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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Despite underlying optimism, reaching the “American Dream” eludes half the country

StrategyOne public opinion survey finds consumers concerned about America’s future prospects

October 19, 2010 (New York, NY) — As the nation struggles to recover from the worst recession in recent history, consumers are sharply divided. Despite a strong undercurrent of hope that success is still possible for hard-working Americans, half say they are not living the American Dream, and many of those fear they will never be able to achieve it.

These findings come from a survey recently conducted among 1,008 Americans by the polling firm StrategyOne, a Daniel J. Edelman company.

Just over half of Americans (52%) believe they are living the American Dream today. But among those in households earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000 –generally considered to be a typical middle income - that belief drops to just 41%. Even among the best educated -- college graduates -- 42% don’t feel they are living the Dream. About 1 in 3 (29%) of those in households earning \$75,000 or more a year -- the highest income category in the survey -- report they are not living the American Dream.

Of the 48% of the country who say they aren’t living the American Dream now, 56% don’t think they ever will.

In spite of widespread doubts about whether individuals have achieved or will achieve the American Dream, 74% believe that the ideal of reaching the American Dream and being able to “make it” in America is largely true and possible, as opposed to being just a myth. Sixty-eight percent of those in households earning less than \$25,000 a year also share this belief.

“Even though many consumers are worried about their own prospects for success, they have not shaken the belief that the American Dream remains a very strong possibility,” said Bradley Honan, senior vice president of StrategyOne.

There is amazing consistency across racial groups on this point. Seventy-eight percent of Blacks believe the possibility of reaching the American Dream is achievable, as do 76% of Hispanics/Latinos, and 73% of Whites.



That optimistic outlook was also shared by 81% of consumers who believe that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve a middle-class life in America. Seventy-four percent agreed that achieving success in America was more about working hard, as opposed to good luck. This belief was held across the economic divide: 71% of those earning under \$25,000 a year agreed, as did 69% of those earning between \$25,000 and \$40,000. This feeling was most pronounced among the highest earners: 78% of those who made over \$75,000 a year felt hard work was the key to success.

Looking Ahead

However, consumers also expressed concern about whether the country may face tougher times in the future. When asked how high schoolers' lives would compare to their own, 31% of consumers thought the teens would have a worse life than they have had, and just 26% thought the young people would have better lives than they had had. Forty-three percent said the lives of those in high school would turn out about the same as their own.

Fears of more wars and violence in the future also shape consumers' expectations for the future. Forty-four percent said that people in high school today would have a world filled with more wars and violence than they had seen in their lives, and only 9% thought the world would be more peaceful than they had experienced so far in their own lives. Forty-seven percent thought the number of wars and violence would remain the same.

Consumers were split over whether Americans in the future would be healthier than they are today. Thirty-six percent of consumers thought Americans would be healthier than they are today; 31% thought they would be about as healthy as they are now; and 33% thought Americans would be less healthy.

Consumers also had significant doubts about America's future prospects as a nation. Sixty-eight percent agreed that while they hated to admit it, America's power is fading in the world.

Nearly half (49%) thought that countries like China and India are so far ahead of America that the United States won't be able to catch up. However, only 28% believed that America can no longer accomplish great things.

"Although they have strong concerns about fierce international competition and fading American power, consumers are reluctant to embrace a defeatist attitude that some pundits have speculated about," Honan said.

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Survey Methodology:



StrategyOne conducted 1,008 telephone interviews among a representative sampling of Americans between October 11 and 12, 2010. The overall margin of sampling error at the 95% level of confidence is = +/- 3.1% overall and larger for subgroups. Statistical weights were designed from the United States Census Bureau statistics.

Full Question Texts & Survey Data:

Question text: Are you living the American Dream today?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	52%
No	48%

Question text: Do you believe you will ever live the American Dream?

Among those 48% who report not living the American Dream today

Answer	Percentage
Yes	44%
No	56%

Question text: The idea and promise of reaching the American Dream and being able to 'make it' in America is . . .

Answer	Percentage
<i>Largely true and possible</i>	74%
<i>Largely a myth and not possible</i>	26%

Question text: Please indicate if you agree or disagree with ... the following: If you work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve a middle class life in America today.

Answer	Percentage
<i>Strongly agree</i>	28%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	53%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	16%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	4%

Question text: Achieving success in America today is more about . . .

Answer	Percentage
<i>Working hard</i>	74%
<i>Having lots of luck</i>	26%

Question text: People now in high school, will over the course of their lives, have a . . .

Answer	Percentage
<i>About the same life I have had</i>	43%



<i>Worse life than I have had</i>	31%
<i>Better life than I have had</i>	26%

Question text: *People now in high school, will over the course of their lives, have a . . .*

Answer	Percentage
<i>About the same number of wars and violence as I have seen</i>	47%
<i>World filled with more wars and violence than I have seen</i>	44%
<i>World filled with fewer wars and violence than I have seen</i>	9%

Question text: *In 10 years from today, the American people will be . . .*

Answer	Percentage
<i>Healthier than they are today</i>	36%
<i>Less healthy than they are today</i>	33%
<i>About as healthy as they are today</i>	31%

Question text: *Please indicate if you agree or disagree with ... the following: I hate to admit it, but America's power is fading in the world*

Answer	Percentage
<i>Strongly agree</i>	19%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	49%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	32%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	11%

Question text: *Please indicate if you agree or disagree with ... the following: Countries like China and India are in so many ways ahead of America, I worry that we may not be able to catch up*

Answer	Percentage
<i>Strongly agree</i>	11%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	38%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	35%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	16%

Question text: *Please indicate if you agree or disagree with ... the following: America as a country can no longer accomplish big things*

Answer	Percentage
<i>Strongly agree</i>	7%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	21%



<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	39%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	33%

About StrategyOne:

StrategyOne, a Daniel J. Edelman company, employs custom public opinion research and secondary research methodologies to deliver strategic counsel to corporate, organizational and governmental clients globally. StrategyOne is a Honomichl top 50 market research firm with offices located in New York, Washington, Paris, London, Chicago, Abu Dhabi, Atlanta, and Silicon Valley. StrategyOne provides global clients with evidence based stakeholder insights, analysis and measurement. Visit www.strategyone.net for more information.

About Edelman:

Edelman is the world’s largest independent public relations firm, with 3,300 employees in 52 offices worldwide. Edelman was named Advertising Age’s top-ranked PR firm of the decade; Adweek’s “2009 Agency of the Year”; PRWeek’s “2009 Agency of the Year” and “UK Consultancy of the Year”; and Holmes Report’s “Agency of the Decade,” “2009 Best Large Agency to Work For” and “2009 Asia Pacific Consultancy of the Year.” Edelman owns specialty firms Blue (advertising), StrategyOne (research), RUTH (creative expression), DJE Science (medical education/publishing and science communications), and MATTER (sports, sponsorship, and entertainment). Visit www.edelman.com for more information.