



6 of 10 Heterosexuals say Benefits for Married Heterosexual Employees should be Equally Available for Employees in Same-Sex Couples

Findings from second annual national survey to be presented at Out & Equal Workplace Summit in Minneapolis on Thursday, October 2 by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive

Minneapolis, MN — October 1, 2003— According to a new national survey, six out of ten heterosexual adults (62%) say that employees with same-sex partners should be equally eligible for key workplace benefits available to spouses of married employees. In another encouraging trend, when compared to last year's attitudes, gay and lesbian Americans report they feel significantly more comfortable being "out" in the workplace on a number of dimensions.

For the second year in a row, Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive® have conducted this national online survey of over 2,306 Americans which investigates workplace attitudes towards gays and lesbians as well as other populations including African Americans, Hispanic Americans, people with disabilities, women, seniors, Jews and Muslims.

When respondents were asked whether committed partners of lesbian or gay employees should receive the same benefits as spouses of married heterosexual employees, three quarters (74%) felt that same-sex partners are entitled to the same leave benefits that heterosexual married spouses receive when there is a loss of a partner or other close family member. Two thirds (66%) of heterosexual Americans also agreed that leave rights for family and medical emergencies as outlined in the Family and Medical Leave Act should be the same for same-sex employees as they are for heterosexual employees. Other findings show:

- Six in ten (62%) heterosexual adults agreed that health insurance benefits for both partners of same-sex employees and spouses of heterosexual married couples should be tax-free;
- Six in ten (61%) heterosexual adults agreed that health insurance coverage under COBRA should also be available to same sex partners of employees;
- Six in ten (60%) heterosexuals agreed that when the same-sex partner of an employee accepts transfer to a new work location, his or her same-sex partner should be treated with equal attention and support as a heterosexual employee's married spouse;
- Half (50%) of heterosexual adults believe that adoption assistance such as counseling and financial benefits should be available to both same-sex employees and married heterosexual employees.

The far-reaching online survey was conducted for Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, a non-profit organization that provides support and advocacy for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT)

community in the workplace. The complete results of this survey will be made available at the opening session of the Out & Equal Workplace Summit in Minneapolis, MN on Thursday, October 2. The Out & Equal Workplace Summit is the nation's leading conference for GLBT employees and human resources professionals addressing these issues in the workplace.

The research also reports that gay and lesbian Americans say they are much more comfortable being open in the workplace about their sexual orientation than they were in 2002. When asked how comfortable they would be to display a photo of a same-sex spouse, partner or significant other, twice as many (48%) responded now that they are very or extremely comfortable compared to last year (24%). Other findings include:

- 48% of GLBT Americans are very comfortable or extremely comfortable introducing their same-sex partner to co-workers as well as their boss or management—an increase of 16 percentage points over last year's 32%;
- Over half (54%) GLBT Americans are very comfortable or extremely comfortable socializing with co-workers who are like themselves; last year, 41% felt this way;
- 51% of GLBT adults are very or extremely comfortable introducing their spouse or partner to coworkers—a significant increase over last year's 35%.

This progress, however, is balanced against the little change in the levels of discrimination reported by GLBT Americans in the workplace. For the second year in a row, four in ten (41%) GLBT adults say they have faced some form of discrimination on the job, including being fired, harassed, pressured to quit or denied a promotion because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. Also, more heterosexuals (52%) reported hearing jokes about GLBT people in the workplace than they did in 2002 (45%).

“The diversity of America's workforce and workplaces helps create an environment of acceptance and appreciation for not only our differences but what we share in common as American families,” said Out & Equal Executive Director Selisse Berry. “We still have a lot of work to do and that's why the Out & Equal Workplace Summit is so important. By providing effective tools and offering useful lessons from the nation's leaders in diversity, others can learn how to transform their workplaces to an environment where all employees are valued for their contributions and talent, not their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.”

Corporate sponsors for the 2003 Out & Equal Workplace Summit include the leaders in GLBT diversity in the U.S. These include IBM, Motorola, American Airlines, Eastman Kodak Co., Best Buy, Procter and Gamble, Honeywell, Intel, Wells Fargo, Citigroup, Prudential Financial, Volvo, J.P. Morgan Chase, Aetna, and Raytheon.

