

# Consumers Find Creative Ways to Weather the Economy

*Michaels survey says consumers find positives in getting back to basics*

IRVING, Texas, Feb. 19 /PRNewswire/ -- A new customer survey from Michaels, the world's largest arts and crafts specialty retailer, says that the economy is changing many people's perceptions about what is important in life. Consumers say that in the face of difficult economic times and much uncertainty, they are getting back to basics by returning to handmade items and by spending more time with their families.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090219/DA72986>)

In the survey of 500 customer households, conducted in early February, 84 percent of respondents said they would like to spend more time on arts and crafts activities and 83 percent think making homemade gifts and spending time with their families are two of the "bright spots" that have emerged during this rough economy.

Customers across all income levels said they have become more budget conscious -- 94 percent said they are more concerned with getting value for their money, up from 76 percent in Michaels' October survey. It's also clear that the renewed interest in arts and crafts isn't just economic -- 82 percent of people responded that making a gift is more rewarding than buying one.

"Our customers are telling us that they're not just saving money, but they are truly enjoying the time spent working on homemade projects as an inexpensive form of entertainment," said Michaels' Chief Marketing Officer Stuart Aitken. "People get a sense of accomplishment when they make something unique, decorative and fun and that homemade projects build family and community bonds."

In response to customers' demand for more assistance in pursuing these interests, in March Michaels will re-launch its popular project idea and inspiration website, WhereCreativityHappens.com, which will feature a brand-new series of how-to videos with Michaels' Creative Expert Jo Pearson demonstrating techniques for gift and decor projects ranging from jewelry making and scrapbooking, to floral design and kids' crafts.

Throughout the year, due to their popularity, Michaels will also host additional The Knack Free Family Events and free demonstrations in stores to teach people new skills and try out new products with the help of Michaels craft specialists. For in-store schedules and information, visit Michaels.com.

## *About Michaels*

Michaels Stores, Inc. is the world's largest specialty retailer of arts, crafts, framing, floral, wall decor, and seasonal merchandise for the hobbyist and do-it-yourself home decorator. The company currently owns and operates over 1000 Michaels stores in 49 states and Canada and 161 Aaron Brothers stores.

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