

Poor Time Management and Gossip Top the List of Workplace Pet Peeves

Less Than a Third Deal with Their Pet Peeves by Talking Directly to the Person Involved



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Poor Time Management and Gossip Top the List of Workplace Pet Peeves

Less Than a Third Deal with Their Pet Peeves by Talking Directly to the Person Involved

New York, NY – Employees today deal with a variety of pet peeves at work, most commonly people with poor time management skills (selected by 43% of employees) and gossip (36%), according to a new Ipsos Public Affairs-Randstad survey of over 1,000 employed U.S. adults. At least one in five say that messiness in communal spaces (25%), loud noises such as speaker phone, loud talkers, and ring tones (21%), and potent scents like perfume, food or smoke (20%) are workplace pet peeves. Fewer pick overuse of personal electronics such as Blackberrys or laptops during meetings (15%), political conversations (12%), misuse of email (12%), or personal use of social media sites during working hours (12%) as their biggest annoyances. One in eight (13%) say that none of these are pet peeves, while 3% say that they do not work with anyone else during a typical work day.

- Younger workers – those under age 35 – are more likely than those 55 and older to say that loud noises (25% vs. 16%) and political conversations (15% vs. 8%) are workplace pet peeves.
- Women are more likely than men to find messy communal areas to be frustrating (28% vs. 23%).

With poor time management being the top workplace pet peeve across demographics groups, a variety of these annoyances seem to frustrate workers. Those who typically interact with others at work are most likely to select people taking excessive breaks – long lunches, smoke breaks, online surfing – as their chief aggravation (22%). Roughly one in ten select other time management problems:

- People who abuse sick days: 11%
- Meetings without agendas or structure: 11%
- Meetings that cut into personal time (start before or end after traditional work hours): 10%
- Meetings that start late or run over: 10%
- People who are distracted on their Blackberry or who text during a meeting: 10%
- People who constantly miss deadlines: 9%

Fewer say that their biggest frustration regarding time management is when the request “have you got a minute?” turns into a lengthy meeting (5%). However, 13% say that none of these issues bother them.

- Employees under 35 are more likely than those who are older to say that their biggest time management pet peeve is when meetings cut into personal time (16% vs. 7%).

Similarly, the findings suggest that many workers’ frustrations with the use of social media during work hours also revolve around time management. The most common pet peeve related to social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter is the amount of time wasted that should be spent on work assignments, selected by 28% of working adults. One in five (20%) most dislike when social media use causes users to ask others for help with their workload or responsibilities. One

in ten are most annoyed about other people's personal use of social media during work hours when it causes them to complain they're overworked (11%) or to miss work-related deadlines (9%). Just 4% worry that social media use has the potential to reflect poorly on their efforts while 27% do not share any of these concerns about social media use.

While wasting time that should be spent on work assignments is the most common annoyance with social media across demographic groups, it is more of a concern among those aged 35 and older than among younger workers (30% vs. 22%).

When it comes to email pet peeves, forwarding chain emails and jokes tops the list (19%), followed by misuse of "reply all" (12%). Others selected:

- People who don't respond to meeting invitations or to emails in general: 9%
- People who ask a question that was just answered in previous email: 7%
- People who use email to solicit for personal fundraising efforts: 7%
- Unnecessary or excessive CC-ers: 6%
- People who acknowledge every email with one-word answers (i.e., thanks, got it, etc.): 5%
- Discovering a colleague blind copied (BCC) a third-party (i.e., boss, client, etc.) to expose something negative about them or their work: 4%
- People who type their entire email message in the 'subject' line area: 3%

Over a quarter of employees (27%) did not select any of these as pet peeves. Women are more likely to be annoyed by unnecessary "reply alls" (15% vs. 10%) while employees under 35 are more likely than those who are older to be most bothered when people who ask a question that was just answered in previous email (12% vs. 4%).

Just as workers have a variety of pet peeves, they also tend to deal with them in different ways. Most commonly, employees say that they typically respond to their pet peeves by saying something directly to the person(s) involved (29%), though few opt to do so over email (2%). One in five (10%) vent to co-workers while one in ten (9%) bring it up with their boss or supervisor. Just 1% leave an anonymous note or vent on social networking sites.

However, over a quarter (27%) say that they ignore the situation completely and 12% say that they do not take any of these approaches to deal with their pet peeves.

- Women are more likely than are men to vent about their pet peeves to co-workers (24% vs. 15%).
- Employees under 35 are also more likely than those who are older to complain to colleagues (23% vs. 17%), while older workers are more likely to speak to the person involved (31% vs. 23%).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted April 13-16, 2010. For the survey, a national sample of 1,037 adults aged 18 and older who are currently employed from Ipsos' U.S. online panel were interviewed online – including 1,004 employed adults who work with other during the course of a typical work day. Weighting was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire adult population of employed adults aged 18 and older in the United States had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.



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