

Office Romance Hits 10-Year Low, According to CareerBuilder's Annual Valentine's Day Survey

- 22 percent of workers have dated their boss, up from 15 percent last year
- 31 percent of workers who started dating at work ended up getting married
- Almost one in ten female workers whose romance at work soured left their job
- 41 percent of workers had to keep their romance a secret

CHICAGO and ATLANTA, Feb. 1, 2018 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- Is the current climate around sexual harassment driving down the number of workers dating coworkers? Maybe. According to CareerBuilder's Annual Valentine's Day survey conducted by The Harris Poll, office romance is at a 10-year low, with 36 percent of workers reporting dating a co-worker, down from 41 percent last year and 40 percent in 2008. Thirty-seven percent of men say they have dated a coworker compared to 35 percent of women, while one in five male workers (20 percent) say they have dated someone at work two or more times in their career, compared to just 15 percent of their female colleagues.

This survey was conducted online by The Harris Poll from November 28 and December 20, 2017 and included a representative sample of 809 full-time workers across industries and company sizes in the U.S. private sector.

"Office romance is experiencing a dip and whether it's impacted by the current environment around sexual harassment or by workers not wanting to admit the truth, the fact remains that office romance has been around forever and will continue to be," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer at CareerBuilder. "To avoid negative consequences at work, it's important to set ground rules within your relationship that help you stay professional in the office and keep your personal life private."

Dating Up

Before getting into a relationship in the office, it may be best to avoid two types of workers – those who you report to and those who report to you. Twenty-two percent of workers have dated someone who was their boss at the time. Of those who have dated at work, more than a quarter of women (27 percent) say they have dated someone who was their boss compared to just 16 percent of men.

Additionally, 30 percent of these workers say they have dated someone who was at a higher level in the organization than they were. Thirty-five percent of female coworkers reported dating someone at a higher level in the company than them, compared to 25 percent of their male coworkers.

It's All Fun and Games.... Until Somebody Gets Hurt

Some relationships that started at work had a happy ending – 31 percent of workers who dated at work ended up getting married. However, it's not always this way – almost a quarter of workers (24 percent) had an affair with a colleague where one person involved was married at the time (27 percent of men compared to 21 percent of women). Six percent of workers have left a job because a romantic relationship with someone at work went sour (9 percent of women compared to 3 percent of men).

Tips for Navigating a Workplace Romance

Haefner recommends these tips for workers exploring a romantic relationship with a coworker.

1. **Check the rules.** In some cases, employers have a policy that prohibits employees from dating one another. Be sure that you know your company's policy before getting into any kind of relationship. If you don't know the policy, check with HR.
2. **Keep your personal life out of the office.** It's important to remember to keep your personal life out of

your work one and beware of social media. While 41 percent of workers today choose to keep their relationship a secret at work, posting on social media may make it much more difficult to keep from your coworkers.

3. **Don't let your romance impact your relationship with your coworkers.** If you don't properly separate your romantic and work life, your romance may color people's judgment with regard to promotions, projects, team building and responsibilities.

Research Method

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 809 employees ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 28 and December 20, 2017. Percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions. With a pure probability sample of 809, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-3.45 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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