

## Flirting Inc.

It might be OK  
to flirt at work,  
or not.

By Haidee E. Allerton

“Flirting takes place in the corporate world every day and isn’t necessarily sexual,” says Susan Rabin, president of Dynamic Communications and founder of the Business School of Flirting. Rabin made her point recently by flirting with David Letterman on his show while lying on a bed.

Rabin contends that flirting is “smart business, is politically correct, and builds better business relationships between women and men—if done the right way.”

Flirting is subtle and can be the first

step in communication, notes Rabin. It’s a people skill and a charming, honest expression of interest in others. But it must be light and without serious intent.

Here are some corporate flirting dos and don’ts from the Business School of Flirting:

**Start** your conversation with a question, comment, or compliment. End with a clever close.

**Tune out** the “what’s in it for me?”

**Don’t step** over the boundary into sexual harassment. The discomfort zone includes threatening touch, out-of-line

## WORKING

compliments, and invasion of someone else's personal space.

The Business School of Flirting targets corporate HR and training departments, and Rabin asserts that allowing harmless flirting can lead to higher income, teambuilding, and promotions because it equalizes people's business skills and gives you social savvy. Rabin gives talks at workplaces and conferences and is the author of the books *How to Attract Anyone Anytime Anyplace*, *101 Ways to Flirt*, and *Cyberflirt!*

<||Source/  
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## What Do You Think?

So, what do you think about flirting in the workplace? Good idea, bad idea? Right way to do it, wrong way? What has been your experience with it? (Don't worry, we'll protect your privacy.) Email [work-ing@astd.org](mailto:work-ing@astd.org), and read the results in a future column.

## Reality Check

# 51%

of American women admit to having nearly punched a colleague (no relation to flirting at work that we know of).

<||Source/Cosmopolitan

# Business Affairs of the Heart

Remember those little pastel-colored conversation candy hearts with sayings such as "You're Sweet," "Luv U," and "Be My Valentine"? They're still around, but some others with a slightly different twist have appeared on the scene.

Now you can send BitterSweets, the same pastel-colored candy hearts but with such phrases as "See Other People," "Luv2 Stalk U," and "I Need Space, Money."

The idea for Despair Inc. was born of twin brothers and a friend working at a dot.com, where a dark mood ensued when some employees didn't receive promised stock options. It clicked with the guys that the usual corporate accessory catalogues had nothing appropriate for... well, despair. Now, they're running a US\$1 million a year firm out of Austin, Texas, that sells the candy above and office items with "satiric business maxims," including posters, coffee mugs, notepad, and desk plaques.

Or what about Despairwear or anything from the Demotivators Collection? Visit [www.despair.com](http://www.despair.com).