Since these questions were initially posed a year ago, the nation has witnessed a sea change in the visibility and news coverage about gays and lesbians. Milestones have included the Supreme Court ruling outlawing sodomy laws, Canada's decision to sanction same-sex marriages as well as the popularity of new cross-over television programming such as 'Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.' Companies like Jaguar, Volvo and Orbitz also executed advertising strategies tailored to the GLBT market, resulting in news coverage on CNN, MSNBC and major newspapers.

The current survey suggests that this broader visibility, combined with the growing trends in corporate diversity training, is leading to greater sensitivity in the workplace among heterosexuals. "Corporate marketing campaigns to GLBT consumers are on the rise especially among companies that promote fairness and equal benefits among their workforce. Yet, even though protections for gays and lesbians in corporate America are increasing, attitudes must still catch up," said Wesley Combs, President of Witeck-Combs Communications, a strategic marketing and public relations firm specializing in reaching the GLBT market. "I predict that the most successful companies will be those that understand best how to put their internal philosophy in synch with their marketplace strategies. They are the ones that will establish lasting reputations and achieve the highest employee and customer loyalties."

About the Out & Equal Workplace Summit

The full report will be presented at the opening session of the 2003 Out & Equal Workplace Summit. The conference, set for October 2-4 at the Marriott City Center in Minneapolis, MN, will bring together more than 600 human resources professionals; GLBT workplace advocates, straight allies and other committed individuals from around the country to receive the latest updates on GLBT issues in the workplace. Over 50 workshops are planned across a wide range of GLBT workplace issues and will include keynote addresses by former Texas Governor Ann Richards, retired NFL player Esera Tuaolo, and furniture executive Mitchell Gold. For a complete listing of speakers and panels, visit www.outandequal.org.

Notes on reading tables

GLBT refers to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender 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
Forms of Discrimination in the Workplace

"Have you ever faced any of these forms of discrimination in the workplace because of your sexual orientation or gender identity? Please check all that apply."

Base: GLBT Respondents

	2002	2003
	GLBT	GLBT
	%	%
I was harassed on the job by co-workers	23	18
I was denied a promotion or job advancement	12	7
I was fired or dismissed unfairly	9	14
I was pressured to quit my job because of harassment or hostility	8	4
Other form of discrimination	22	20
I have never faced any form of discrimination in the workplace because of my sexual orientation or gender identity	59	59
Respondents who have ever faced discrimination (NET of first five responses)	41	41

TABLE 2
Frequency of Experiencing Discrimination

“How often do you think the following groups experience discrimination in the workplace, for example, are fired or dismissed from a job, been harassed, or been denied promotions or job advances?”

Base: All Respondents

			Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Decline To Answer
Regardless of their sexual orientation, all employees are entitled to equal benefits on the job, such as health insurance for their partners or spouses									
GLBT 2003	%		83	4	3	3	5	1	*
GLBT 2002	%		74	14	3	5	1	3	-
Heterosexual 2003	%		49	13	8	8	13	8	2
Heterosexual 2002	%		52	11	8	6	13	6	3
How an employee does his or her job should be the standard for judging an employee, not their sexual orientation.									
GLBT 2003	%		87	2	2	-	7	1	*
GLBT 2002	%		91	4	2	-	*	3	*
Heterosexual 2003	%		70	10	5	2	4	8	2
Heterosexual 2002	%		69	8	6	2	5	7	2
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are treated fairly and equally in my workplace.									
GLBT 2003	%		39	16	10	9	15	10	*
GLBT 2002	%		14	26	14	14	8	14	11
Heterosexual 2003	%		32	18	15	6	4	23	3
Heterosexual 2002	%		28	14	14	5	4	20	14
It would be very difficult for an employee to be openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in my workplace.									
GLBT 2003	%		13	18	13	14	35	7	*
GLBT 2002	%		15	16	19	18	18	13	2
Heterosexual 2003	%		11	14	17	17	23	15	3
Heterosexual 2002	%		12	12	16	15	23	14	8
I would be uncomfortable if my boss were openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.									
GLBT 2003	%		10	*	7	9	72	1	1
GLBT 2002	%		9	1	4	6	73	5	1
Heterosexual 2003	%		14	13	16	14	33	8	1
Heterosexual 2002	%		15	14	17	10	33	8	5

TABLE 2 (Continued)
Sexual Orientation and the Workplace
“How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?”

