

Americans are Purchasing More Generic Brands and Brown Bagging It to Save Money

They are not changing or cancelling cell phone service to save money

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – June 30, 2009 – As the economic crisis continues, strong numbers of Americans are not spending on any big ticket items such as computers or a new car, but they are also making changes to their everyday spending ([June 4, 2009 - Harris Poll](#)). Whether it is cutting back on subscriptions, services or morning coffee, U.S. adults are also making changes or have considered making them in the past six months in order to save money.

These are some of the results from The Harris Poll, a new study of 2,177 U.S. adults surveyed online between June 8 and 15, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Specifically some of the changes Americans have made or considered in order to save money are:

- Three in five adults (62%) say they are *purchasing more generic brands* while another 14% are considering it. Just under half (47%) of Americans are brown-bagging lunch instead of purchasing it with 8% considering it;
- Slightly over one-third (36%) are *going to the hairdresser or barber less often*, while one-third (33%) are switching to refillable water bottles instead of purchasing bottles of water;
- People are also *cancelling one or more magazine subscriptions* (29% done, 7% considered) and *cancelling a newspaper subscription* (15% done, 9% considered); and,
- One in five Americans have *cut down on dry cleaning* (20%) and stopped purchasing coffee in the morning (19%) while 14% have begun carpooling or taking mass transit.

On the other hand, over half of Americans (54%) say they have not changed or cancelled their cell phone service or even considered it to save money, while 13% have done so and 17% have considered it. Half of U.S. adults (50%) have not done or considered cancelling their landline phone service, and only using their cell phone while 11% have done so and 21% have considered it. Also, just under half of Americans (46%) have not done or considered cancelling or cutting back on their cable television service but 17% have done so and 23% have considered it.

So What?

The economy is making people rethink what is important for them to have in their daily lives. For some people, it might be going a little more often without a haircut or having some highlights. For others, it could be foregoing the premium brands and switching to generics or brown-bagging lunch instead of hopping out to grab something. What is

interesting is that there are two areas where people have not made any changes or considered making any are in the technology space – cell phones and cable television. Part of it may be convenience – cell phones have become such a part of everyday life now that it is inconceivable to not have one. And, the other part when looking at the cable television services may be comfort. With things so bad, people may not want to give up the security of having hundreds of channels to choose from for an evening on the couch.

TABLE 1
SPENDING/SAVINGS OVER NEXT SIX MONTHS

“Have you done or considered doing any of the following over the past six months in order to save money?”

Base: All adults

		Have Done	Have Considered	Have not Done or Considered	Not applicable
Purchasing more generic brands	%	62	14	18	6
Brown bagging lunch instead of purchasing it	%	47	8	13	32
Going to the hairdresser/barber/stylist less often	%	36	9	31	24
Switched to refillable water bottle instead of purchasing bottle of water	%	33	11	23	33
Cancelled one or more magazine subscriptions	%	29	7	24	40
Cut down on dry cleaning	%	20	4	18	59
Stopped purchasing coffee in the morning	%	19	5	20	56
Cancelled or cut back cable television service	%	17	23	46	15
Cancelled a newspaper subscription	%	15	9	31	45
Begun carpooling or using mass transit	%	14	8	34	44
Changed or cancelled cell phone service	%	13	17	54	16
Cancelled landline phone service and only using cell phone	%	11	21	50	17

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States June 8 and 15, 2009, among 2,177 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

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.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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***The Harris Poll*[®] #71, June 30, 2009**

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