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Love Conquers All—Except the Need for Job Security

Risk of Consequences for Office Relationships too High for Most Workers, According to Latest Spherion Staffing Survey



FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla., February 11, 2011 — This Valentine’s Day, workers are just as concerned as last year that openly dating a coworker could jeopardize their careers, according to the 2011 Valentine’s Day Workplace Survey conducted by Monster on behalf of [Spherion Staffing Services](#). Nearly three-quarters (70 percent) of respondents agree that openly dating a coworker could jeopardize job security or advancement, a similar percentage to last year. The 2011 survey findings also show that 68 percent agree that workplace relationships can lead to conflict at work, and another 61 percent believe they are a distraction.

More than half (53 percent) of survey respondents revealed that they have had a crush on a coworker, while 39 percent of all respondents have turned a workplace crush into a workplace relationship. Half of respondents (48 percent) wouldn’t consider dating a coworker or boss at all, even if that person didn’t work in their department. If workers were willing to date on the job, only 24 percent would consider dating a co-worker within their department. One in 10 would consider dating their boss, but only eight percent of bosses would date someone they supervise.

“It’s clear from this year’s survey results that workers remain fearful that dating in the workplace could jeopardize their job security, a sentiment that may be heightened due to ongoing uncertainty in the economic situation,” says John Heins, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at SFN Group, Inc. “Just three years ago, workers didn’t feel this way. In 2008, only a third of people were hesitant to start relationships at the office. When facing an economic environment where mass layoffs, restructuring and unemployment reign, workers appear to be less willing to risk their jobs for love.

(More)

“Ambiguous policies on office romance don’t help, either. If office policies aren’t clearly communicated or don’t exist at all, people can’t measure the potential consequences of how an office romance will be perceived or handled by the company. We believe that if employers put clear measures in place to properly manage the possibility of workplace romances, workers might feel safer to pursue these relationships. One thing that’s clear is without a policy in place, people aren’t at ease,” said Heins.

Marriage May Lead to Changing Jobs

Of the 13 percent of those surveyed who had relationships that resulted in marriage, only nine percent are still employed by the same company, indicating that most married couples who begin by working together don’t continue doing so.

Declaring Love at Work

Almost half (46 percent) of the survey participants feel that workplace relationships should be governed by formal company policies. However, one third (36 percent) work at companies without a relationship policy, and 43 percent don’t know if their company has a relationship policy at all.

Methodology

The February 2011 Spherion Valentine’s Day Workplace Survey was conducted online within the United States by Monster Worldwide on behalf of Spherion Corporation between January 27 and February 2, 2011 among a U.S. sample of 423 registered Monster users.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with non-response, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Monster feels the use of “margin of error” is misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, un-weighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published surveys come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were randomly selected from among those who have agreed to receive communication from Monster, so no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Spherion Staffing Services

Spherion Staffing Services is a leading recruiting and staffing provider that specializes in placing administrative, clerical, customer service and light industrial candidates in temporary and full-time opportunities. As an industry pioneer for more than 60 years, Spherion has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in virtually every industry through a network of offices across the United States and Canada.

Spherion Staffing Services is a division of SFN Group, Inc. (NYSE:SFN). SFN operates a family of specialty businesses providing strategic workforce solutions in professional services and general staffing. To learn more, please visit www.spherion.com.

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