

Press Contact:
Alyssa Hall
Harris Interactive, Inc.
212-539-9749
ahall@harrisinteractive.com



Business Leaders Considered Most Persuasive in Ad Endorsement

Former political figures, however, are considered least persuasive

New York, N.Y. – November 4, 2009 – The issue of celebrity endorsements is something a number of companies grapple with as they are planning their advertising campaigns. Do they go with an endorsement or let the product or service speak for itself? If they decide to move forward with an endorsement, what type of celebrity should be the one facing the camera? Some types of celebrities can help and persuade someone to buy the product while others may be less persuasive in their pitch. The age groups being targeted are a factor as well; certain celebrities can be seen as more persuasive with different age ranges.

When it comes to helping sell, almost two in five U.S. adults (37%) find business leaders to be most persuasive when they endorse a product in an ad. On the other side of the situation, two in five Americans (39%) say they find former political figures to be least persuasive when they endorse a product in an advertisement.

These are some of the findings of a new **Adweek Media/ Harris Poll**, survey of 2,186 U.S. adults surveyed online between September 25 and 29, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Looking at other types of celebrities and their persuasiveness, one in five Americans (21%) say they find athletes to be most persuasive when they endorse a product, followed by 18% who say television or movie stars are most persuasive, 14% who say singers or musicians and 10% who say former political figures are most persuasive.

When it comes to how other celebrities rank in the category of least persuasive, almost one-quarter (23%) say television or movie stars are least persuasive, while 14% say business leaders are least persuasive. Just over one in ten Americans (13%) say when athletes endorse a product they find them least persuasive and 11% say singers or musicians are least persuasive.

Age differences in celebrity endorsements

Certain celebrities are seen as more persuasive from the eyes of different age groups. Almost half of those who are aged 55 and older (46%) say business leaders are most persuasive compared to only 28% of those who are 18-34 years old. One quarter of those aged 18-34 (23%) say television or movie stars are most persuasive while only 15% of those aged 55 and older feel the same way.

There is also a difference among those who are seen as least persuasive. Almost half of those aged 35-44 (45%) say they feel former political figures are least persuasive when they endorse a product compared to one-third of those aged 18-34 years old (33%).

TABLE 1
CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS THAT ARE MOST PERSUASIVE

“When they endorse a product in an ad, which type of celebrity do you find most persuasive?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Age			
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
	%	%	%	%	%
Business leaders	37	28	33	38	46
Athletes	21	24	21	20	19
Television or movie stars	18	23	21	15	15
Singers or musicians	14	13	15	17	12
Former political figures	10	13	9	9	8

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

TABLE 2
CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS THAT ARE LEAST PERSUASIVE

“When they endorse a product in an ad, which type of celebrity do you find least persuasive?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Age			
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
	%	%	%	%	%
Former political figures	39	33	45	39	42
Television or movie stars	23	20	19	24	26
Business leaders	14	21	12	12	10
Athletes	13	12	14	11	14
Singers or musicians	11	14	10	14	9

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

Methodology

This **Adweek Media/Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States September 25 and 29, 2009 among 2,186 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.

The Harris Poll #125, November 4, 2009

By Regina A. Corso, Director, *The Harris Poll*, Harris Interactive

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