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National Survey

Flirting in the Office Now Off Limits, Most Workers Say; But 1 in 10 Say Promotions Often Stem From Office Affairs

11th "Attitudes in the American Workplace" Poll by Harris Interactive® for The Marlin Company

North Haven, CT, September 27, 2005 – Is romance in the workplace dead? Most U.S. workers seem to be saying, "yes," according to a new national survey. The survey found that 78% say they have not flirted with a co-worker.

The survey, conducted by Harris Interactive® for the Marlin Company, the workplace communication experts, found workplaces are a far cry from hotbeds of romance. Four out of five workers (80%) say that flirting between co-workers is not common.

"Since the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings, sexual behavior or intimations of this are verboten. I believe people are reacting to and fearful of engaging in any behavior that can be construed as sexual harassment," said Dr. Marianne LaFrance, a professor of psychology at Yale University.

"The survey findings were surprising as many people know someone who has found a spouse or significant other in the workplace. But the survey results don't mean we should throw out all the Hollywood scripts of office romance," said Frank Kenna III, president of The Marlin Company.

"While some flirting is obviously going on, what it suggests is that increased training regarding appropriate behavior is having its intended impact," said Kenna. "We know that that companies are vigorously educating employees on what constitutes sexual harassment or the appearance of it and this is manifesting itself in a more business-like work atmosphere at all times."

The survey found men more likely than women to have flirted at the office and more likely to be ready to become romantically involved with a co-worker. While married workers are less likely to have flirted than their unmarried counterparts, there is still a sizeable percentage of married workers -- 17% -- who say they engage in flirting with a coworker.

Have you ever flirted with a co-worker?	Yes	No	Not Sure	Decline answer
US Workers	21%	78%	1%	1%
Male	24%	75%	1%	1%
Female	17%	82%	1%	0%
Married	17%	83%	1%	0%
Unmarried	27%	72%	1%	0%

Is flirting between co-workers common in your workplace?	Yes	No	Not Sure
US Workers	18%	80%	2%

Unmarried workers are nearly twice as likely as married workers to be aware of situations where an employee advances in his or her career as a result of romantic involvement with another worker. Similarly, workers in medium-size and large companies are more likely to be aware of this type of advancement.

Are you aware of any situations at your work where romantic involvement between two employees appeared to result in the advancement of at least one of the employee?	Yes
US Workers	11%
Married	8%
Unmarried	15%
Company size: 1-100	7%
Company size: 101-1000	20%
Company size: 1001+*	14%

* Small base. Data should be used directionally.

Methodology

Harris Interactive® conducted the “11th Annual ‘Attitudes in the Workplace’” telephone survey on behalf of The Marlin Company between May 25 and June 8, 2005. Interviewing took place among a nationwide cross section of 757 U.S. adults ages 18 and over who are employed full- or part-time, using a Random Digit Dialing technique that significantly reduces bias. Figures for age, sex, race, and region were weighted where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3.6 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy.

About The Marlin Company

For more than 90 years, The Marlin Company has been the Workplace Communication Experts™ helping companies improve employee morale, productivity and performance through the innovative use of original, visually engaging content displayed in Communication Stations that can be managed through print or Internet distribution. Its stations, which contain content customized by industry, help more than 8,000 companies of all sizes improve workplace attitudes and behavior. Through its many years of experience, The Marlin Company has developed a strong database of, and experience in, issues affecting the workplace. It routinely surveys thousands of clients to determine current issues, works with industry experts across North America, and conducts national polling. Since 1995, it has conducted its annual "Attitudes in the American Workplace" poll. For more information, please see www.themarlincompany.com.

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