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Coca-Cola Study Measures Global Happiness Study Reveals Human Contact Brings Most Happiness in an Increasingly Digital World

Study uncovers the source of happiness in 16 countries and reveals that sometimes all we need to make us happy is a hug!

ATLANTA--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- A study undertaken by Coca-Cola has uncovered the leading sources of happiness. The global study which covers 16 countries and four continents identifies what happiness means to different nationalities and reveals that, despite the rapid pace of growth in the virtual world, human contact wins hands down when it comes to happiness. People in all 16 countries agree real world contact with family and partners is a greater source of joy (77%) than virtual world alternatives.

Supporting this notion that human, rather than virtual interaction, is a greater source of pleasure; the biggest highlights of the day include catching up with loved ones in the evening (39%), eating with the family (22%) and chatting to friends or colleagues (17%). Modern alternatives such as watching TV (14%), connecting with others online (5%) and receiving the day's first text message (2%) paled in comparison.

"The results of the Coca-Cola Happiness Barometer show that staying connected with friends and family remains an important source of happiness for people around the world, and that this holds true across all continents and nationalities, including here in the U.S.," said Bill Kelly, Senior Vice President, Coca-Cola Trademark Brands, Coca-Cola North America. "Despite the online social networking phenomenon, nothing beats quality time with loved ones or simple pleasures such as sharing a Coke with our nearest and dearest to bring happiness in our lives."

The results also show that, despite the global economic woes, overall global happiness levels are high, with more than two thirds of people (67%) declaring they are satisfied with their lives.

When we do need cheering up, 38% of us turn to a night out with friends and more than one in five (22%) will give or receive a big, warm hug!

In the U.S., the study found that females are more likely than males to hug when they need cheering up (23% of females versus 15% of males). Females are also more than three times more likely than males to shop when they need some form of happiness (14% of females versus 4% of males, respectively). For teens in the U.S., music is important, with 18% saying it is a source of happiness and 22% saying listening to music is one of the happiest moments of the day.

To help interpret the results, Coca-Cola invited Dr. Richard Stevens, M.A., Ph. D., a social psychologist and author of Personal Worlds and Understanding the Self, who specializes in happiness and wellbeing, to provide his perspective on the findings. In his analysis, he noted, "While it is important to have enough money to live, income is a fairly irrelevant contributor to happiness. Without relationships, love, family or friendship, most people will not be content and no amount of money can fill this void."

Striving for celebrity did not come out as a popular source of happiness in the study. The results showed that, globally, people wouldn't choose fame and fortune to bring happiness, instead citing travelling around the world (37%), volunteering to help others (26%) and meeting the love of their life (12%) as being the key contributors to happiness.

"Despite our celebrity-driven culture, fame is not likely in itself to be a primary source of happiness," added Dr. Stevens. "Our real happiness depends much more on our basic sense of self, and connecting with other people, especially through love, care and kindness."

The study also found that drinking a Coke really does contribute to making people happy! More than half of the people surveyed (56%) cited the taste of Coca-Cola as something that makes them smile.

"Coca-Cola provides simple moments of pleasure throughout the day. Through this study we wanted to understand what else our consumers reach for in their quest for happiness," said Cristina Bondolowski, Senior Global Brand Director, Coca-Cola, The Coca-Cola Company. "We were especially pleased to see that it's the great taste of Coke that is still putting a smile on faces around the world, as it has done for nearly 125 years."

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Of the countries studied, The Happiness Index reveals the six happiest are:

1) Mexico

2) Philippines

3) Argentina

4) South Africa

5) Romania

6) United States

Survey says...

- Teenagers are generally happier than their parents (71% of teenagers are satisfied with life versus 66% of those 40 or older).
- Females derive more happiness from their friends and family than their male counterparts (88% of females versus 81% of males).
- "Retail Therapy" is confirmed as a female phenomenon with 25% shopping when they need cheering up versus only 10% of men.
- A full press kit containing a full summary of the research findings can be accessed at: http://openhappiness.digitalnewsagency.com.

Happiness Barometer

- The Happiness Barometer surveyed 12,500 consumers in 16 countries: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, France, Italy, Mexico, Philippines, Romania, Russia, S. Africa, Spain, Turkey, UK and US
- The questions in the Happiness Barometer are part of the Coca-Cola Happiness Index, a scientific index designed by Complutense University of Madrid for the Coca-Cola Happiness Institute in Spain. Based on a scale developed by Ed Diener, who has written more than 240 scientific publications on happiness, the Happiness Index is a new and more complete method of measuring overall happiness and consumers' level of satisfaction with their life.

About The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company (NYSE: KO) is the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with more than 500 sparkling and still brands. Along with Coca-Cola(R), recognized as the world's most valuable brand, the Company's portfolio includes 12 other billion dollar brands, including Diet Coke(R), Fanta(R), Sprite(R), Coca-Cola Zero(R), vitaminwater, POWERADE(R), Minute Maid(R), Simply(R) and Georgia Coffee(R). Globally, we are the No. 1 provider of sparkling beverages, juices and juice drinks and ready-to-drink teas and coffees. Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy the Company's beverages at a rate of 1.6 billion servings a day. With an enduring commitment to building sustainable communities, our Company is focused on initiatives that protect the environment, conserve resources and enhance the economic development of the communities where we operate. For more information about our Company, please visit our website at www.thecoca-colacompany.com.

Source: The Coca-Cola Company