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Executives Slow to See Value of Corporate Blogging

Corporate blogs take up only a small space in the blogosphere, but awareness is building, however slowly, among senior executives. Makovsky + Company released "The Makovsky 2006 State of Corporate Blogging Survey" with research conducted by Harris Interactive, to determine which corporations are blogging and how concerns about blogging are being handled.

The role of the blogosphere isn't yet fully realized by senior executives at Fortune 1000 companies. Reserved views extend both to blogging and how to respond to blog posts about the company.

Of 150 top-level decision makers surveyed, 5 percent said they see corporate blogging as a communications medium; 3 percent see it as a brandbuilding technique; and less than 1 percent see it as a sales or leadgeneration tool. Many respondents doubt the credibility of blogs as a communications tool (62 percent); brandbuilding (74 percent) and a sales or lead generation channel (70 percent).

Corporate opinions of blogging may be caused by the clash between corporate culture and the relaxed practices of some bloggers. "The culture of blogging places a high value on communiqués that are honest, spontaneous, provocative and sometimes shocking, in contrast to the controlled communications of business," said Robbin

Goodman, EVP and partner at Makovsky + Company. "There is a learning curve that needs to take place."

About half of the respondents say they have policies in place concerning blogging. Seventy-seven percent believe a policy should be in place to handle company-sanctioned blogs. Legal or

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informal action has been taken by 12 percent of the companies questioned in the survey.

Senior level executives may not author blogs themselves, but 15 percent have someone in the organization writing a blog relating to the company or its activities.

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Corporate policies are also required to handle outside bloggers writing about the organization. Forty percent believe it's important for a company to have corporate policies to address external blogs.

Company policy toward products, services and other policies were changed at 3 percent of companies due to blog posts written about the company. Monitoring of blogs, to know when the company appears in the blogosphere, is done by 20 percent of respondents. Twenty-one percent read business-related blogs at least once a week. About 30 percent of senior executives have a thorough understanding of the term "Internet blog."

"Executives and corporations need to have a mechanism for knowing what is being said in the first place, and to that effect can subscribe to one of several blog monitoring services that are available to pinpoint what is being said about them," said Goodman. "Assuming that you are monitoring blogs, and become aware of customer complaints, don't let them linger – take them seriously, since complaints can take on a life of their own unless they are addressed."

The data are a result of a nationwide telephone survey of 150 leading executives at Fortune 1000 companies; 144 of whom had heard of the term "corporate blogging."

