

Newsmaker Insights®

PR NEWS YOU CAN USE

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■ THIS EDITION'S FOCUS "Green" Research

Introduction

In 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* first opened Americans' eyes to humanity's impact on the environment. The grassroots environmental movement inspired by the book eventually resulted in the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970 and a global environmental movement was born.

Once dismissed by many as merely a passing fad, "green" is the new black – it's here to stay. The last few years have witnessed a sharp increase in the attention paid to the environment by the media, politicians, and the public. And research firms are now conducting more and more surveys on green topics as marketing and PR professionals seek to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to trends in consumer sentiment and behavior.



While scientists and politicians continue to debate various issues surrounding climate change and global warming, corporations are already jumping on the green bandwagon en masse to enhance their image and lure customers to purchase their products.

Many companies are incorporating green into their mission statements and adopting environmentally friendly

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■ RELATED RESEARCH

Did you know that...?

- About 7 in 10 U.S. adults believe in global warming (71%) and that we are currently experiencing it (71%). Most (81%) agree that, as the world's leading industrial nation, the U.S. should set the lead in controlling greenhouse gases and pollution. However, more than half (53%) feel there is too little government regulation and involvement when it comes to environmental protection.

Source: Harris Poll phone survey conducted October 16-23, 2007 among 1,052 adults ages 18+.

- Nearly 3 in 4 U.S. adults (72%) believe their personal actions are significant on the environment, but only about half (53%) have somehow changed their lifestyle to make it more environmentally sustainable.

Source: Harris Poll online survey conducted May 5-12, 2008 among 2,602 adults ages 18+.



THIS EDITION'S FOCUS *Continued from page 1*

practices as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments. Some are even developing expertise in this increasingly "hot" topic by creating green practices or divisions.

Harris Interactive, for example, is launching our own green center of excellence to house and monitor the publicly released research that we conduct for our clients as well as for ourselves (i.e., *The Harris Poll*®).

As you work with clients to develop a green marketing strategy or highlight their green efforts, it is crucial that you understand the broader green landscape within which your messages will be received. Research can be just the tool you need to inform the environment (no pun intended) for your key messages and, consequently, help you determine which messages may be more or less appropriate.

There are various ways you can use research to inform your green strategy:

- thought leadership, or newsmaker, surveys (e.g., benchmarking or trending of attitudes and behaviors)
- message/communications testing (e.g., advertising, logos)
- product/concept testing (e.g., features, design)

Since October is Energy Awareness Month, we have decided to focus this newsletter on the first category of research – newsmaker studies designed for media release – while the latter – communications and concept testing

studies – tend to be proprietary and used primarily to guide internal strategic planning.

Background: Existing "Green" Research

Green is a very broad term that refers to attitudes about (and impact on) the environment. But much of the existing publicly released green research can be categorized into the following topics:

1. General attitudes toward green

Harris Interactive research includes concern for the environment, willingness to pay more for green products, and satisfaction with green work policies.

2. Energy/electricity/power consumption/conservation

Harris Interactive research includes attitudes about certain forms of alternative energy (solar, wind), awareness, knowledge, and barriers or incentives to usage.

3. Fuel/ethanol/biofuel

Harris Interactive research includes awareness, knowledge, barriers or incentives to usage and impact on agriculture and national security.

4. Organic food/products

Harris Interactive research includes attitudes about health and wellness, nutrition, natural and organic products and barriers or incentives to usage.

5. Waste/recycling

Harris Interactive research includes concern for the environment and personal and employer attitudes and action.

■ RELATED RESEARCH

(CONTINUED)

Did you know that...?

- A majority of U.S. adults feel economic growth and development (63%) is more important to their region than protecting the environment (27%). One in ten (10%) are not sure.

Source: Harris Poll online survey conducted June 9-16, 2008 among 2,454 U.S. adults ages 18+.

- As consumers, most Fortune 1000 executives (80%) are personally concerned about climate change and its potential impact on the quality of life of future generations. However, there are substantial gaps between the actions they think their company should take and the actions that are currently being taken.

– For example, 76% feel their company should collaborate with industry groups, customers, and suppliers to address CO₂ emissions standards, but only 57% are currently doing so.

Source: Makovsky + Company phone survey conducted by Harris Interactive March 11-April 30, 2008 among 150 Fortune 1000 executives.



■ DO'S AND DON'TS

1 Do your homework. This tip applies to all newsmaker research, but is especially important when dealing with current and popular issues such as the environment. Green is a very hot topic and, by now, has been for several years. So before you commission your own survey, do your homework and make sure that your specific topic hasn't been addressed yet or that you can attack it from a different angle. The research should be fresh and original, building on, rather than merely duplicating, data that already exist in the public domain.

2 Make it relevant. In order for a thought leadership survey to be successful for you and your client, the angle you take on the content should be closely aligned with your clients' business objectives and the issues that are important to their key constituencies.

3 Don't force it. A green slant is not always appropriate or helpful and, depending on your client or the topic at hand, may cause more problems than it solves.

