

One-in-Four Female Workers Have Experienced Discrimination or Unfair Treatment at Work, CareerBuilder.com and Kelly Services Survey Shows

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Twenty-five percent of female workers have experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in the workplace, and 17 percent said they have felt sexually harassed by a fellow employee or manager, according to a nationwide survey by CareerBuilder.com and Kelly Services, conducted by Harris Interactive. Of those who reported the incident to their employers, the majority said the offender was not held accountable.

The study, "Diversity in the Workplace," was designed to gauge the frequency, severity and occasion for perceptions of discrimination or unfair treatment and how diversity impacts hiring, compensation and career advancement. It focused on seven diverse segments including women, Asians, African Americans, Hispanics, workers with disabilities, mature workers age 50 or older and Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender workers.

"As the female labor force has steadily climbed over the past quarter-century, employers have come a considerable way in implementing fair and equal workplace practices," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources at CareerBuilder.com. "Nevertheless, this study indicates that there is still much room for improvement. Nearly one-third of women said they feel discriminated against or treated unfairly based on their gender at least once a week."

"Despite the strides women and other diverse groups have made in the workplace, there is still a void at the top," said Nina Ramsey, senior vice president of Human Resources at Kelly Services. "Forty percent of all workers -- both diverse and non-diverse -- say there is an absence of diverse workers in management in their workplace. In order for an organization to evolve, their hiring, leadership development and succession practices need to evolve and include workers of all backgrounds."

Severity and Frequency of Discrimination or Unfair Treatment in the Workplace

Fourteen percent of female workers categorize the discrimination or unfair treatment they experienced at work as severe while 61 percent described it as moderate. Thirty-one percent of female workers said they experience discrimination or unfair treatment at least once a week. Twenty-six percent said once a month and 34 percent said it happens occasionally (defined as one to three times per year).

Discriminating or Unfair Behaviors

The most common incidents of discrimination or unfair treatment involved:

- Not receiving credit for one's work (44 percent)
- Not having concerns addressed or taken seriously (43 percent)
- Co-workers saying derogatory comments to or in front of the worker (38 percent)
- Feeling ideas or input are generally ignored (34 percent)
- Co-workers were talking behind their backs (33 percent)
- Not being given projects that provide worker with more visibility in the company (31 percent)
- Being overlooked for a promotion (26 percent)

Pay and Career Advancement

Twenty-seven percent of female workers feel they are paid less than male co-workers who have the same skills and experience; 5 percent feel they are paid more; and 46 percent feel they are paid the same.

When asked about career advancement, 24 percent of female workers feel they have less opportunities compared to male co-workers who have the same skills and experiences; 3 percent feel they have more and 49 percent feel it's the same.

Reporting of Discrimination or Unfair Treatment

Unfortunately, much of the discrimination or unfair treatment goes unaddressed. Nearly half (49 percent) of female workers who experienced discrimination or unfair treatment said they did not report the incident. Seventy-two percent of female workers said they didn't think reporting the incident would make a difference

while 46 percent feared being labeled as a trouble-maker and 34 percent feared losing their jobs.

Most of the female workers who reported discrimination or unfair treatment did so by bringing it to the attention of their direct supervisor (34 percent). Another 26 percent reported it to Human Resources while 18 percent reported it to someone in senior management. The majority of workers who reported the incident (61 percent) said they didn't think their claim was taken seriously and, in 69 percent of the cases, the offender was not held accountable. Only 3 percent of female workers took legal action against their employer.

Sexual Harassment

Seventeen percent of women said they have felt sexually harassed at the office. Seven percent said the source of harassment was by a peer, 8 percent pointed to their supervisor and two percent pointed to senior management. Fifty-nine percent did not report the incident. Of those who did report the incident, one-in-four said it was never addressed by the authority figure they consulted at work and 27 percent said the offender was not held accountable. Only 9 percent said the offender was fired.

Diversity Hiring and Firing

Thirty-three percent of female workers said their gender works against them when applying for a job while 11 percent said it works in their favor. Fifty-six percent said their gender has no influence on whether they are hired.

In terms of involuntary termination, 12 percent of female workers said they believed they had been fired at some point in their career because of their gender.

Twenty-one percent of all workers -- both diverse and non-diverse -- said they have witnessed discrimination or unfair treatment of a co-worker based on their diverse background.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com and Kelly Services among 953 Workers (age 18+ within the United States, employed full-time or part-time) with 436 being Diverse Female (age 18+ within the United States, employed full-time or part-time) between March 15 and March 21, 2007. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

With a pure probability sample of 953 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points. With a pure probability sample of 436 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 4.7 percentage points. Sampling error for data from subsamples is higher and varies. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Kelly Services

Kelly Services, Inc. is a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Troy, Mich., offering human resource solutions that include temporary staffing services, outsourcing, vendor on-site and full-time placement. Kelly operates in 33 countries and territories. Kelly provides employment to more than 750,000 employees annually, with skills including office services, accounting, engineering, information technology, law, science, marketing, creative services, light industrial, education, and health care. Revenue in 2006 was \$5.5 billion. Visit <http://www.kellyservices.com/>.

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