

One in Four Office Romances Involves a Superior, Finds Annual CareerBuilder Valentine's Day Survey

- 17 percent of office romances involve someone who is already married

- More than 2 in 5 employees don't know whether their company has a dating policy in place

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CHICAGO, Feb. 11, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- What do Barack Obama, Bill Gates and Brad Pitt have in common? All met their significant others at work. They're also far from alone. According to CareerBuilder's annual Valentine's Day survey, 37 percent of workers have dated a coworker, and 33 percent of those office romances have led to marriage — on par with last year's findings.

The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from November 4 to December 1, 2015, and included a representative sample of 3,252 full-time, private sector workers across industries and company sizes.

Of those who have had an office romance, nearly 1 in 4 (23 percent) have dated someone in a higher position than them — a more common occurrence for women than men (26 percent versus 20 percent). And as if dating a superior wasn't risky enough, 17 percent of office romances involved at least one person who was married at the time.

But are these employees breaking the rules? More than 2 in 5 employees (45 percent) don't know whether their company has a dating policy in place.

Playing it Cool

To keep it professional, some are keeping their affairs hush-hush. One third of workers who have had an office romance (33 percent) had to keep their relationship a secret at work, which can be easier said than done. More than one 1 in 4 workers who have had an office romance (27 percent) have run into co-workers while out with their office sweetheart (10 percent pretended they weren't dating, while 17 percent admitted to it).

But even the most secretive of office romances may not be so secret after all: 65 percent of employees say they're confident they know the relationship status of everyone in their office.

Among those who have had an office romance, more than 1 in 10 say their trysts began late night on the job (12 percent). The next most popular place for amore to bloom was happy hour after work (10 percent), followed by chance meetings outside of work (10 percent), and lunches (9 percent). Nearly 1 in 10 workers who have had an office romance (9 percent) claim they fell for their workplace loves at first sight.

Lust, Love and Heartbreak

About 1 in 5 employees (22 percent) say what someone does for a living influences whether they would date that person (20 percent of men and 24 percent of women), and 18 percent say they're attracted to people who have a similar job as them (22 percent of men and 14 percent of women).

Unfortunately, not all workplace relationships end happily ever after — and some result in more than heartbreak: 5 percent of workers who have had an office romance say they have left a job because of an office relationship gone sour.

To keep a meaningful relationship at work without the romantic spark, nearly 1 in 10 (8 percent) employees are playing it safe and say they have a platonic office spouse.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 3,252 employees ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 4 and December 1, 2015. Percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions. With a pure probability sample of 3,252, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.72 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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