

Thirty-Eight Percent of Managers Say They Have Fired Someone for Stealing at the Office, CareerBuilder.com's Survey Finds

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How many sticky fingers are in your office? It may be more than you think, according to a recent CareerBuilder.com survey. Although only one-in-ten workers admitted to stealing from their employers, 38 percent of hiring managers reported they have fired employees for office theft. The survey, titled "Office Kleptomania," was conducted in June 2006 of more than 2,200 workers, including 1,000 hiring managers.

Office supplies topped the list of hot loot with 15 percent of hiring managers stating employees were most often caught red-handed with these items. Money came in second at 14 percent and merchandise placed third at 11 percent.

Break rooms, co-workers' cubicles and even the first aid kit were also designated targets for five-finger discounts. Popular items include:

- co-workers' belongings
- computer or phone equipment
- office decor (including paintings and plants)
- coffee packets, tea bags and condiments
- toilet paper
- Band-Aids
- confidential files
- faxing or shipping services for personal use

Comparing various industries, Healthcare, IT and Manufacturing had the highest amount of workers own up to engaging in office theft, while Retail, Sales and Hospitality had the lowest.

Company reprimands for office thievery varied. Although 45 percent of hiring managers said they would automatically terminate someone for stealing from the company, 48 percent said it would depend on the object and situation. Seven percent said they would not fire the culprit.

"Whether it is worker dissatisfaction, a sense of entitlement, the thrill of the steal or some other reason, this behavior communicates a lack of shared values with the company," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at Careerbuilder.com. "Companies need to establish clear guidelines for employees and take proper measures if employee trust is violated."

Survey Methodology

The survey, "Office Kleptomania," was conducted from June 6 to June 16, 2006. Methodology used to collect survey responses totaling more than 2,200 workers for this study involved selecting a random sample of comScore Networks panel members. These Web Panel members were approached via an e-mail invitation, which asked them to participate in a short online survey. The results of this survey are statistically accurate to within +/- 2.08 percentage points (19 times out of 20). Note: this sample included more than 1000 hiring managers. The results for the hiring managers are statistically accurate to within +/- 3.65 percentage points (19 times out of 20).

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