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We stress less over our jobs

Survey: Economy, family top sources

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American workers are still experiencing stress at work, but from a different source, according to a survey released Friday by The Marlin Co.

The survey found that only 15 percent of workers ranked their jobs as the primary cause of stress. The largest number - 28 percent - picked the economy, 27 percent their families and 24 percent picked the war on terrorism as bigger sources of stress than their jobs.

Frank Kenna 111, president of

the North Haven-based The Marlin Co.. said the job ranked much higher in previous polls, but he didn't think this means people's jobs are less stressful, it just means that the world has changed.

"Stress is caused by things beyond your control," Kenna said, such as the economy, family illnesses and terrorism - things beyond everyone's control.

The Marlin Co. is a workplace communications firm that provides materials and consulting services to companies trying to build teamwork and reduce stress at the workplace.

The company was spun off from the Marlin Firearms Co. in 1986. Kenna said his company used to be an in-house service that the firearms maker provided to other companies.

Kenna said his company works with 7,000 businesses, and the biggest problem he has discovered is getting managers to sit down and listen to their employees. He said the manager may not be able to fix the problem, but the act of listening can often head off a stressful situation because it shows respect.

The survey showed that despite

all the corporate scandals, layoffs and other issues that have hit businesses in the last few years, people still trust and respect their bosses.

Kenna said he was surprised that 73 percent of respondents said they would trust their boss to babysit their children and 72 percent said they would hire their boss.

However, Kenna said, having one in four employees not trust the boss isn't such a good ratio.

He also said that the trust factor is higher at small companies, generally because workers interact more with their bosses on a daily basis.

Kenna also said management has had to take a hard look at how it is perceived in the workplace given the rash of corporate scandals in the last two years.

The Marlin survey was conducted by Harris Interactive, which polled a representative sample of 752 U.S. workers.

While Kenna's survey was conducted using standard research techniques, **Norwalk-based Richmond Consulting Group released the results of an Internet poll on workplace**

recognition that Kenna said were interesting.

The Richmond poll asked, "How do you want your boss to show appreciation?" and 59 percent picked the choice "show me the money."

Company principal Annette Richmond said her poll is not scientific, but is more of a temperature gauge of what's going on. Her company is a management-consulting group.

Richmond said that, given the slow economy, she was surprised that 22 percent of people picked a non-monetary award.

Kenna said he was surprised by Richmond's poll, too.

According to Kenna, while Internet polls aren't considered statistically accurate, they can have some value in gauging public sentiment.

In Kenna's experience employees usually place a higher value on recognition than money.

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