

## **Majority of Support Staff Workers Have Overheard Confidential Conversations at Work, New CareerBuilder Survey Finds**

**- More than 1 in 10 have information that can get someone fired**

**- Support staff workers name the strangest things found left behind at the office**

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CHICAGO, Feb. 26, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- You couldn't do your job without them. They clean your workplace, transfer your calls, deliver your mail, keep your building secure and make sure everything in the office is running smoothly. They are your company's support staff. And though you may not interact with them every day, a new CareerBuilder survey suggests they may know more about you than you think.

Fifty-three percent of support staff workers have overheard confidential conversations at work, according to the survey, and 11 percent of support staff workers have stumbled upon information that could cause someone to be fired.

The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from November 4 to December 2, 2014. It included a representative sample of more than 500 support staff employees who classify themselves as custodians, janitors, mailroom attendants, security guards, receptionists, facilities maintenance workers, housekeepers, administrative assistants or maintenance workers.

### **Hot Topics**

Dissatisfaction at work, rumors and backstabbing are among the most popular themes of hush-hush conversation among workers. When asked what types of discussions they overheard the most, support staff workers who have overheard confidential conversations cited the following themes:

- Conversations around people complaining about the boss or other workers: 62 percent
- Conversations around layoffs or firing someone: 35 percent
- Conversations around someone's compensation: 22 percent
- Conversations around romantic relationships between co-workers: 20 percent
- Conversations around lying to the boss: 18 percent
- Conversations around setting up another co-worker to fail: 11 percent

Sometimes it's not what workers say, but what they leave behind that reveals too much. One in ten support staff workers (10 percent) have found something in the trash or lying around the workplace that could get a worker or the company in trouble. A similar amount (11 percent) say they have knowledge about an executive or co-worker that could be grounds for that individual's dismissal.

### **Lost and Confounded**

When asked about the most unusual things they've seen left lying around the workplace or in the trash, more than a few support staff workers mentioned seeing evidence that workers were engaging in some Not Suitable for Work (NSFW) behaviors during the off-hours. Other curious workplace discoveries included the following:

- A list of employee salaries.
- Picture of partially-dressed co-worker.
- Layoff and compensation paperwork.
- Upcoming reorganization diagram.
- An old love letter from one person in the office to another.
- A predetermination request for a breast augmentation.
- A short story about the boss and several co-workers cast in an unflattering light.
- A pregnancy test.
- An employee's response to a personal dating ad.
- An employee's resume on the copier.
- A letter from the boss's mistress.
- The boss's ex-wife's bank account statement.
- An employee's tax return.
- Stolen event tickets.
- A diamond ring.
- A passport.
- A full key set for the facility.

### **Survey Methodology**

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 507 U.S. support staff workers (identified themselves as a custodian / Janitor, mailroom attendant, security guard, receptionist, facilities maintenance, maid / housekeeper, administrative assistant / secretary or maintenance worker) ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 4 and December 2, 2014 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 507, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 4.35 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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