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**HEADLINE:** WORKERS DREAD LONG MEETINGS

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**BODY:**

Nobody keeps track of how many useless business meetings the average person is going to suffer through in 2004.

Here's a one-word answer, and it's just a guess:

Plenty.

A longer answer to the same question: more than enough to go around.

A survey of 1,216 American workers by Santa Rosa, Calif.-based Interactive Meeting Solutions suggests a little more insight into the common trauma felt by workers at companies large and small.

The firm found by randomly calling workers that about one-third of the country's work force attends three or more meetings each week that are (multiple-choice):

- A. Pointless.
- B. Annoying.
- C. Soporific.
- D. All the above.

A surprise finding of the survey, which is accurate to plus or minus three percentage points, was that half the workers at large companies have attended meetings where somebody actually drifted off to sleep.

At meetings at small companies, only one in four workers have seen somebody doze off to the dulcet voice of a supervisor reading from an agenda, or because a co-worker just droned on and on and on about customer imperatives and market initiatives. The doze-off difference between workers at big and small companies is due to two factors, said Chuck McPherson, president of IMS.

"There is more accountability at a small company. They also tend to have fewer

meetings," McPherson said.

The IMS report was based on a survey conducted by Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N.J.

Most meetings are exercises in effusive mendacity; that is, don't expect any truthful opinions.

Two of three respondents from big companies said meetings could use more honesty, though nobody expects that to happen.

One in three workers at large companies said they'd be fired if they said what they really thought.

Only one in four workers at small companies thought they would get fired if they said what they really thought.

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