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## **GIBBS & SOELL SURVEY: FORTUNE 1000 EXECUTIVES CONFIDENT ABOUT OWN GREEN EFFORTS AMID DOUBTS OF WIDESPREAD COMMITMENT**

*-- Customer Demand and Climate Change Are Top Sustainability Drivers--*

### **Key Messages:**

- The 2011 Gibbs & Soell Sense & Sustainability® Study is the public relations firm's second annual survey of Fortune 1000 executives and U.S. consumers about corporate efforts to improve the health of the environment through sustainable practices, products, or services.
- Results reveal 88% of executives report their company is "going green," yet only 29% believe a majority of businesses are committed to sustainability.
- Sales, social responsibility, and management and shareholder influence are seen by executives as chief drivers of their company's green efforts.

**NEW YORK, April 5, 2011** – U.S. consumers and Fortune 1000 executives remain doubtful there is widespread commitment to "going green" among corporate America, according to the second annual Gibbs & Soell Sense & Sustainability® Study released today. However, executives express confidence in their own employer's green business initiatives while remaining skeptical about the broader commitment of other companies to sustainable practices, products or services.

The study was conducted online in February 2011 by Harris Interactive® among 2,031 U.S. adults and 302 Fortune 1000 executives on behalf of **Gibbs & Soell**, a global independent public relations firm with communications expertise in sustainability and the **advanced manufacturing, energy** and **greentech industries**. Key findings include the following:

- **Executives are aware of their own company's green efforts, but join the general public in ongoing skepticism of corporate America's commitment to sustainability.** The majority (88%) of business leaders report their company is "going green." However, only 29% of executives and 17% of consumers believe that a majority of businesses ("most," "almost all," or "all") are committed to "going green" – defined as "improving the health of the environment by implementing more sustainable business practices, and/or offering environmentally-friendly products or services."
- **Sales, social responsibility, and influence from management and shareholders are seen by executives as the chief drivers of their company's green efforts.** Business leaders identify customer demand (42%), the desire to help reduce or reverse global climate change (34%), and directives from management and investors (31%) as the top reasons for their company "going green."
- **Financial inefficiency, market reluctance and unclear measurement continue to be challenges to going green, but there are hints that these are lessening.** Executives cite insufficient return on investment (70%), down from 78% in 2010; consumers' unwillingness to pay a premium for green

products or services (66%), down from 71% in 2010; and, difficulty in evaluating sustainability across a product life cycle (44%), down from 45% in 2010, as the top barriers to more businesses “going green” in 2011. Though the only statistically significant change between 2010 and 2011 is the 8 percentage point decrease in the proportion of executives citing ROI as a barrier, these year-over-year differences suggest a downward movement that will be verified through future research.

- **There is an emphasis on creating an organizational structure to meet sustainability goals, but efforts continue to coexist with other business responsibilities.** Three-quarters of executives (75%) indicate their company has people responsible for sustainability or “going green” initiatives, up from 69% in 2010. Nearly one out of five (17%) report there is a team of individuals whose jobs are specifically and solely dedicated to sustainability, up from 13% in 2010. These year-over-year changes, though not statistically significant, suggest a possible upward trend that will be verified with future surveys. More than one out of ten (11%) note there is a C-suite or senior level function specifically and solely dedicated to “going green” initiatives. The majority of executives (55%) report that teams of individuals (37%) and C-suite or other senior level positions (19%) work on “green” responsibilities in addition to their primary job descriptions.

Founded in 1971, Gibbs & Soell develops and implements communications strategies to engage consumer and business audiences across a **broad array of industries**. Its rich history includes successfully launching and guiding the growth of green products and technologies, manufacturing processes and business practices, including energy-efficient building systems, nature-based plastics and chemicals, biofuels, water conservation, and plastics recycling.

“The seeds of sustainability have been planted in many businesses, yet this effort does not offer assurances that environmental stewardship is in full bloom everywhere,” stated Ron Loch, senior vice president, greentech and sustainability, Gibbs & Soell. “The research results are a wake-up call for chief executives and sustainability officers to be more rigorous and transparent in reporting and communicating their green business progress to all stakeholders—employees, customers, investors and the general public.

“Organizations that have invested in a sustainability strategy must realize that their business leaders and employees are green ambassadors with success stories that should be captured and shared through a comprehensive communications program. Sustainability is more than a philosophy; it is an iterative, enterprise-wide practice. It will be difficult for businesses to unlock the value of their experiences without a well-structured, compelling narrative for all stakeholders.”

Gibbs & Soell provides communications expertise to top-tier corporations, organizations and brands focused on advanced manufacturing and energy, agribusiness and food, consumer lifestyle and building solutions, greentech and sustainability, professional services, and technology and general science. The firm’s **portfolio of services** includes corporate communications, marketing communications, event marketing, digital and social media, leadership positioning, employee communications, communications training, and communications research and evaluation.

To obtain a summary of the Gibbs & Soell Sense & Sustainability Study, please visit the Gibbs & Soell [website](#).

**About Gibbs & Soell:**

Gibbs & Soell is an [independent public relations agency](#) celebrating its 40th year in business. [Headquartered in New York](#), G&S has full-service offices in Chicago, Raleigh, N.C., and Zurich, Switzerland. The [G&S global network](#) extends across nearly 40 countries and includes Cosmo PR in Tokyo, Inhere Communications in Beijing and Shanghai, and the Public Relations Organisation International partnership. For more information, please visit [www.gibbs-soell.com](http://www.gibbs-soell.com).

**About the Gibbs & Soell Sense & Sustainability® Study:**

The 2011 Gibbs & Soell Sense & Sustainability Study is the public relations firm's second annual survey of Fortune 1000 executives and U.S. consumers about corporate efforts to improve the health of the environment through sustainable practices, products, or services. The survey was fielded on behalf of Gibbs & Soell by Harris Interactive®, one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. The study was conducted online between February 7th and 9th, 2011 via the QuickQuery online omnibus service among 2,031 U.S. adults ages 18+, and between February 8th and 21st, 2011 via the Executive Omnibus service among 302 Fortune 1000 executives. Final data for consumers are weighted to be representative of the national U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. Final data for executives are weighted to be representative of the Fortune 1000 companies in the U.S. on the basis of annual revenue, company size (i.e., number of employees) and company rank (i.e., within the Fortune 1000).

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