USA: It's not easy being green

Contributed by GfK
Thursday, 19 April 2007

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New Study Reveals Attitudes and Behavior Around Earth Day

NEW YORK, April 20, 2007 â€“ GfK Custom Research North America today announced results of a national survey revealing that individual Americans view U.S. citizens and corporations as behind the rest of the world when it comes to taking action to protect the environment.

When asked whether U.S. individuals are ahead, behind or equal to people in other countries in terms of being "green,â€• nearly half (43%) of Americans say their fellow citizens are lagging, 27% say they are ahead and 22% cite them as equal. Similarly, 38% indicate U.S. corporations are behind their foreign counterparts, one-quarter (25%) think theyâ€™re ahead and 28% say they are equal with respect to environmentalism.

"Itâ€™s perhaps not surprising that consumers are more likely to point the finger at themselves rather than corporations for falling short on environmental responsibility,â€• says Kathy Sheehan, senior vice president of GfK Roper Consulting. "This reflects the overall â€˜consumer awakeningâ€™ trend we are seeing today, in which action is historically preceded by acknowledgement of an issue resulting in a need for change.â€•

Heightened Environmentalism: Fact or Fad?
With the recent wave of media coverage around the environmental steps individuals and businesses are taking, the survey asked if this increased "greenâ€• focus reflects a real shift in opinion. While the majority of Americans (55%) say the heightened interest is "real,â€• one in three (31%) claim it is "just a fad.â€•

When asked in which month Earth Day is observed, six in ten (60%) U.S. consumers said they didnâ€™t know, 24% cited the wrong month and only 16% were able to correctly identify April. Additionally, an overwhelming 83% of Americans say they have no plans to mark Earth Day this year.

At the same time, the study reveals an acknowledgment of the benefit of Earth Day with 70% of consumers saying over the years it has had an impact on what Americans do to protect the environment. Slightly less, but still a majority (60%), say the annual celebration has influenced U.S. corporationsâ€™ behavior over time.

Among the 14% of Americans who intend to celebrate Earth Day this April 22, 64% say they plan to plant a tree in honor of the occasion followed by 30% who will make their commute "greenâ€• (ride bicycle, carpool or use public transportation to get to work). Other Earth Day activities include organizing a local recycling program (18%) and attending an environmental rally (17%).

Survey Methodology
The GfK Roper OmniTelÂ® Earth Day survey was conducted February 23 - 25, 2007 as a precursor to GfK Roper Consultingâ€™s upcoming 2007 GfK Roper Green Gauge ReportÂ®, the only nationwide, long-term syndicated study of consumer attitudes and behaviors towards the environment. A total of 1,004 computer assisted telephone interviews were completed among a nationally representative sample of American adults ages 18 and up.