

National Survey Reveals Gays and Lesbians are Frequent and Discerning Business Travelers

New Online Poll By Witeck-Combs Communications/Harris Interactive Also Confirms That Gay Consumers Consider Cost, Location and Fair Treatment Most When Choosing Travel Accommodations

Rochester, NY—June 18, 2003 – According to the most recent consumer research study by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive®, gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) individuals tend to take more business trips than their non-gay counterparts. In addition, gays, lesbians and bisexuals list cost, location and fair treatment as the most important factors when choosing a hotel for either business or pleasure trips.

“These findings are not surprising,” said Wesley Combs, president of Witeck-Combs Communications. “Because only 20% of GLB households have children, it may be that GLB employees have fewer conflicts when it comes to business travel. Given this assumption, they may more readily volunteer or might possibly be asked to take more business trips.”

GLB consumers report taking an average of seven business trips a year, compared to the two business trips reported by their non-gay counterparts. Eleven percent (11%) of GLB consumers indicated taking between three and five business trips in the last year, while six percent indicated taking more than ten. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of GLB consumers reported taking no business trips at all in the past year, compared to 65 percent of their non-gay counterparts.

When choosing travel accommodations for business or pleasure, GLB consumers overwhelmingly indicated that cost and location are the most important factors in deciding where to stay. In addition, one in five GLB business travelers (22%) said that one of their top three concerns when choosing a hotel is fair treatment of guests ‘like me,’ while 30% of GLB pleasure travelers also named fair treatment as one of their top three concerns.

“It is increasingly important for hotels to create a welcoming and respectful environment for all of their guests, including GLB customers,” added Combs. “In a competitive travel market, it is apparent that those who focus on customer service and who sensitively and professionally include GLB guests will earn their share of this trackable market.”

According to Rick Cirillo, American Airlines’ global sales manager for the gay and lesbian community, the new research “mirrors our experience and underscores why the gay business traveler is so highly sought after. We have learned the benefit of American’s gay-friendly policies and practices, which welcome these discriminating travelers who have many choices in air travel.”

When GLB consumers were asked about their future international travel plans, one in ten (10%) indicated plans to travel to Europe in 2003 for personal reasons or for pleasure. When asked where in Europe they would like to travel, 21 percent of GLB consumers indicated that the British Isles are their European destination of choice, while 13 percent preferred Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Five percent (5%) favored Eastern European countries, such as Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic, while only two percent (2%) mentioned Italy or Greece.

These are a few highlights of a nationwide Witeck-Combs Communications/Harris Interactive study of 3,462 adults, of whom five percent (5%) self-identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. The survey was conducted online between May 19 and 25, 2003 by Harris Interactive, a worldwide market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the GLB market.

Notes on reading tables

GLB refers to gay, lesbian and bisexual respondents. The percentage of respondents has been included for each item. An asterisk (*) signifies a value of less than one-half percent. A dash represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents answering that question.

**TABLE 1
NUMBER OF TRIPS TAKEN FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE**

“We will now switch gears to ask you a few questions about travel and hospitality. How many trips have you taken in the past 2 years for business, or for personal reasons/pleasure?”

Base: All Adults

	Business Travelers			Pleasure Travelers		
	Total	GLB*	Hetero-sexual	Total	GLB*	Hetero-sexual
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0 trips	65	57	65	18	22	17
1 trip	9	12	9	14	12	15
2 trips	9	10	9	20	16	20
3 – 5 trips	8	11	8	31	37	31
6 – 10 trips	4	4	5	13	8	14
More than 10 trips	4	6	4	3	5	3
MEAN	3	7	2	3	4	3

***NOTE:** Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from this table because the GLB sample for this question is a very small base.

**TABLE 2
REASONS FOR STAYING AT HOTEL**

“When you travel for (business/personal reasons/pleasure) and stay in a hotel, what are the three most important considerations when deciding which hotel to stay at?”

Base: U.S. Adults Who Are Business or Pleasure Travelers Who Stay in Hotels

	Business Travelers %			Pleasure Travelers %		
	Total	GLB*	Hetero- sexual	Total	GLB*	Hetero- sexual
Location	80	84	79	75	69	76
Cost	77	81	77	86	87	86
Fair Treatment of Guests Like Me	27	22	28	24	30	24
Standard Large Chain (Such As Hilton)	20	14	20	12	8	12
Guest Rewards Program	17	20	17	12	17	12
Hotel Dining Options	17	16	17	14	15	14
Discount Chain (Such As Holiday Inn)	12	5	12	21	15	21
Pool/Spa	11	9	11	20	23	20
Business Services	10	15	9	2	1	2
Recommendation From Friend/Family	9	6	10	16	14	16
Gym/Fitness Center	8	9	8	6	6	6
Boutique Hotel (Such As W Hotel)	3	6	2	2	4	1
Historic Building	2	5	1	3	4	3
Other	8	8	8	8	7	8

*NOTE: Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from this table because the GLB sample for this question is a very small base.

**TABLE 3
PLANNING TO TRAVEL TO EUROPE**

“Are you planning to travel to Europe for personal reasons or pleasure in 2003?”

Base: All Adults

	Total %	GLB %	Heterosexual %
Yes	8	10	8
No	92	90	92

TABLE 4
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES PEOPLE PREFER TO TRAVEL TO

"Where in Europe would you most like to visit?"

Base: All Adults

	Total %	GLB* %	Heterosexual %
British Isles (Great Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Wales)	30	21	28
Germany/Austria/Switzerland	14	13	14
Italy/Greece	14	2	15
Spain/Portugal	11	11	12
Eastern Europe (Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic)	4	5	4
Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)	2	-	3
Other	24	49	24

***NOTE:** Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from this table because the GLB sample for this question is a very small base.

Methodology

This study was conducted online within the United States between May 19 and 25, 2003, among a nationwide cross section of 3,462 adults. Of those adults surveyed, 184, or approximately five percent, self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual (GLB). Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and 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.

In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus two percentage points (for the overall sample) and plus or minus ten percentage points (for the GLB sample) of what they would be if the entire adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (non-response), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data and screening (e.g., for likely voters). It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online survey is not a probability sample.

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

± ADDITIONAL NOTE: Previous research conducted by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive queried gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) self-identified respondents. Although we remain interested in the consumer attitudes and characteristics of transgendered individuals, for accuracy and consistency we now distinguish sexual orientation from gender identity.

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About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm, specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over nine years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications has developed respected relationships throughout the community and serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay and lesbian consumers. In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trendspotting for their pathbreaking work on the gay and lesbian market.

About Harris Interactive®

Harris Interactive (www.harrisinteractive.com) is a worldwide market research and consulting firm best known for **The Harris Poll**®, and for pioneering the Internet method to conduct scientifically accurate market research. Headquartered in Rochester, New York, U.S.A., Harris Interactive combines proprietary methodologies and technology with expertise in predictive, custom and strategic research. The Company conducts international research through wholly owned subsidiaries—London-based **HI Europe** (www.hieurope.com) and Tokyo-based Harris Interactive Japan—as well as through the Harris Interactive Global Network of local market- and opinion-research firms, and various U.S. offices. **EOE M/F/D/V**

To become a member of the Harris Poll OnlineSM and be invited to participate in future online surveys, visit www.harrispollonline.com.

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