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U.S. Adults Increasingly Support Workplace Equality for Lesbians and Gays

Findings from fourth annual Harris Interactive/Witeck-Combs Communications Out & Equal Workplace Summit survey to be presented in Denver, Colorado on September 22

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — September 20, 2005 — According to the latest national Out & Equal Workplace Summit survey, three-quarters of heterosexual adults (76%) strongly agree that employees should be measured by their job performance, not their sexual orientation. In addition, more than half (55%) of heterosexual adults feel that regardless of sexual orientation, all employees are entitled to equal benefits on the job, such as health insurance for their partners or spouses.

These findings will be disclosed Thursday in the fourth annual Out & Equal Workplace Summit survey conducted by Harris Interactive® in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications. This national online survey of 2,242 U.S. adults, of whom six percent self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), investigates workplace attitudes towards lesbians and gays as well as other populations including African Americans, Hispanic Americans, people with disabilities, women, seniors, Jews and Muslims.

The survey also shows that in the last three years, heterosexuals and LGBT adults increasingly consider diversity to be an important factor when deciding which company to work for. The survey finds that, all other things being equal:

- Nearly seven out of 10 (69%) heterosexuals consider it extremely or very important that a company offer equal health insurance benefits for all employees, compared to 57 percent in 2002.
- Fifty-seven (57%) of heterosexuals consider it extremely or very important that a company have a written non-discrimination policy that includes race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability, compared to only 43 percent in 2002.
- Almost nine out of 10 (88%) LGBT adults consider it extremely or very important that a company have a written non-discrimination policy that includes race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability, compared to 66 percent in 2002.

- More than eight out of 10 (81%) LGBT adults consider it extremely or very important that a company offers equal health insurance benefits for all employees, compared to 71 percent in 2002.

For the fourth year in a row, Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive® have teamed to provide these results, which will be made available on Thursday, September 22, at the opening session of the Out & Equal Workplace Summit in Denver, CO. The Out & Equal Workplace Summit is the nation's leading conference for LGBT employees and human resources professionals addressing these issues in the workplace. Out & Equal Workplace Advocates is a non-profit organization that provides support and advocacy for the LGBT community in the workplace.

"Regardless of how Americans feel about LGBT issues, majorities still support fair treatment for their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender peers in the workplace," said Selisse Berry, executive director of Out & Equal Workplace Advocates. "Employers are demonstrating leadership in providing parity for LGBT people, helping all employees understand the value of diversity in the workforce."

In addition, the survey also found that LGBT adults are more comfortable with "being out" at the workplace today as compared to 2002 when the same survey questions were asked for the first time.

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) now report that they are comfortable – including those saying "extremely comfortable" (31%), "very comfortable" (13%) and "comfortable" (25%) – discussing their "after work" social life, including details about who they share time with, such as spouses, dates, friends or partners in their current or most recent job, compared to 53 percent overall – including those who said "extremely comfortable" (11%), "very comfortable" (24%) and "comfortable" (18%) – who said this in 2002.
- While overall, 68 percent of LGBT adults, compared to 61 percent in 2002, say they would be comfortable introducing their spouse, partner or significant other to their co-workers, in particular, more than half (55%) now say they would be "extremely" (40%) or "very" (15%) comfortable introducing their spouse, partner or significant other to their co-workers, compared to 35 percent who said this in 2002 (24% saying "extremely" and 11% saying "very").

"The prominence of LGBT issues in the media over the past couple years has enhanced the dialogue about gay issues in all facets of life, including the workplace," said Wesley Combs, president of Witeck-Combs Communications. "By being more visible on the job, LGBT Americans are helping their non-gay

peers understand who they are and how their families are not treated equally when it comes to rights and benefits.”

Earlier this week, with related findings, the Human Rights Campaign released the results of its annual Corporate Equality Index, which measures how equitably companies are treating their LGBT employees, consumers and investors. A total of 101 companies received a perfect score of 100 percent – an 80 percent increase from one year ago, when 56 companies received a perfect score.

“This year’s CEI benchmark is another clear example of how Corporate America is committed to making workplace equality a reality,” added Selisse Berry. “As an advocate for safe and equitable workplaces for LGBT people, I could not be more pleased to see so many companies receive perfect CEI scores, recognizing them for valuing their LGBT employees and setting the standard for all employers to follow.”

