



And our festive survey says....

Consumer surveys are becoming a key part of companies PR strategies.

And while some offer an interesting and sometimes entertaining insight into the habits of the great British public, others provide answers to questions that would have never otherwise entered the heads of most people.

Here the Observer's Chris Smith takes a look at some festive findings.

CHRISTMAS is supposed to be the season to be jolly, but we're told most workers do not expect the break from the office to offer them any relief from stress.

A staggering 73 per cent of the 1,000 people quizzed by leading UK health cash plan provider Medicash admit they would worry about work in the run to the festive season with 50 per cent expecting the holiday to be interrupted by work.

Worries about work however do not appear to be extended to money despite the financial crisis gripping this country, not least according to a poll of 2000 Britons by Freelancer.co.uk, the UK and the world's largest online jobs marketplace, which shows many of us have refused to be Scrooges and cut spending on presents and nights out.

But rather than going into debt 56 per cent of respondents to the survey have been doing more to spend more, earning extra money with second jobs.

With work playing such a huge part of our lives it was surprising to be learn from recruitment specialist OfficeTeam that the traditional Christmas office party seems to be becoming a thing of the past.

It claims its study of 1,000 employees showed 20 per cent work for companies who were not having one this year and 34 per cent of those whose bosses have organised one will be snubbing it in favour of spending time with close friends and family.

Adults admit to missing the excitement of Christmas they experienced in their younger days in a study by protection specialist LV-.

All they want for Christmas is our money, Online pocket money account provider PKTMNY research claims.



Its research has pinpointed the age of nine-years-old when it was the most magical time for us with some 23 per cent of the 2,000 adults quizzed still missing the excitement of thinking about the gifts they might receive with 10 per cent wishing they still had the joy of trying to stay awake in the hope of catching a glimpse of Father Christmas.

Festive spending habits also feature in a joint poll by National Employment Savings Trust and MoneySupermarket who claim we will shell out £20,072 on Christmas over our working lives - the equivalent to almost an entire year's salary for the average earner in the UK.

But as they old saying goes, the best things in life are free, and that seems to be proven by The Garden Centre Group.

Its customers put playing games, going for a walk and watching the Queen's speech among the most popular things to do on Christmas Day.

A tip from Good Housekeeping magazine for the men among us who have yet to do their present shopping - don't buy your other half a gadget because they are not interested. Some 21 per cent of its readers want more traditional presents to an iPad or Kindle - the expected biggest sellers this Christmas.

And our kids just want our money,

so says online pocket money account provider PKTMNY. Some 64 per cent of its eight to 16-year-olds customer say they will prefer the cash to a present, rising to 84 per cent of the 14 to 16-year-olds among the 1,000 questioned.

But demanding our cash is not such a bad thing, says clinical child psychologist Dr Elizabeth Kilbey.

"Giving them money not only ensures they are getting what they really want, but they have been able to take control over their own money and learnt a valuable lesson in money saving and spending."

However it seems Christmas not only costs us money, we also lose plenty of sleep over it too. Hotel chain Travelodge's findings show on average we lose 21 hours of shut eye in the week leading up to Christmas Day.

The sleep study of 2,000 adults revealed 45 per cent will survive on a mere daily ration of five hours of sleep over the next seven days due to worrying if presents will arrive on time, partying hard and staying up late to wrap parcels, peaking on Christmas Eve when a fifth of those who had children saying they will probably be working throughout the night assembling new toys and making up stockings.

Chris Idzikowski of Edinburgh Sleep Centre said: "Sleepiness is as dangerous as drinking and you have to be very careful if you're driving or doing anything else that needs your full attention."