

Press Release

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The values of the Germans - greater emphasis on achievement

Survey conducted by the GfK Association on changes in the importance of values in Germany

Nuremberg, August 31, 2010: The current economic upswing in Germany is beginning to impact on the values of the German population. Achievement-related values are currently gaining in importance, whereby innovation and competition are now rated even more highly than they were in January. However, while the forecasts for the German economy have been significantly upgraded, it is still security which ultimately seems to count. Just under three quarters of all the survey respondents claimed that under the current circumstances, their accent on security is continuing on an upward trend. These are the findings of a current study conducted by the GfK Association in August on the subject of "Changing value perception" during which more than 1,000 Germans were surveyed for the second time.

The findings of the first survey carried out in January this year already revealed that the overwhelming majority of Germans were of the opinion that the importance of security as a value was rising. And six months later nothing has changed. Virtually irrespective of income, class and gender, consumers still seem to have a great need for security. Around three quarters of the survey respondents assumed that under the current circumstances, security would continue to gain in importance, with just 4% expressing the opposite opinion, that the subject would become less relevant.

However, while six months or so ago, the home as a haven of security was ranked second, today, achievement comes much higher on the list. Roughly two thirds of Germans currently believe that what is more important is positive action and commitment. This amounts to 7% more than in January.

In line with this, the subjects of competition and innovation have also made significant gains, with just under half the respondents, or 10% more than in the previous survey, saying that they considered being in contention more important. And 44% expressed the opinion that the path to economic leadership was paved with new ideas. Consequently, this value has risen by 8%. The subject of power is also regarded as more relevant today, with 32% of survey respondents saying they believed that power was more important now than formerly, which is 7% more than in January.

Home and solidarity are losing out

The trend towards “homing”, retreating to the security of one’s own four walls, appears to be on the decline. Only just over half the respondents currently believe that the home is a value which will gain in importance, and so this value has dropped back from second to fifth place in the rankings. The concept of solidarity is also slipping down the rankings: while in January, just under half the respondents still rated community spirit very highly, only 41% currently expressed this view. In light of the economic recovery taking place, more respondents appeared to be assuming that increased competition would dominate, and that the focus on community spirit would fade from view.

However, this development does not mean a loss of empathy and humanity. In fact, the values of responsibility and trust remain ranked third and fourth, and this signifies that they are still among the top “climbers” in the value hierarchy. More than half of Germans continue to believe that even now, it is increasingly important to do their duty, including towards other people, and similarly, compared with January, the subject of trust has lost nothing of its topicality.

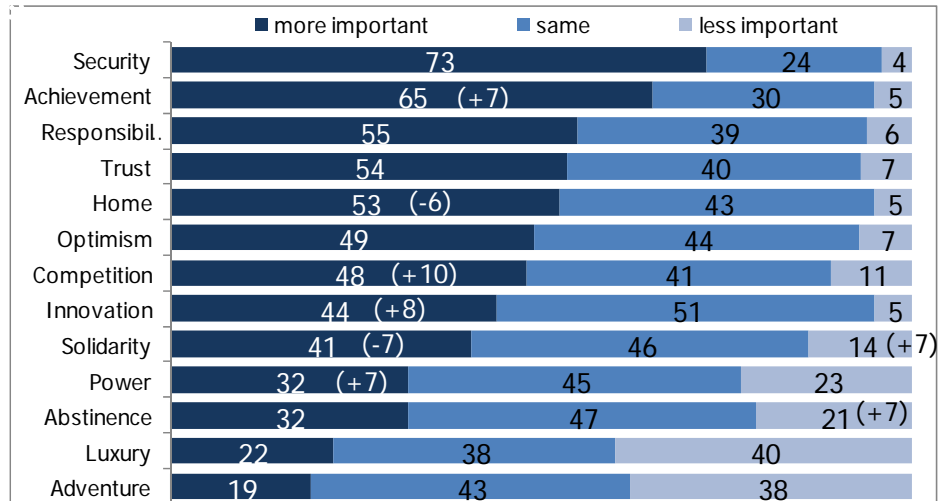
“Security has traditionally been very important to Germans. Now, however, more and more citizens are taking the view that security only comes into being when two things come together: character and the ability to make things happen. Consequently, responsibility, trust and achievement belong together,” says Raimund Wildner, Managing Director of the GfK Association, commenting on the findings.

Less restraint, but luxury is also out

Still today, Germans are not very interested in adventure and luxury. Although both these values rose slightly in the past months, the increase has not been sufficient to pull them upwards in the rankings. But there are positive signs for consumption. Compared with January, significantly more respondents were of the opinion that restraint would not play as great a part in the time ahead, and the number of those believing that less restraint was the order of the day rose by half from 14% to 21%.

Changing value perception (figures in %):

If the change is more than 5 percentage points (in comparison to January 2010) the change is indicated in percentage points in brackets



Source: Survey on "Changing value perception", the GfK Association, August 2010

Question posed: The significance of values can change with time. I will now go through a list of various values with you. Please tell me if you consider their significance to be rising or falling at the moment, in other words if they are becoming more or less important.

The survey

The "Changing value perception" survey was conducted in August 2010 by the GfK Association, questioning a total of 1,015 men and women over the age of 14. The survey investigated whether the significance of values is rising, falling or remaining the same in the current climate. The values cited were adventure, innovation, achievement, luxury, power, optimism, security, responsibility, trust, going without, competition and the home. Respondents are representative of the German population. Further information is available on the "Compact" internet page, the current GfK Association info service, under the heading "Focus Topics": www.gfk-compact.de

The GfK Association

The GfK Association is a non-profit organization for the promotion of market research. Its membership consists of approximately 600 companies and individuals. The purpose of the Association is to develop innovative research methods in close cooperation with scientific institutions, to promote the training and further education of market researchers and to study basic structures and developments in society, the economy and politics and to research their impact on consumers. The findings of the studies are made available to the membership free of charge.

The GfK Association is a shareholder in GfK SE.

For further information, visit www.gfk-association.org

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