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## **THE ALTMAN GROUP WINS “TOPS” PROXY HONORS AGAIN**

New York, NY – January 25, 2006 – The Altman Group, Inc., a New York-based proxy solicitation firm with offices throughout the United States, announced today that it has won the 2006 TOPS Award as the highest rated proxy solicitation firm. The Altman Group also won the TOPS Award in 2004, making it the second consecutive time that The Altman Group has won this biennial award.

The TOPS Award is presented every two years based on an independent survey conducted by Stockholder Consulting Services, Inc., in conjunction with the Rutgers University Graduate School of Management. The 47 question survey covers proxy solicitation, proxy contests, public offerings, investor relations and communications, corporate governance, stockwatch and market surveillance, odd lot shareholder programs, foreign ownership surveys, knowledge of proxy advisory firms and call center operations. All major proxy firms were included in the survey, including Morrow and Co., Mellon Investors Services, Georgeson Shareholder, and D.F. King. Full results of the survey can be obtained from Stockholder Consulting Services.

“Winning the TOPS Award again is extremely satisfying because it means the market recognizes and appreciates our intense focus on client service,” said Ken Altman, President of The Altman Group. “We have made our mark in the proxy industry because we saw the need for better client service and have consistently met that need by providing the highest quality service, as demonstrated by the survey results.”

The Altman Group, which began expanding its operations significantly in 2002, surprised industry watchers by winning the TOPS Award in 2004 after adding over 200 new clients in a two-year span. With a client roster now exceeding 500 and a second consecutive TOPS Award in 2006, The Altman Group has now clearly established itself as a leader in the proxy industry.

“I’m delighted by the recognition we are receiving,” said Paul Schulman, Executive Managing Director for The Altman Group. “We have an extremely experienced staff that works directly with our clients. We have three executives with over twenty years of proxy industry experience and another twelve with over ten years experience. All other client service representatives have between five and ten years of proxy industry experience. We are confident that our highly experienced team provides the best service available from any proxy firm. Winning the TOPS Award twice in a row proves that our commitment to hiring the best people in our industry has paid off.”

Part of The Altman Group’s success has derived from its ability to hire people with unique talents. In the past year, for example, The Altman Group hired Reid Pearson from Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS), where he spent ten years in various roles including Senior Analyst and as a member of the firm’s proxy policy committee. “No other proxy firm has hired a person with Reid’s level of ISS experience in recent years. I believe this provides a level of expertise in dealing with impact of ISS and the other proxy advisory firms that sets us apart from our competitors,” said Altman. “Working with ISS is one of the hot button issues for companies these days, and adding Reid and his level of know-how to our team gives us unique capabilities.”

In addition to winning the TOPS Award in 2004, The Altman Group, founded in 1995 by Ken Altman, established itself as one of the elite proxy firms through notable retentions by major corporate entities such as **Qwest Communications International** in the competitive bidding for MCI, **Macromedia, Inc.** in its acquisition by Adobe Systems Inc., **Starbucks Coffee Company** for its annual meetings, **The Robert Mondavi Corp.** in its merger with Constellation Brands Inc., **Sumitomo Corporation of America** in its acquisition of TBC Corp., and **Pacific Gas & Electric** in its battle with the California Public Utilities Commission. In the bankruptcy arena The Altman Group has earned a reputation for expertise in bankruptcy plan balloting and case administration services having worked on over 100 major bankruptcy cases.

The Altman Group has also become an industry leader in mutual fund solicitations, including retentions by **Allianz Global Investors, AXA Financial, MFS Investment Management, Dodge & Cox, BlackRock Funds, Franklin Templeton Funds,** and **Barclays Global Investors-iShares** among many others.

Additionally, The Altman Group’s Asset Reunification Programs (ARP) provide a cost-free way to locate lost or unresponsive shareholders and re-unite them with their asset, frequently as a result of a merger or acquisition.

The Altman Group handles annual and special meeting solicitations for corporations and mutual funds, provides broker search and distribution, corporate governance consulting, vote projections, shareholder identification services, as well as a full slate of services for proxy fights, mergers and acquisitions, tender and exchange offers

Additional information about The Altman Group can be found at [www.altmangroup.com](http://www.altmangroup.com) or by e-mailing [info@altmangroup.com](mailto:info@altmangroup.com).