

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



261 Workplace Romance is on the Decline

A third of American workers say they have participated in an office romance. However, fewer employees are doing so today than any time in recent memory? I'm Jerry Roberts and I'll tell you why fewer folks are looking for love at work, today, on The Extra Point.

So, one in three workers across the U.S. have found love in a cubicle nearby, or somewhere across the open floor plan. And if it's not the person on your left or the person on your right, then — ooh, it's you. I had a feeling about that.

My sense of it is that Guam probably boosted the numbers for the rest of the U.S., and it's likely that far more than one in three workers have dated a coworker.

However, the news is not so good on the love and workplace front these days, and that might include Guam as well. A lot less people are getting thusly involved with folks they share employers with, at least according to SHRM, the Society for Human Resource Management. A current poll they've released indicates just two percent of workers admit to romantic involvement with a coworker. The folks at careerbuilder.com ran a similar survey last year, and found that workplace romance is at a 10-year low. So, what once seemed like a big and exciting thing for so many, is becoming a relic of history? — like Amazon jobs in New York City...or elected Republicans in Guam.

So why is this happening? Well, SHRM thinks they know, at least for workers in the 50 states. It come down to a growing awareness of sexual harassment and people now choose to abstain from romantic encounters at work because it carries a greater potential for trouble.

There are other reasons people cite for not getting hooked up with a coworker. SHRM says one-third of workers consider the whole concept unprofessional. A fourth worry about

how their employer might view it, and 22 percent say they fear others in their workplace would gossip about them. Well, that would only be mainland thing, right? I mean, I can't imagine anyone in Guam ever gossiping about coworkers dating. Certainly not.

Those last two factors — worry over the employer's reaction and gossiping — are why about 30 percent of office romantics do everything possible to hide it. That might be impossible in Guam where secrets aren't kept for long.

Employers don't have a problem with workers linking up romantically, but there are some issues. SHRM found in a 2013 study that among businesses with workplace romance policies, 99 percent prohibited relationships between a supervisor and direct report. That said, CareerBuilder found 22 percent of people have dated their boss and 30 percent have dated someone at a higher level within the organization than they were. This creates an issue if the relationship sours. One person will likely be transferred to another department, or possibly end up leaving the organization.

Research shows that men and women initiate the action on workplace romances more or less equally. Men are singled out as more likely to have had multiple relationships at work, while women are more likely to date up the company ladder. A final note, about one-third of office love connections lead to marriage.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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