Notes on reading tables

LGBT refers to lesbian, gay, 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 percent because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents answering that question.

TABLE 1
IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY MEASURES ON CAREER DECISION-MAKING

“All other things being equal, when making decisions about your own career, how important is it for you to work for a company that...?”

Base: All Adults

			Extremely/ Very Important (NET)	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Not Applicable
Has a written non-discrimination policy that includes all of the following: race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age									
LGBT 2005	%		88	44	44	7	3	2	-
LGBT 2002	%		66	49	17	15	4	1	14
Heterosexual 2005	%		57	29	28	25	11	7	-
Heterosexual 2002	%		43	27	16	20	10	11	16
Has senior executives who welcome, hire and encourage a diverse work force									
LGBT 2005	%		66	24	42	22	7	5	-
LGBT 2002	%		49	22	27	24	4	7	16
Heterosexual 2005	%		47	18	29	30	14	8	-
Heterosexual 2002	%		40	21	19	21	11	12	17
Promotes and professionally develops senior managers who come from diverse backgrounds									
LGBT 2005	%		64	21	43	20	10	6	-
LGBT 2002	%		39	16	23	23	15	8	15
Heterosexual 2005	%		42	16	26	30	17	11	-
Heterosexual 2002	%		34	17	17	22	12	15	18
Supports community non-profit organizations that represent the diversity of the workforce and the customer base									
LGBT 2005	%		53	16	37	29	11	6	-
LGBT 2002	%		42	14	28	19	14	10	15
Heterosexual 2005	%		38	15	23	32	18	12	-
Heterosexual 2002	%		32	14	18	23	16	14	17
Offers equal health insurance benefits to all employees									
LGBT 2005	%		81	43	38	15	2	2	-
LGBT 2002	%		71	41	30	8	3	3	15
Heterosexual 2005	%		69	33	36	23	5	3	-
Heterosexual 2002	%		57	36	21	16	5	6	16

TABLE 2
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 Adults

		Extremely/Very Comfortable	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								
LGBT 2005	%	42	33	9	8	12	16	22
LGBT 2002	%	24	17	7	10	13	20	33
Heterosexual 2005	%	57	40	17	14	3	4	22
Heterosexual 2002	%	47	29	18	16	3	3	31
Having a photo of your children on your desk or in your office ¹								
LGBT 2005	%	37	28	9	2	8	3	49
LGBT 2002	%	67	45	22	19	9	4	-
Heterosexual 2005	%	55	40	15	13	3	3	26
Heterosexual 2002	%	70	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								
LGBT 2005	%	44	31	13	25	13	12	5
LGBT 2002	%	35	11	24	18	17	18	12
Heterosexual 2005	%	50	28	22	23	12	9	6
Heterosexual 2002	%	41	22	19	25	12	8	14
Introducing your spouse, partner or significant other to your co-workers								
LGBT 2005	%	55	40	15	13	10	7	15
LGBT 2002	%	35	24	11	15	13	14	23
Heterosexual 2005	%	66	44	22	16	3	2	13
Heterosexual 2002	%	51	32	19	22	3	3	20

TABLE 2 (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 Adults

		Extremely/Very Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not at all Comfortable	Not Applicable
Introducing your spouse, partner or significant other to your boss or management								
LGBT 2005	%	51	40	11	7	13	9	20
LGBT 2002	%	32	25	7	9	22	14	23
Heterosexual 2005	%	63	43	20	17	3	3	14
Heterosexual 2002	%	52	31	21	20	4	3	22
Socializing with others at work who are like you								
LGBT 2005	%	64	42	22	11	15	3	7
LGBT 2002	%	41	16	25	22	16	7	15
Heterosexual 2005	%	63	38	25	22	6	2	6
Heterosexual 2002	%	52	30	22	26	6	2	13
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								
LGBT 2005	%	41	26	15	10	13	23	13
LGBT 2002	%	18	13	5	26	6	26	23
Heterosexual 2005	%	47	31	16	20	8	8	17
Heterosexual 2002	%	41	25	16	21	6	6	26
Using the proper pronoun when referring to the person who is your spouse, date or partner**								
LGBT 2005	%	57	42	15	8	10	9	15
LGBT 2002	%	29	20	9	20	13	18	20
Heterosexual 2005	%	64	45	19	18	3	2	13
Heterosexual 2002	%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

** In 2002, this item was only asked of the LGBT sample.

**TABLE 3
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE WORKPLACE**

“How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?”

