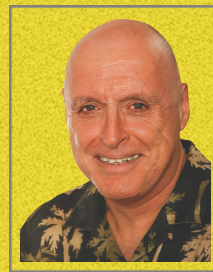


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1709 Love at Work is on the Decline

Sad news to report this morning. It comes from SHRM, the Society for Human Resource Management. The HR group is reporting that office romances are on the decline. According to SHRM, fewer people are trying to score a honey where they make their money. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got the reasons why, coming next on the Extra Point.

SHRM does an annual survey on the topic of romance at work. The 2025 numbers indicate that fewer people are connecting at work for the purposes of having an intimate personal relationship.

I've seen research over the years that shows about half of those polled have dated a coworker. Last year, 21% of those asked by SHRM said they had done so in the last year. The recent survey shows those numbers are down to 16%.

Last year, 49% of respondents said they had a crush on someone at work. Well, mom told me that crushes can be fleeting. Here today and gone gone tomorrow. Mom knew. This year, according to the SHRM study, only 22% have or have had crushes.

These numbers give a picture of what is taking place on the mainland. I don't know if any Guam workers responded to SHRM's survey, but my guess is that workplace romance figures here are higher.

Why do people connect at work? Convenience. Oldtime robber Willie Sutton, when asked why he chose to hold up banks, famously said, "That's where the money is." In the game of romance, work is where the people are.

For some listeners, their place to connect with a potential partner might have been church, school, beach, the grocery store, or bars and clubs. For others, work was recognized as an easier landscape for dating.

So what's happening back in the upper 50 that is putting the damper on workplace dating? I

did some digging and there are a number of reasons for the current trend. If you're single and thinking of relocating, you might want to perk up your ears.

1. A lot of people are working from home. There aren't as many opportunities for casual interactions, and old fashioned flirting with coworkers. I have a feeling that flirting via Zoom or Microsoft Teams just doesn't offer the same thrill.
2. Sexual harassment issues in the workplace have made many people more cautious about initiating office romances. Sometimes, a mere accusation of inappropriate behavior can have a serious impact on a person's career.
3. Dating apps are becoming more popular. Online dating platforms provide accessible options for meeting potential partners outside of the workplace. Gen Z leans into this to a larger degree than others.
4. Many companies have implemented stricter policies regarding workplace relationships. There are significant potential issues for an organization when two workers are involved in an office romance.

Favoritism or unfair treatment is cited as an issue. Not that it actually happens, but just the perception that it could happen is a concern.

Productivity can be a problem, as is the the potential loss of talent if two people have a bad breakup.

Most managers claim that they are prepared to handle workplace romances, but you never know about that until it happens.

For now, fewer and fewer people are seeking a dating partner at work. If you relocate to the mainland, and want to hook up, singer Johnny Lee would say that you might be looking for love in all the wrong places. Be so advised.

(Con't.)

He'd also tell you...

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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