



# Workplace Snapshot

spherion

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## Spherion Survey: Workers Say Listening to Music While Working Improves Job Satisfaction, Productivity

*Nearly one-third of adult workers listen to music at work using an iPod, MP3 player  
or similar personal music device*

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla., September 18, 2006 — According to the latest Spherion® Workplace Snapshot survey conducted by Harris Interactive®, almost one-third (32 percent) of workers listen to music while working using an iPod, MP3 player or similar personal music device. Of those, 79 percent feel that doing so improves their job satisfaction and/or productivity. The survey also found that 10 percent of adults who use personal music devices while working spend more than 50 percent of their time tuned in.

The percentage of workers who feel that listening to a personal music device improves their job satisfaction and/or productivity is highest among younger adults, with 90 percent of workers aged 18 to 24 and 89 percent of those aged 30 to 39 making this claim. In addition, of adult workers who listen to a personal music device while working, 55 percent feel it improves *both* job satisfaction and productivity—a number most likely driven by the 30 to 39 age group (at 68 percent).

“Recent research indicates that more than 40 million people worldwide own iPods, so it’s not surprising to find that nearly one-third of adults listen to these or similar devices while they work,” commented Nancy Halverson, Spherion vice president of talent development. “However, when the majority of those who listen also claim it improves their job satisfaction and productivity, employers ought to take note.

“Like many other new technologies that have seeped into the workplace, such as cell phones, Blackberries and instant messaging, personal music devices do have the potential to negatively impact performance and security in the workplace. This may be especially true in certain higher-risk jobs where the ability to hear clearly is paramount,” says Halverson. “Yet our survey has uncovered a compelling argument that allowing workers to listen to music while they work could pay dividends in the form of higher job satisfaction and productivity.”

The key, according to Halverson, is for employers to set ground rules for workers to avoid distractions or communication breakdowns. This can include asking workers to keep low volume levels, identifying designated areas where listening is acceptable and implementing policies governing the downloading of music and other files using company computers. Without guidelines, employers could see an increase in safety risks due to employees missing fire alarms or alerts from colleagues, and diminished customer service because employees don’t hear the phone or coworkers have difficulty getting their attention.

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Other results from the most recent Spherion Workplace Snapshot Survey:

**Workers aged 25 to 29 more likely to listen to music on a personal music device while working.**

- Almost half (48 percent) of adults aged 25 to 29 say they listen to music on an iPod, MP3 player or similar personal music device while working—more than any other age group.
- Adults aged 50 to 64 are least likely to listen while working, with only 22 percent claiming to do so.

**Higher-income workers more likely to listen to personal music devices at work.**

- According to the survey, 35 percent of adults earning \$35,000 or more say they listen to music on an iPod, MP3 player or similar personal music device while working. (Specifically, 35 percent of those earning \$35,000 to \$49,999, 36 percent who earn \$50,000 to \$74,999, and 35 percent of those earning \$75,000 or more per year listen while they work.)
- By contrast, only 22 percent of workers earning less than \$25,000 listen while they work, and only 26 percent of those earning \$25,000 to \$34,999 do so.

**Male workers more likely to report improved job satisfaction and/or productivity.**

- 82 percent of male adults who listen to a personal music device while working report that it improves their job satisfaction and/or productivity, compared to 76 percent of female adults.
- Similarly, 24 percent of female workers who listen to a personal music device while working indicate that it improves neither job satisfaction nor productivity, compared to 18 percent of adult males.

**Methodology**

The August 2006 Spherion® Workplace Snapshot is based on data from the Harris Interactive® QuickQuery<sup>SM</sup> online omnibus conducted monthly by Harris Interactive on behalf of Spherion Corporation. A U.S. sample of 1,613 employed adults, aged 18 years and older, was interviewed in a poll conducted August 8-10, 2006. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, income, education and region were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting adjusted for respondents' propensity to be online.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With a pure probability sample of 1,613 U.S. employed adults one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- two percentage points. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

**About Spherion**

Spherion Corporation (NYSE:SFN) is a leading recruiting and staffing company that provides integrated solutions to meet the evolving needs of companies and job candidates. As an industry pioneer for 60 years, Spherion has screened and placed millions of individuals in temporary, temp-to-hire and full-time jobs. Positions range from administrative and light industrial to a host of professions that include accounting/finance, information technology, engineering, manufacturing, legal, human resources and sales/marketing.

With approximately 650 offices in the United States and Canada, Spherion delivers innovative workforce solutions that improve business performance. Spherion provides its services to more than 8,000 customers,

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from Fortune 500 companies to a wide range of small and mid-size organizations. Employing 375,000 people annually through its network, Spherion is one of North America's largest employers. To learn more, visit [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com). For up-to-date career tips and trends, visit Spherion's career blog, *The Big Time*<sup>TM</sup>, at [www.spherion.com/careerblog](http://www.spherion.com/careerblog).

#### **About Harris Interactive**

Harris Interactive is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides research-driven insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for *The Harris Poll*, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what could conceivably be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novatris in France and through a global network of independent market research firms. The service bureau, HISB, provides its market research industry clients with mixed-mode data collection, panel development services as well as syndicated and tracking research consultation. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).

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