Base: All Adults

		Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	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									
LGBT 2005	%	87	83	4	3	2	2	7	*
LGBT 2002	%	88	74	14	3	5	1	3	-
Heterosexual 2005	%	68	55	13	8	7	10	4	2
Heterosexual 2002	%	63	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.									
LGBT 2005	%	91	89	2	1	-	1	7	*
LGBT 2002	%	95	91	4	2	-	*	3	*
Heterosexual 2005	%	87	76	11	5	1	3	4	1
Heterosexual 2002	%	77	69	8	6	2	5	7	2
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are treated fairly and equally in my workplace.									
LGBT 2005	%	50	33	17	13	10	16	9	*
LGBT 2002	%	40	14	26	14	14	8	14	11
Heterosexual 2005	%	51	32	19	18	6	4	17	3
Heterosexual 2002	%	42	28	14	14	5	4	20	14

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE WORKPLACE

“How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?”

Base: All Adults

		Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Decline To Answer
It would be very difficult for an employee to be openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in my workplace.									
LGBT 2005	%	38	21	17	4	16	35	6	*
LGBT 2002	%	31	15	16	19	18	18	13	2
Heterosexual 2005	%	27	11	16	17	18	27	8	3
Heterosexual 2002	%	24	12	12	16	15	23	14	8
I would be uncomfortable if my boss were openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.									
LGBT 2005	%	9	7	2	2	3	81	5	*
LGBT 2002	%	10	9	1	4	6	73	5	1
Heterosexual 2005	%	28	15	13	14	15	39	3	2
Heterosexual 2002	%	29	15	14	17	10	33	8	5
I would be uncomfortable if any of my co-workers were openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.									
LGBT 2005	%	5	3	2	2	4	84	3	*
LGBT 2002	%	11	9	2	4	5	76	2	2
Heterosexual 2005	%	23	12	11	14	15	43	2	1
Heterosexual 2002	%	24	12	12	15	14	36	7	4
I favor written nondiscrimination policies that include sexual orientation									
LGBT 2005	%	88	82	6	4	2	3	3	*
LGBT 2002	%	81	64	17	6	2	2	8	1
Heterosexual 2005	%	62	44	18	18	6	8	4	3
Heterosexual 2002	%	50	36	14	20	4	11	8	7

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the online survey in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. between September 6 and 12, 2005 among a nationwide cross section of 2,242 U.S. adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 2,051 are heterosexual and 160 (or 6%) self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Note: The overall sample includes 3 transgender individuals.

Overall 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 overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the LGBT sub-sample is plus or minus 8 percentage points. The online sample was not a probability sample.

About the Out & Equal Workplace Summit

The full report will be presented at the 2005 Out & Equal Workplace Summit. The conference, set for September 22-24 at the Adams Mark Hotel in Denver, CO, will bring together a record breaking 900 human resources professionals, LGBT workplace advocates, straight allies and other committed individuals from around the country to receive the latest updates on LGBT issues in the workplace. More than 60 workshops are planned across a wide range of LGBT workplace issues and will include keynote addresses by noted Judy Shepard, mother of Mathew Shepard, actor B.D. Wong, openly lesbian Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin and Tim Gill, founder of Quark, Inc. and the LGBT-focused Gill Foundation. For a complete listing of speakers and panels, visit www.outandequal.org.

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 Inc. (www.harrisinteractive.com) is the 13th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world, perhaps best known for *The Harris Poll*® and for pioneering and engineering Internet-based research methods. The Rochester, New York-based global research company blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application, conducting proprietary and public research globally to help clients achieve clear, material and enduring results.

Blending science and art, Harris Interactive combines its intellectual capital and one of the world's largest online panels of respondents, with premier Internet survey technology and sophisticated research methods to market leadership through its US, Europe (www.harrisinteractive.com/europe) and Asia offices, its wholly owned subsidiary, Novatris in Paris (www.novatris.com), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies. EOE M/F/D/V

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

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