

Feel the Love

Perhaps you thought we were going to talk about romance in the workplace, it being February. But been there, done that—see Working Life last February. We are instead being sardonic, ironic, tongue in cheek. In fact, there's sometimes absolutely no love lost among co-workers. They get on each other's nerves, kind of like people who have been married a long time. They have PET PEEVES.

We know that because we did our own (albeit unscientific) survey of a diverse group of employees, and here's what we found.

Top 10 things people wish other people would do or would not do at work

10. Don't make your crisis mine. In other words, just because you missed a deadline doesn't mean I'm suddenly expected to drop everything and make the badness go away.

9. No loitering allowed. Please don't interrupt someone while that person is on the phone or stand at the door until he or she hangs up.

8. Don't be impatient or rude. Regarding the increase of such behavior in the workplace, one respondent says, "Chalk it up to technology creating the expectation of instant gratification."

Oh, yeah, and stop whining about having too much work. The same respondent says, "Everyone's busy, can we move on?"

7. Please use bathroom etiquette. There were many recommendations for a

Courtesy Flush and reminders to wash one's hands. ("I HAVE TO TOUCH THAT DOORKNOB!")

6. Let people exit the elevator before you try to get on. Duh.

5. It's not YOUR personal fridge!

- ❑ Don't smush someone's sandwich to get your big lunchbox in.
- ❑ Don't leave food in there until it mutates.
- ❑ Take ownership of what's in there; it is not a time capsule.

4. Do clean up after yourself! In the kitchen, in the mailroom, at the copier, at the fax machine, in the common work areas. Come on, people! Remember what your mothers taught you!

3. Use email etiquette:

- ❑ Don't send all-staff replies to all-staff messages.
- ❑ Please cut down on the endless thread of responses and commentary that say nothing important.
- ❑ Don't forward every Internet joke whether funny or not.
- ❑ Don't send large attachments that need printing; just send a hard copy.
- ❑ Don't send messages that could be a conversation or a meeting.
- ❑ Don't read other people's email over their shoulder.
- ❑ Don't read your email while someone's talking to you.

2. Cubicles are offices, too! Be a little quieter. Don't talk loudly in the halls or next to someone's cubicle, don't have heated arguments on the phone with ven-

dors, your significant other, etc., and don't play your voicemail at top volume. Let's use our inside voices, just like Mom used to tell us.

and number 1: We like to call it "I love the smell of napalm in the morning." You know, Robert Duvall, from the film *Apocalypse Now*.

- ❑ Don't wear overpowering cologne or perfume.
- ❑ Don't heat smelly food in the microwave or eat same at your desk. In other words, if you had smoked eel in used motor oil or pasta a la dirty sneakers the night before, please consume the leftovers at home.

Honorable Mention: People should refrain from using silly phrases such as "We need to get our arms around this..." or "streamline our processes to get synergy...."

We're sure we haven't covered them all so send your personal pet peeves to

Do You Have a True Tale From the Workplace?

Tell us actual stories that happen at your work, and we'll mention you as a contributor to Working Life (or grant you anonymity, if you prefer).

Just email Haidee Allerton at worklife@astd.org or write to me at *Training & Development*, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

Fame can be yours!—or a place in the Working Life witness protection program.