Base: All Respondents

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Decline To Answer
I would be uncomfortable if any of my co-workers were openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.								
GLBT 2003	%	7	3	3	7	78	1	1
GLBT 2002	%	9	2	4	5	76	2	2
Heterosexual 2003	%	10	12	15	17	37	8	1
Heterosexual 2002	%	12	12	15	14	36	7	4
I favor written nondiscrimination policies that include sexual orientation								
GLBT 2003	%	73	7	11	3	3	1	1
GLBT 2002	%	64	17	6	2	2	8	1
Heterosexual 2003	%	33	18	21	7	9	9	2
Heterosexual 2002	%	36	14	20	4	11	8	7

TABLE 3
Comfort Level in Sharing Personal Information at Work
“In your current or your most recent job, how comfortable are you or were you...?”

Base: All Respondents

			Extremely Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not at all Comfortable	Not Applicable
Having a photo of your spouse, partner or a significant other on your desk or in your office								
	GLBT 2003	%	32	16	11	5	18	18
	GLBT 2002	%	17	7	10	13	20	33
	Heterosexual 2003	%	32	17	18	4	3	26
	Heterosexual 2002	%	29	18	16	3	3	31
Having a photo of your children on your desk or in your office¹								
	GLBT 2003	%	39	22	20	7	12	-
	GLBT 2002	%	45	22	19	9	4	-
	Heterosexual 2003	%	46	24	22	4	4	-
	Heterosexual 2002	%	45	25	23	3	4	-
Discussing your after work social life, including details about who you share time with, such as your spouse, dates, friends or partner								
	GLBT 2003	%	33	21	16	13	14	4
	GLBT 2002	%	11	24	18	17	18	12
	Heterosexual 2003	%	24	19	25	13	9	11
	Heterosexual 2002	%	22	19	25	12	8	14
Introducing your spouse, partner or significant other to your co-workers								
	GLBT 2003	%	30	21	15	8	13	14
	GLBT 2002	%	24	11	15	13	14	23
	Heterosexual 2003	%	34	20	20	6	2	18
	Heterosexual 2002	%	32	19	22	3	3	20
Introducing your spouse, partner or significant other to your boss or management								
	GLBT 2003	%	31	17	14	11	14	14
	GLBT 2002	%	25	7	9	22	14	23
	Heterosexual 2003	%	33	19	20	5	4	19
	Heterosexual 2002	%	31	21	20	4	3	22
Socializing with others at work who are like you								
	GLBT 2003	%	38	16	22	8	4	11
	GLBT 2002	%	16	25	22	16	7	15
	Heterosexual 2003	%	31	24	24	7	3	11
	Heterosexual 2002	%	30	22	26	6	2	13

TABLE 3 (Continued)
Comfort Level in Sharing Personal Information at Work

“In your current or your most recent job, how comfortable are you or were you...?”

Base: All Respondents

			Extremely Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not at all Comfortable	Not Applicable
Displaying symbols or personal items at your desk or in your office that show others about your life, personal interests, or beliefs such as a rainbow flag, Jewish star, cross, or the flag of your nation of origin								
GLBT 2003	%		22	18	12	15	22	12
GLBT 2002	%		13	5	26	6	26	23
Heterosexual 2003	%		26	20	22	8	6	19
Heterosexual 2002	%		25	16	21	6	6	26
Using the proper pronoun when referring to the person who is your spouse, date or partner²								
GLBT 2003	%		41	16	10	12	11	9
GLBT 2002	%		20	9	20	13	18	20
Heterosexual 2003	%		35	20	22	3	3	18
Heterosexual 2002	%		-	-	-	-	-	-

*Note: Only GLBT respondents were asked about the statement “Using the proper pronoun when referring to the person who is your spouse, date or partner”.

¹ Percentage of respondents who provided a not applicable response was deleted from the base, percentages recalculated using this new base. Please note that the base size for GLBT adults in this statement is a small base. Therefore caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from the results.

² This item was only asked of the GLBT sample in 2002.

TABLE 4
Heard Jokes About Groups in Workplace

“Have you ever heard someone at your current or most recent job tell jokes about any of the following groups?”

