



PRESS RELEASE

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New National Survey:

U.S Workers Face Layoffs and Humiliation by Email

13th Annual "Attitudes in the American Workplace" Poll conducted by Harris Interactive for The Marlin Company

North Haven, CT, September 20, 2007 – U.S workers may want to think twice before opening e-mail from their boss. According to a new national survey, 10% of U.S employees say their company has used email to fire or lay off employees. And 17% indicated their boss used emails to avoid other difficult face-to-face conversations.

The national survey of 752 US workers was conducted in May and June 2007 by Harris Interactive® for The Marlin Company, The Workplace Communications Experts™ in employee communications.

“Email has become the new shield of today’s business. Companies hide behind it to avoid the negative reactions of unhappy employees,” said Frank Kenna III, president of The Marlin Company.

“While email works fine for day-to-day communication, the last thing you want to do is use it for something as sensitive as lay-offs,” Mr. Kenna said. “That risks turning former employees into disgruntled ones who can become walking negative advertisements for your firm.”

The survey also found that 5% of respondents had been the recipient of a humiliating email that was copied to other individuals. Additionally, almost one quarter (23%) of workers have received a politically incorrect email, 15% have been the recipients of an e-mail sent in anger, and 13% reported receiving flirtatious emails.

“Email etiquette is still in the middle ages and for too many employees anything goes is the rule,” said Mr. Kenna. “Just like companies have telephone policies, they need to have email policies with clear rules for what is and isn’t permissible.”

The survey also reported that U.S workers make other e-mail-related errors at work. Almost 20% (19%) said they had sent an email to the wrong person, and 38% had sent an email without an intended attachment.

“U.S workers are creating an opportunity for Microsoft to pounce on workers’ mistakes by adding a warning about a missing attachment,” said Mr. Kenna, who added a special message for Microsoft’s chairman. “Hey Bill Gates -- how about fixing that attachment problem. Fifty two million U.S workers will thank you!”

The survey has a sampling error for the overall results of plus or minus 4 percentage points. For further detail on the results and supporting data, please see [marlinresults](#).

About the Survey

This “Attitudes in the American Workplace” study was conducted by telephone within the (United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of The Marlin Company between May 21 and June 14, 2007 among 752 U.S. adults ages 18 or older who are employed full or part-time. The 2004 survey was also conducted by telephone among 772 U.S. adults ages 18 or older who are employed full or part-time. Results were weighted for age, race/ethnicity, education, income, and region where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

About The Marlin Company

For more than 90 years, The Marlin Company has been the Workplace Communication Experts™, helping companies improve employee morale, productivity and performance through the innovative use of workplace posters and electronic message boards. Its corporate posters and electronic display systems, which contain content customized by industry, are helping companies of all sizes address workplace issues, such as safety, stress management, health/wellness, communication with employees and dozens of other topics involving workplace morale and customer service. Through its many years of experience, The Marlin Company has developed a strong database of, and experience in, issues affecting the workplace. It routinely surveys thousands of clients to determine their current issues, works with industry experts across North America, and conducts national polling. Since 1995, it has conducted its annual "Attitudes in the American Workplace" Labor Day poll. In the early years, the Gallup Organization conducted the polling. Harris Interactive has done so since 2001. For more information, please see www.themarlincompany.com.

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