4 Be honest – No "greenwashing"! The term "greenwashing" – a combination of "green" and "whitewash" – was first coined in 1986 by New York environ-



mentalist Jay Westerveld in an essay on the hotel industry's practice of urging guests to reuse towels in order to benefit the environment, but some believe in actuality to increase profit. Consumers are wise to these efforts – in fact, more than 2 in 3 U.S. adults (68%) believe most companies say they are more environmentally friendly than they actually are (*2008 Adecco Earth Day survey*) – and the media are even savvier.

5 Buddy up – consider partnering with a relevant third-party organization. Co-branding with a non-profit often lends further credibility to a research endeavor conducted on behalf of a for-profit company.

6 Start trending. At this point, it's unlikely that green is just a fad, so even though it's a hot topic, it's not too late to begin tracking attitudes and behaviors surrounding green issues that are relevant to you and your client.

■ CASE STUDY

Adecco Workplace Insights Earth Day Survey

Adecco, a world leader in recruitment and workforce solutions, releases monthly surveys as part of their Workplace Insights research series, which takes the pulse of American

workers on all things workplace related, ranging from work/life balance and employee-boss relationships to diversity and generational differences.

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■ WHY WAS THE ADECCO STUDY A SUCCESS?

- The research focused on a contemporary and popular issue (i.e., the environment) but did so from a fresh angle (i.e., workers' perceptions of their employer's actions and policies).
- The release of the data was timed to coincide with an international event (i.e., Earth Day).
- The 2008 survey was based on best practices learned from the 2007 survey – that is, the most successful questions were trended while others were discarded.
- The 2008 survey results revealed a change in attitudes since 2007. Developing a trend (regardless of whether you find an increase, decrease, or no change in attitudes or behaviors) establishes a franchise for your client's brand and enables you to position them as a unique source of information.

CASE STUDY *Continued from page 3*

In March 2007, as part of its Workplace Insights research series and specifically in recognition of Earth Day, Adecco commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct a survey of American workers to gauge their perspectives on the role of the environment in the workplace.

Among the first of its kind, the 2007 Adecco Earth Day survey revealed that just over 1 in 2 employed adults feel their company should do more to be environmentally friendly and 1 in 3 adults would be more inclined to work for a green company.

The results were fresh, topical and consequently very successful, garnering coverage in outlets such as *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME Magazine*, and *Forbes.com*.

One year later, for its 2008 Earth Day initiative, Adecco, inspired by the success of the 2007 survey, trended most of the questions from the initial survey – and also added a couple of new questions to address emerging issues.

The latest Adecco Earth Day survey revealed that employed adults care more today than just one year ago about their company's green policies and translating thought into action:

- More than 1 in 3 adults in the workforce¹ would be *more inclined to work for a "green" company compared to an organization that does not make conscious efforts to promote socially- and environmentally-friendly practices*, an increase of 3 percentage points since last year (36% in 2008 vs. 33% in 2007).
- The same proportion as last year – about 2 in 3 – report that their company has an environmental policy (67% in 2008, 69% in 2007), but *familiarity with these policies has increased year over year* (51% in 2008 vs. 46% in 2007).
- In 2008, *fewer workers have no opinion* about their company's green practices (20% "don't know/not sure" in 2008 vs. 26% in 2007).
- More workers today say their *company should do "much more"* to be environmentally friendly (22% in 2008 vs. 17% in 2007).
- Though a majority of employed adults want their company to do more to be green, less than 1 in 3 workers (31%) would be willing to "put their money where their mouth is" and sacrifice a percentage of their salary in order to work for an environmentally friendly company.
- Those who are willing to sacrifice typically say they are willing to give up 5% of their salary.



¹U.S. adults ages 18+ who have ever looked for a job or intend to look for a job in the future.

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■ OTHER HARRIS INTERACTIVE E-NEWS SOURCES

The Harris Poll Weekly

Compiles results from the most recent Harris Polls on public opinion

Healthcare News

Covers policy issues and topics important to the healthcare industry and consumers

WSJ Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll

Focuses on healthcare topics research conducted bi-weekly for *The Wall Street Journal Online*

WSJ Online/Harris Interactive Personal Finance Poll

Focuses on a wide range of personal finance topics, research conducted monthly for *The Wall Street Journal Online*

The Advisor

Examines top issues impacting the financial services industry

Trends & Tudes

Keeps you informed of current topics important to youth marketers and educators

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To make suggestions regarding this newsletter or to discuss how to best leverage research as a public relations vehicle, please contact our Information Desk at 877.919.4765 or info@harrisinteractive.com.



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■ YOUR GREEN CONTACTS AT HARRIS INTERACTIVE

Kathy Steinberg, formerly manager of all omnibus research for the PR team here at Harris, is now spearheading the green center of excellence to collect, track, and analyze key themes that emerge from Harris's own (i.e., *The Harris Poll*), as well as client-commissioned, publicly released research on various environmental issues.

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David Parcell, a recent addition to the PR team as vice president and senior consultant, has extensive experience in public relations and environmental issues, having most recently served as VP of Marketing and Communications for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

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