

Northwestern Mutual Study Reveals Americans' Discipline for Long-Term Planning in an Age of Immediacy

MILWAUKEE ([BUSINESS WIRE](#)), June 20, 2011 - According to a national [study](#) just released by [Northwestern Mutual](#), a leading provider of financial security, three out of four Americans (74%) feel the [pace of today's society](#) is making it harder for them to focus and remain on track toward achieving long-term goals.

The research – called the *Stick With It* study – also reveals how some people are successfully remaining focused over time. The No. 1 strategy that works is “setting small interim goals,” with nearly seven out of 10 people (67%) reporting this as a key step to ensure a long-term goal is achieved. The two next most common strategies seemingly go hand-in-hand – “allowing yourself to make mistakes” (62%) while “holding yourself accountable” (60%). See the related info graphic, “[Strategies for Success](#).”

“Achieving long-term goals is particularly challenging at a time when just about everything around us is getting more immediate,” said Greg Oberland, Northwestern Mutual executive vice president. “The good news is that Americans appear to be adapting. The people who participated in this study said loud and clear – the best way to stay focused is to take baby steps, expect setbacks, and never let yourself off the hook. In short: don't expect it to be easy, but stick with it.”

Scoring Goals in America

The *Stick With It* study, conducted by independent research firm [Market Probe](#), uncovers wide-ranging insights into how Americans prioritize their goals and pursue them over time. Among the key findings:

When it comes to setting goals, money trumps family. When asked what areas people set goals in, financial goals come out on top:

- Financial (72%)
- Family (62%)
- Fitness (57%)
- Work (55%)
- Diet (54%)

When it comes to the self-discipline required to achieve goals, family and work trump money. When asked what areas people have the most self-discipline in, the responses were:

- Family (77% reporting 7 or higher on a 1-10 scale)
- Work (70%)
- Financial (55%)
- Diet (38%)
- Fitness (36%)

People need the most help with finance, fitness and diet. When asked what areas people feel they could use more self-discipline in, the responses were:

- Fitness/Diet (62%)
- Financial (47%)
- Work (20%)
- Family (18%)

In other words, the best link between goal-setting and self-discipline, or 'stick-with-it-ness,' comes in people's family lives and careers. Yet, there are substantial disconnects in three areas – financial lives, fitness and diet – in which people acknowledge needing more self-discipline. See the related info graphic, "[Goal Setting & Self-Discipline](#)."

Financial goals

Among [financial goals](#), the desire for long-term protection is clear. The top financial goals include:

- Maintaining a comfortable standard of living during retirement (78% reporting 7 or higher on a scale of 1-10)
- Not falling below your current standard of living (73%)
- Protecting your income in the event of a disability (60%)
- Protecting your family's standard of living in the event that the household breadwinner passes way unexpectedly (55%)

These numbers came in notably higher than other common goals such as:

- Building a sizable investment portfolio (47%)
- Making a major purchase such a car, boat or furniture (30%)
- Financing your children's college education (29%)

"Success is not about where you stand; it's about where you're going. It's about the road you're on. All across America, people have become more risk-sensitive and are pursuing financial security on a more realistic path. The challenge now is sticking with it," said Oberland. "As with anything else that is difficult, for those who have the discipline and the patience, the rewards can be extraordinary. Whether it is finances, career, diet or fitness, sticking with it pays dividends."

Visit the Northwestern Mutual [Newsroom](#) for a full copy of the *Stick With It* study report and to download the related info graphics.

About the Research

[Northwestern Mutual](#) sponsored the *Stick With It* study to gauge the self-discipline and financial tenacity of Americans today. Independent research firm Market Probe conducted the online survey of 1,000 Americans aged 25 or older between March 4, 2011 and March 15, 2011. Results were weighted to be representative of the U.S. population (age 25+) by gender, age, income and education.

About Northwestern Mutual

The [Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company](#) – Milwaukee, WI (Northwestern Mutual) – the "World's Most Admired" life insurance company in 2011 according to *FORTUNE*® magazine – has helped clients achieve financial security for more than 150 years. As a mutual company with \$1.2 trillion of [life insurance](#) protection in force, Northwestern Mutual seeks to share its gains with policyowners and deliver consistent and dependable value to clients over time. Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries offer a holistic approach to financial security solutions including: [life insurance](#), [long-term care insurance](#), [disability insurance](#), [annuities](#), [investment products](#), and [advisory products and services](#). Subsidiaries include Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC, broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company, limited purpose federal savings bank; and Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company; and [Russell Investments](#).

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=6766376&lang=en>

1266|2011-06-21 10:18:00|2011-06-21 10:19:07.477000000|Northwestern Mutual Ranks Among "Best Places to Work in IT"|

MILWAUKEE ([BUSINESS WIRE](#)), June 21, 2011 - Northwestern Mutual is one of the top workplaces for information technology (IT) professionals for the sixth consecutive year, according to IDG's *Computerworld*, the leading source of technology news and information for IT influencers worldwide.

In the ranking of 100 companies, Northwestern Mutual ranks 7th overall, 22nd among medium-sized companies (2,500 – 9,999

U.S. employees) and first overall in the state of Wisconsin.

"To be recognized year after year as a top workplace validates what we know to be true: that this company is truly a great place to work," says Tim Schaefer, chief information officer of Northwestern Mutual. "It's so much more than the work environment or benefits the company offers. It's about the IT workforce – our people – and their day to day commitment to the company's mission and values that makes coming to work at Northwestern Mutual something to look forward to."

Since 1994, *Computerworld's* annual "Best Places to Work in IT" feature has ranked the top 100 work environments for technology professionals, based on a comprehensive questionnaire regarding company offerings in categories such as benefits, diversity, career development, training and retention.

"To be among the Best Places to Work in IT, it's not enough to seek out and hire the most talented IT professionals, offer them competitive pay and provide great benefits," said Scot Finnie, editor in chief of Computerworld. "Smart IT people realize that they need to get up to speed on their employer's revenue opportunities. The organizations that made this year's Best Places to Work list are creating a work environment that both trains and encourages IT personnel to pursue business-driven priorities."

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