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Executive compensation: Here's why they pay 'em the big bucks

By: JOHN MACINTYRE , Figuratively Speaking

\$20 billion: Calculated annual cost to American taxpayers of tax and accounting loopholes that encourage excessive executive pay, according to the 15th annual Executive Excess report from the Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy.

\$10 billion: Amount accounted for by stock-option accounting double standard.

\$5.2 billion: Amount accounted for by unlimited deductibility of executive compensation.

\$2.6 billion: Amount of the \$20 billion accounted for by preferential capital-gains treatment of carried interest.

Source: United for a Fair Economy.

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96: Percentage of parents who say that parent involvement was a key factor in student achievement, according to the results of an independent, nationwide survey by Pearson.

95: Percentage of parents who felt achievement would improve with better communication between school and home.

Source: Pearson Education/Pearson Scott Foresman.

3.7: Average percentage pay increase planned by U.S. employers in 2009, according to the "2008/2009 U.S. Compensation Planning Survey" from Mercer.

5.6: Expected percentage base-pay increases in 2009 for the highest-performing employees (14 percent of the workforce).

0.6: Expected percentage base pay increases in 2009 for the weakest performers (7 percent of the workforce).

Source: Mercer.

* * *

\$6 billion: Estimated annual value of books in the religious products market, according to a study by Packaged Facts.

21: Percentage increase in the overall religious products market between 2004 and 2008.

\$1 billion: Amount this percentage increase represents.

Source: Packaged Facts.

63: Percentage of Americans who say economic growth and development is more important to their region than protecting the environment, according to a survey by Harris Interactive.

Source: Harris Interactive.

1: Rank of overpacking on the list of the biggest mistakes travelers make, according to a poll of U.S. Tour Operators Association member companies.

Source: Kundell Communications.

88: Percentage of Americans who use at least one electronic device in the bathroom, according to American Standard's 2008 Bathroom Habits Survey.

33: Percentage who read their mail in the bathroom - both snail mail and e-mail.

15: Percentage who talk on the phone.

3: Percentage who watch TV.

Source: American Standard.

1, 2, 3, 4 (tie): Ranks of Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University on the list of America's Best National Universities, according to the U.S. News Media Group's 2009 edition of America's Best Colleges.

1 (tie), 3: Ranks of Amherst College, Williams College and Swarthmore College on the list of the nation's Best Liberal Arts Colleges.

Source: U.S. News Media.

42: Percentage of parents who say that they are working additional hours at their current job so they can pick up the tabs (and mortgages, car payments, grocery bills, etc.) that have increased, according to a Sittercity.com survey.

27: Percentage of stay-at-home parents who are now going back to work.

8: Percentage of working parents who have taken on a second job.

Source: Sittercity.com.

72: Percentage of high-net-worth business owners - whose companies have at least \$10 million in annual revenue - who participate with their family in charitable activities, according to a SunTrust Bank Private Wealth Management study.

81: Percentage of business owners who cited a spouse or partner as their greatest influence in making charitable decisions.

Source: SunTrust Banks Inc.

Idle Thought

"The perfection of a clock is not to go fast, but to be accurate." - Luc de Clapiers, marquis de Vauvenargues

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(Readers can contact John MacIntyre at johnmacintyre(at)bwr.eastlink.ca.)

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FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING by John MacIntyre

(EDITORS: All data is confirmed with the primary source. For more information on sources, including contacts, e-mail Clint Hooker at chooker@amuniversal or contact John MacIntyre.)

** ** *

Calculated annual cost to taxpayers of tax and accounting loopholes that encourage excessive executive pay, according to the 15th annual Executive Excess report from the Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy: \$20 billion

Amount accounted for by stock-option accounting double standard: \$10 billion

Amount accounted for by unlimited deductibility of executive compensation: \$5.2 billion

Amount of the \$20 billion accounted for by preferential capital-gains treatment of carried interest: \$2.6 billion

Source: United for a Fair Economy.

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Percentage of parents who say that parent involvement was a key factor in student achievement, according to the results of an independent, nationwide survey by Pearson: 96

Percentage of parents who felt achievement would improve with better communication between school and home: 95

Source: Pearson Education/Pearson Scott Foresman.

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Average percentage pay increase planned by U.S. employers in 2009, according to the "2008/2009 U.S. Compensation Planning Survey" from Mercer: 3.7

Expected percentage base-pay increases in 2009 for the highest-performing employees (14 percent of the workforce): 5.6

Expected percentage base pay increases in 2009 for the weakest performers (7 percent of the workforce): 0.6

Source: Mercer.

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Estimated annual value of books in the religious products market, according to a study by Packaged Facts: \$6 billion

Percentage increase in the overall religious products market between 2004 and 2008: 21

Amount this percentage increase represents: \$1 billion

Source: Packaged Facts.

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Percentage of Americans who say economic growth and development is more important to their region than protecting the environment, according to a survey by Harris Interactive: 63

Source: Harris Interactive.

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Rank of overpacking on the list of the biggest mistakes travelers make, according to a poll of U.S. Tour Operators Association member companies: 1

Source: Kundell Communications.

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Percentage of Americans who use at least one electronic device in the bathroom, according to American Standard's 2008 Bathroom Habits Survey: 88

Percentage who read their mail in the bathroom - both snail mail and e-mail: 33

Percentage who talk on the phone: 15

Percentage who watch TV: 3

Source: American Standard.

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Ranks of Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University on the list of America's Best National Universities, according to the U.S. News Media Group's 2009 edition of America's Best Colleges: 1, 2, 3, 4 (tie)

Ranks of Amherst College, Williams College and Swarthmore College on the list of the nation's Best Liberal Arts Colleges: 1 (tie), 3

Source: U.S. News Media.

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Percentage of parents who say that they are working additional hours at their current job so they can pick up the tabs (and mortgages, car payments, grocery bills, etc.) that have increased, according to a Sittercity.com survey: 42

Percentage of stay-at-home parents who are now going back to work: 27

Percentage of working parents who have taken on a second job: 8

Source: Sittercity.com.

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Percentage of high-net-worth business owners - whose companies have at least \$10 million in annual revenue - who participate with their family in charitable activities, according to a SunTrust Bank Private Wealth Management study: 72

Percentage of business owners who cited a spouse or partner as their greatest influence in making charitable decisions: 81

Source: SunTrust Banks Inc.

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Idle Thought

"The perfection of a clock is not to go fast, but to be accurate." - Luc de Clapiers, marquis de Vauvenargues

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(Readers can contact John MacIntyre at johnmacintyre(at)bwr.eastlink.ca.)

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A horizontal banner advertisement for Champion Windows. The background is a green, textured surface. On the left, white text reads "SAVE UP TO 30% ON YOUR ENERGY BILLS!" with "Click Here or call 866-536-7662" below it. In the center is a photograph of a window looking out onto a lake and trees. On the right, the word "Champion" is written in a large, red, cursive font. Above it, in smaller white text, is "FACTORY DIRECT SINCE 1953". Below "Champion" are the words "WINDOWS • SIDING PATIO ROOMS" in white, all-caps font.

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