Base: All Respondents

			Yes	No
African Americans				
	GLBT 2003	%	46	54
	GLBT 2002	%	46	54
	Heterosexual 2003	%	43	57
	Heterosexual 2002	%	38	62
Hispanic Americans				
	GLBT 2003	%	48	52
	GLBT 2002	%	40	60
	Heterosexual 2003	%	40	60
	Heterosexual 2002	%	33	67
Asian Americans				
	GLBT 2003	%	36	64
	GLBT 2002	%	28	72
	Heterosexual 2003	%	30	70
	Heterosexual 2002	%	26	74
Women				
	GLBT 2003	%	62	38
	GLBT 2002	%	55	45
	Heterosexual 2003	%	63	37
	Heterosexual 2002	%	54	46
People who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender				
	GLBT 2003	%	56	44
	GLBT 2002	%	64	36
	Heterosexual 2003	%	52	48
	Heterosexual 2002	%	45	55
Older adults, aged 65 and older				
	GLBT 2003	%	36	64
	GLBT 2002	%	45	55
	Heterosexual 2003	%	39	61
	Heterosexual 2002	%	36	61
People with disabilities				
	GLBT 2003	%	30	70
	GLBT 2002	%	42	58
	Heterosexual 2003	%	30	70
	Heterosexual 2002	%	26	74
People who are Jewish				
	GLBT 2003	%	35	65
	GLBT 2002	%	31	69
	Heterosexual 2003	%	33	67
	Heterosexual 2002	%	30	70
People who are Muslim				
	GLBT 2003	%	37	63
	GLBT 2002	%	34	66
	Heterosexual 2003	%	30	70
	Heterosexual 2002	%	30	70

TABLE 5
Who Should Receive Employer Benefits

“Employers sometimes offer different benefits to spouses of married heterosexual employees, compared to committed partners of gay and lesbian employees. For the following employer benefits, who do you think should receive each?”

Base: All Respondents

			Spouses of married heterosexual employees only	Committed partners of gay and lesbian employees only	Both spouses and partners	Neither spouses nor partners
Untaxed health insurance benefits						
	GLBT 2003	%	4	2	90	4
	Heterosexual 2003	%	32	2	62	4
Adoption assistance such as counseling and financial benefits						
	GLBT 2003	%	5	2	77	16
	Heterosexual 2003	%	36	2	50	12
Leave for employees who experience the loss of a spouse/partner or close family member						
	GLBT 2003	%	5	2	92	1
	Heterosexual 2003	%	21	3	74	2
Transfers for employees to new locations when their spouse/partner has been transferred by their own employer						
	GLBT 2003	%	3	2	87	8
	Heterosexual 2003	%	27	1	60	11
Leave rights for family and medical emergencies as outlined in the Family and Medical Leave Act						
	GLBT 2003	%	4	2	93	1
	Heterosexual 2003	%	30	2	66	3
Extended health insurance under COBRA when an employee leaves a job						
	GLBT 2003	%	14	12	16	10
	GLBT 2003	%	4	2	91	3
	Heterosexual 2003	%	32	2	61	5

Methodology

This recent consumer research survey of a nationwide cross section of 2,306 adults (ages 18+) was conducted online by Harris Interactive in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the GLBT market. Of those adults surveyed, 172 (7%) self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. The survey was conducted for Out & Equal Workplace Advocates between September 16 – 23, 2003.

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 2 percentage points (for the overall sample) of what they would be if the entire adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. However, this is not a probability sample.

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

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About Out & Equal Workplace Advocates

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates (www.outandequal.org) champions safe and equitable workplaces for GLBT people. They advocate building and strengthening successful organizations that value all employees, customers and communities. In addition to the annual Workplace Summit, Out & Equal's programs include: Building Bridges Diversity Training - designed to increase employee productivity, improve morale, and strengthen the workplace community by opening up communication to increase awareness and develop an action plan of GLBT issues; Networking Opportunities – including organized events in regions across the country, providing an opportunity for people to meet, network and learn about issues facing the GLBT community in the workplace.

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 corporate clients including American Airlines, IBM, Sears, Ford Motor Company and its brands Jaguar, Volvo and Land Rover. With a decade's experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications has earned 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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