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10 employees have engaged in an intimate relationship with someone at work—be it a peer, manager, or even member of the C-suite.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Apr. 17, 2018



Workplace relationships are remarkably common. How common are they?

According to the results of the [Love @ Work Survey](#) from HR company [Namely](#), 4 in 10 employees have engaged in an intimate relationship with someone at work—be it a peer, manager, or even member of the C-suite. Five percent of employees have had a relationship with their boss, and millennials were most likely to have done so.

Among those surveyed, 61% said their company does not have an office relationship

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people would tell no one, and less than 5% would tell HR. If a dating policy required employees to report their relationship, only 42% say they would comply. Men are twice as likely *not* to tell HR if required.

- **Employees don't trust HR to keep their secret.** 49% of employees have below average trust in HR to keep their office relationship confidential. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the most trustworthy, only 14% of employees give HR the top rating.
- **Employees give HR high marks on sexual harassment preparedness.** In the wake of the #MeToo movement, 6 in 10 employees say their companies are well or outstandingly prepared to handle a sexual harassment situation. Plus, the vast majority of respondents (62%) have been required to take sexual harassment training.
- **Employees hesitate to "swipe right" on coworkers.** Most employees (79%) would not swipe right if they saw a coworker on a dating app. A willingness to swipe is correlated to age, with Gen Z most likely, and Baby Boomers least likely. Men are more than twice as likely to swipe right than women.

"With the average workweek rounding out to over 47 hours, work has become such a big part of our lives. It's no surprise that workplace relationships are so common," says Julie Li, Senior Director of People Operations at Namely. "As HR, supporting employees is *not* just about having a policy in place. HR should be an accessible and trusted resource for all employees, particularly in cases when love at work has a negative impact."

Where does HR fit in? Employees were quite mixed on how HR should respond to a manager dating a direct report, for example. 34% opted to transfer the manager to a new department or location, and 29% opted to transfer the direct report. Some opted for terminations, while 21% said "do nothing."

When it comes to dating at work, every situation is unique. Leesa Schipani, SHRM-SCP and HR consultant, has a personal take. "While I don't advocate legislating

‘love,’ I believe companies can put guardrails in place to minimize risk and

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