2000."

Adds Davidson: "It is very encouraging to see employees regaining a desire to responsibly manage their finances—something we haven't experienced as a society since the years following the Great Depression."

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About Financial Finesse

Financial Finesse is the leading provider of unbiased financial education programs to organizations nationwide. They provide a variety of content on all financial topics through workshops, a financial helpline, one-on-one sessions and an online learning platform all delivered and developed by Certified Financial Planners™. For more information, visit www.financialfinesse.com.