



PRESS RELEASE

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New National Survey:

U.S Companies Much More Active in Promoting Exercise and Healthy Eating

But Junk Food Laden Vending Machines Tell Another Story

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

North Haven, CT, October 16, 2007 – While U.S. corporations have become more vocal in preaching the virtues of healthy eating and exercise, they continue to stock their vending machines with junk food, according to a new national survey. Fifty eight percent of U.S employees said their companies are “very active” or “somewhat active” in offering employees information about exercise and healthy eating to prevent obesity. Yet 75% of U.S. workers whose companies have vending machines said the machines mostly contain junk food such as potato chips, cookies, and candy bars.

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

In The Marlin Company’s 2004 workplace poll conducted by Harris Interactive, just 36% of workers said their company was “very active” or “somewhat active” in offering information about exercise and healthy eating, 22% fewer than in 2007. The number of employees whose companies were “not at all” or “not very active” has dropped from 63% in 2004 to 41% in 2007. Meanwhile, it seems that companies have not made the same strides to discourage junk food consumption. In the 2004 survey, 84% of workers whose companies had vending machines said their workplace vending machines were stocked with snacks, such as potato chips, cookies, and candy bars, a difference of just 9% over 2007.

“Can companies be truly serious about promoting exercise and healthy eating, when junk food-laden vending machines are just around the corner?” asked Frank Kenna III, president of The Marlin Company. “A real commitment to healthy food and exercise should be part of a company’s culture. A company might offer a wider selection of healthy food in the cafeteria, offer discounted health club memberships or start a company softball team to encourage exercise. Actions like these tell employees that the company is serious about creating a healthy environment at work.”

While nearly one third (29%) of workers surveyed said more than half of their coworkers have an unhealthy diet, the majority (87%) do not believe overweight or obese employees would be more or less likely to receive job promotions.

“One thing that is especially interesting is the broad perception that weight does not affect promotions. There is clear evidence this is not the case, so the gap between perception and reality is a big issue,” says Dr. Kelly Brownell, a Yale professor and Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity.

Company size, however, influences how actively employers offer information about exercise and healthy eating to employees. Seventy eight percent of workers in larger companies (1,000+ employees) said their company was “very active” or “somewhat active” at promoting these healthy habits, compared to 49% workers in companies of 100 employees or fewer. On the other hand, workers in larger companies (1,000+ employees) were more likely to have unhealthy temptations. Seventy one percent of workers in larger firms (1000+ employees) said company vending machines contain snacks, such as potato chips, cookies, and candy bars, compared to 45% of workers at smaller companies (100 employees or fewer).

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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