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Be a Smart Shopper for the Holidays
Texas CPAs Offer Tips to Save Money This Holiday Season

Dallas (Nov. 23, 2015) – In past years, Americans’ holiday spending has averaged around \$700, for a total of \$465 billion, according to the National Retail Federation. If you’re trying to trim your budget this year, or if you’d like to get more value out of your spending, there are simple steps you can take, according to the Texas Society of CPAs.

Make a List

Write down all of the people you’re planning to buy gifts for, then set a realistic budget and determine if you can afford to buy all the presents on your list. If you can’t, advance planning helps you rethink how much you can spend on each person or how many people you can include on your list. That’s much better than buying first and finding out later that you’ve gone over budget and will have to do some skimping in the new year.

Check It Twice

Only 21 percent of consumers said they always compare prices before making a purchase, according to an Ask Your Target Market survey. That’s too bad, because a little research—whether it’s in a different store or on the Internet—can often reveal better deals. Another option is price matching, when stores will lower their price to match another retailer’s advertised deal. If you’re not shopping around, you won’t be able to ask for better prices and ensure you’re getting the best deal.

Consider Consolidating

If you’re part of a large family, group of friends or co-workers, it might be easier on everyone’s wallet to pick one name from a hat and give a gift to that person alone rather than trying to cover everyone. You can all gather to enjoy opening gifts together, rather than scrambling to shop for—and afford—something for all.

Remember, It’s the Thought That Counts

It’s not always necessary to spend a lot—or anything at all—to show that you care. Instead, consider thoughtful favors for loved ones. Offer to babysit for a new parent who could use some time off to run errands, go out for an evening or sleep! Give an older friend or relative coupons that promise you will shovel their sidewalk when it snows or rake leaves in the fall. Create a

photo album or scrapbook that captures important memories for a loved one. The people on your list will treasure thoughtful gestures like these even though they cost little to give.

Start Thinking about Next Year

Want to take the stress out of your holiday shopping in 2016? Starting early is your best bet. First, commit to putting aside a small amount each week or each month so that you have a nest egg to spend when December rolls around. In the meantime, don't hesitate to pick up presents when you see them throughout the year. You'll be able to enjoy holiday gift giving a lot more with presents waiting to be wrapped and more spending money in the bank.

Turn to Your CPA

Making smart shopping choices at the holidays is just one of the many ways you can manage your money and make the most of your spending power. If you have questions about these tips or any other financial issues, be sure to contact your local CPA. He or she has the expertise to help you make the best financial decisions.

About TSCPA

TSCPA (<http://www.tscpa.org>) is a nonprofit, voluntary, professional organization representing Texas CPAs. The society has 20 local chapters statewide and has nearly 27,000 members, one of the largest in-state memberships of any state CPA society in the United States. TSCPA is committed to serving the public interest with programs that advance the highest standards of ethics and practice within the CPA profession.

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