



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fantasy Football Is Not Killing the Economy

SURVEY FINDS THAT FANTASY FOOTBALL IS NOT SAPPING PRODUCTIVITY

CHICAGO, September 30, 2010 – With three weeks of the NFL season in the books, the big question is whether fantasy football leagues are sapping the nation’s workplace productivity. According to human resource professionals from around the country, the answer is a resounding NO.

In a survey by global outplacement consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., the majority of respondents said fantasy football had little to no impact on productivity. Ranking the level of distraction on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no noticeable impact, nearly 70 percent said four or lower. Less than eight percent of respondents said the level of distraction rated a 7 or 8 and none of the respondents felt the phenomenon deserved a 9 or 10.

“Other surveys show that people are indeed managing their fantasy teams from work. However, what we are hearing from the human resources community is that this is not at all affecting the level of output workers are expected to deliver,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

The Challenger survey found that about one in five employers block access to sports and fantasy football websites. However, many simply look the other way with nearly half (46.2 percent) saying they do not care if employees spend part of their workday on fantasy football, as long as the quality and quantity of output does not decline. About 22 percent said they merely ask workers to limit fantasy football and other personal activities to lunch and other break times.

“It is difficult for companies to take a hard-line stance against fantasy football. The internet technology that helped fuel the rapid growth of fantasy football participation and makes it possible to manage teams from one’s desk also makes it possible for employees to attend to work duties during their personal time,” said Challenger.

Fantasy football is becoming so popular it may be difficult for employers to stop it, even if they wanted to. A 2008 study by the Fantasy Sports Trade Association estimated that 27.1 million Americans participate in fantasy sports, with 75 percent of those or roughly 20.3 million playing fantasy football. That was up from 17 million fantasy sports participants and 13.6 million fantasy football players estimated by the Association just a couple of years prior.

Meanwhile, other studies from the Fantasy Sports Trade Association indicate that fantasy sports participants spend about three to four hours on the Internet per week, with nearly 1.2 hours of that time at the office.

“Managers should only crack down on those whose work is clearly suffering from the added distraction. An across-the-board ban on all fantasy football or sports websites could backfire in the form of reduced morale and loyalty. The result could be far worse than the loss of productivity caused by 10 to 20 minutes of team management each day,” said Challenger.

“Companies that not only allow workers to indulge in fantasy football, but actually encourage it by organizing a company leagues are likely to see significant benefits in morale as well as productivity,” Challenger said. “In the long run, this may lead to increased employee retention.”

A 2006 Ipsos Survey, 40 percent of respondents said fantasy sports participation was a positive influence in the workplace. Another 40 percent said it increases camaraderie among employees. One in five said their involvement in fantasy sports enabled them to make a valuable business contact.

Despite these impressive figures, less than eight percent of the Challenger survey participants said their companies “embrace” fantasy football participation as a morale-boosting activity and none of the employers represented officially organized leagues.

The Challenger survey was conducted online among approximately 100 respondents from the end of August through late-September. Interestingly, about 65 percent of those polled said they participate in fantasy football leagues, either with co-workers, friends outside of work or both.

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2010 FANTASY FOOTBALL SURVEY

On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the level of distraction or impact on the workplace productivity resulting from employee participation in fantasy football leagues.

(1 being no noticeable impact at all and 10 being an obvious or measurable impact)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19.2%	26.9%	12.5%	10.5%	7.7%	15.4%	4.6%	3.2%	0	0
Average Rating 3.42									

Does your company take any steps to discourage employees from partaking in fantasy football activities at the office?

No, we don't care, as long as the quality of worker output does not decline.	46.2%
We block access to sports and fantasy football websites.	24.0%
We ask that they limit such activities to lunch or other breaks.	22.1%
No. In fact, we embrace fantasy football as a morale-boosting activity.	7.7%
We prohibit use of company computers for personal activities.	0

Does your company formally organize a fantasy football league for workers?

No, but I am aware of one or more employee-organized leagues.	65.4%
No, we see fantasy football as a distraction.	30.8%
No, but we don't discourage it.	3.8%
Yes	0
We leave it up to department heads.	0

Do you participate in a fantasy football league, either with co-workers or friends outside of work?

Yes, with friends	38.5%
I do not participate in a fantasy football league	34.6%
Yes, with both co-workers and friends	19.2%
Yes, with co-workers	7.7%