

Press Release: Monday 1st September 2008

British bosses are feeling the pinch – in more ways than one

- **One in five British workers would flirt with the boss for promotion**
- **Men more likely to initiate internal affairs with over half willing to date a work colleague**

Economic uncertainty, a slump in the housing market and UK inflation hitting a 15-year high ... Tough times could well be forcing people to go that extra mile to increase their earnings -- but just how far would *you* go to get ahead at work?

Well, according to a new survey by online dating firm PARSHIP.co.uk – one in five British workers (22%) – double the number recorded in 2004 – would flirt with the boss in order to get a promotion, with men (25%) more willing than their female colleagues (19%) to use charm to get ahead.

PARSHIP's "Love to Work" survey, which polled 12,000 people, also found that 33% of men find their female bosses/superiors attractive in the first place, perhaps because the qualities rated as a turn-on by men are also an asset in the workplace. Female bosses were said to appeal to men because they were intelligent, self-confident, open-minded, honest, had good communication skills, a sense of humour, the ability to compromise, and an optimistic attitude. The messages for male bosses are less positive. Just 17% of women fancied the man in charge, but that might well be down to women's distaste for some classic alpha-male characteristics: ruthlessness, a dominating personality, a know-it-all attitude and a lack of a sense of humour.

The imbalance in male-female aspirations has become more extreme over the last four years. In 2005, 32% of men considered dating a work colleague; this figure has risen to 57% in 2008. In striking contrast, the comparable percentage for women has halved: 15% in 2008 against 30% in 2005. Of the 6,000 women polled, one in five said they were attracted to a man in professional charge or in the traditional male role of breadwinner. However, the majority (88%) said they'd prefer a relationship based on equality, and 76% of men share this ideal. Just 25% of women say they want their man to offer an upscale standard of living, with still fewer –19% -- claiming to be specifically on the look-out for a man who earns more than they do.

Dr Nafsika Thalassis, PARSHIP.co.uk's singles coach, commented:

“Perhaps, women have learnt through bitter experience that using one’s sex appeal to get ahead at work can backfire. Women who flirt with their boss run the risk that their bluff will be called, ending up in a sticky and even embarrassing situation. Moreover, women are more likely to realise that flirting to get ahead will be disapproved by their colleagues, so that even if they get the promotion, it will be at the expense of their workmates’ good opinion. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to perceive themselves as being in control and are less concerned that their flirting will result in being cornered by their boss in the stockroom.

But they should be wary: Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. Ultimately, flirting is our way of telling people that we might fancy them and while the fun of flirting lies precisely in its playfulness (maybe I mean it, maybe I don’t), in the workplace it is often better to conduct one’s relationships with absolute clarity.”

When it comes to the life-work balance, women still want it all: a loving partner, great job and, in many cases, children. When quizzed on their expectations for the next five years, 71% of single women hope to be in a committed relationship, 31% want to be married and 25% plan to be mothers (with the percentage for the 25-34 age group rising to 31%), even if they have yet to meet Mr Right. 22% of single women between 25 and 40 hope that their next relationship will produce a child -- though maybe not fathered by the boss!

The online Romantic Rich List poll of 1,000 British singles seeking a long-term relationship was conducted by PARSHIP, Europe’s largest serious online dating site for single men and women, which features a unique psychometric compatibility test and a methodology that matches you with people who are genuinely right for you.

What not to do when dating a work colleague

1. Never date a married colleague and never date a work colleague if you yourself are married.
2. Never hide the relationship; it will encourage gossip and make you look as if you have something to hide.
3. If you are dating a work colleague and you decide to end the relationship, do so in an honourable way. This means explaining sensitively (preferably face to face) why the relationship isn’t working. Ultimately you want to be able to continue a professional relationship with the person.
4. Never end a relationship with a co-worker by giving them the cold shoulder. It could have lasting effects on your career, particularly if your colleague ends up as your boss.
5. Dating a colleague is not usually a sackable offence, but inappropriate conduct during working hours could put your job in jeopardy.

6. Do not carry on the relationship during working hours, you're paid to work and canoodling over the photocopier is likely to irritate your colleagues.
7. Physical intimacy in the work premises is a no-no. Remember those security cameras.
8. Refrain from sending personal messages on your work email you don't know who could read them, and limit phone calls and text messages if the company pays the bill.
9. Never charge a date to your company expenses or use a business trip as an opportunity to entertain a love interest.
10. Don't share confidential information even during pillow talk

- Ends -

For Further information, please contact Penny Conway on 020 7014 4046, 07775992350 or email penny@parship.co.uk. Dr Nafsika Thalassis is available for interviews.

Notes to editors:

About PARSHIP

PARSHIP is the Europe's largest online dating service dedicated to people who want to form a serious relationship. Founded in 2001, PARSHIP now has millions of active members and uses a unique scientific compatibility test, based on over 40 years of scientific research, to match people who have both similar and complementary personality traits – the requirements for a harmonious relationship. www.parship.co.uk,

About Survey

The survey was conducted by Innofact in June 2008 with 12,000 British adults over the age of 18.