

CANADIAN PRESS / LÉGER MARKETING

# How Canadians feel about Sex and Romance in the Workplace

Report



## 1.0 Study Highlights

- A quarter of Canadians have flirted with co-workers.

Question : *Have you ever flirted with someone at work? ? IF SO: Was this person a SUPERIOR, a SUBORDINATE or someone at the SAME LEVEL as you ?*

n=1500	Superior	Subordinate	Same level	No, has never flirted with a co-worker	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	3%	2%	21%	71%	3%

Question : *Have you ever had an intimate relationship with someone at work? IF SO : Was this person a SUPERIOR, a SUBORDINATE, or someone at the SAME LEVEL as you ?*

n=1500	Superior	Subordinate	Same level	No, has never had an intimate relationship with a co-worker	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	2%	1%	7%	87%	3%

- Flirting has a negative impact on the quality of life at work.

Question : *In your opinion, do office romances or flirting have a POSITIVE impact, a NEGATIVE impact, or no IMPACT on the quality of life in the workplace ?*

n=1500	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	Don't know/ Refusal
Canada	10%	56%	23%	10%

- More than a third of Canadians would be flattered if a co-worker flirted with them.

Question : *If one of your co-workers flirted with you, would you be FLATTERED, INSULTED or INDIFFERENT?*

n=1500	Flattered	Insulted	Indifferent	Don't know/ Refusal
Canada	36%	12%	45%	8%

- Advances from a superior would lead to a sexual harassment complaint.

Question : *If a superior made an advance at you, would you CERTAINLY, PROBABLY, PROBABLY NOT or CERTAINLY NOT consider making a formal sexual harassment complaint ?*

n=1500	Certainly	Probably	Probably not	Certainly not	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	17%	20%	34%	18%	12%

- People do get promoted after having sex with a superior or boss.

Question : *In your present workplace, have any of your co-workers been promoted after having had sexual relations with their superior or boss?*

N=1500	YES	NO	Not working presently	Don't know
Canada	8%	63%	12%	18%

## 2. Results

### 2.1 A quarter of Canadians have flirted with co-workers

26% of Canadians admit they have flirted with co-workers. 21% have done so with co-workers at the same level, 3% with superiors and 2% with subordinates. 49% of those in the 18-24 age group admit to flirting, compared to 14% of those over 65. In terms of gender, 30% of men claimed to have flirted, compared to 22% of women.

Question : *Have you ever flirted with someone at work? IF SO : Was this person a SUPERIOR, a SUBORDINATE, or someone at the SAME LEVEL ?*

n=1500	Superior	Subordinate	Same level	No, have never flirted with a co-worker	Doesn't know/ Refusal
Men	3%	3%	24%	66%	3%
Women	3%	1%	18%	75%	4%
18-24 years	6%	3%	40%	50%	1%
25-34 years	5%	3%	24%	66%	1%
35-44 years	2%	1%	17%	77%	4%
45-54 years	3%	2%	19%	73%	3%
55-64 years	2%	2%	18%	74%	4%
65 years and over	1%	1%	12%	78%	8%
Canada	3%	2%	21%	71%	3%

26% have flirted with a co-worker

In addition, 10% of the population admits to having had intimate relations with co-workers, 7% of these with co-workers at the same level, 2% with superiors, and 1% with subordinates. 23% of those in the 18-24 age group admitted having done so, compared to 2% of those over 65. 13% of men claimed to have had intimate relations compared to 7% of women.

Question : *Have you ever had an intimate relationship with someone at work?. IF SO : Was this person a SUPERIOR, a SUBORDINATE, or someone at the SAME LEVEL as you ?*

n=1500	Superior	Subordinate	Same level	No, never had an intimate relationship with a co-worker	Don't know/ Refusal
Men	2%	1%	10%	84%	3%
Women	2%	0%	5%	89%	4%
18-24 years	4%	1%	18%	77%	1%
25-34 years	2%	1%	9%	87%	1%
35-44 years	2%	1%	8%	86%	3%
45-54 years	2%	0%	5%	90%	3%
55-64 years	0%	1%	4%	91%	4%
65 years and over	1%	0%	1%	90%	8%
Canada	2%	1%	7%	87%	3%



10% have had intimate relations with a co-worker

## 2.2 Office romances and flirting have a negative effect on the workplace

According to 56% of Canadians, flirting and romantic relationships between co-workers have a negative impact on the quality of life at work, while 23% feel they have no impact and 10% says the impact is positive.

Those in the 18-24 age group (18%) and allophones (19%) were more likely to feel they had a positive impact.

It should be noted that 36% of those who have flirted with a superior feel that the impact is negative, while 34% of this same subgroup find it positive.

Question : *In your opinion, do office romances or flirting have a POSITIVE, NEGATIVE, or NO IMPACT on the quality of life in the workplace ?*

	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	Don't know / Refusal
Has flirted				
... with a superior	34%	36%	29%	2%
... with a subordinate	23%	55%	13%	9%
... with a co-worker at the same level	18%	44%	32%	6%
Has never flirted	7%	62%	21%	10%
Canada	10%	56%	23%	10%

### 2.3 Over a third of Canadians would be flattered if a co-worker flirted with them

36% of Canadians would be flattered if a co-worker flirted with them, while 12% would be insulted and 45% would remain indifferent.

However, almost half of male respondents (47%) would be flattered if someone flirted with them, but only a quarter of women (25%) would be. 52% of those in the 18-24 age group and 43% of Quebecers were among those that would be the most flattered.

It should be noted that 28% of those who say they have never flirted would be flattered if a co-worker flirted with them, while 49% would be indifferent and 15% would be insulted.

Question : *If one of your co-workers flirted with you, would you be FLATTERED, INSULTED, or INDIFFERENT ?*

	Flattered	Insulted	Indifferent	Don't know / Refusal
Men	47%	8%	38%	8%
Women	25%	15%	51%	9%
Has flirted				
... with a superior	63%	2%	30%	5%
... with a subordinate	59%	0%	33%	7%
... with a co-worker at the same level	59%	2%	35%	4%
Has never flirted	28%	15%	49%	8%
Canada	36%	12%	45%	8%

## 2.4 Advances from a superior would lead to a formal sexual harassment complaint

If a superior were to make an advance, 37% of Canadians would lodge a sexual harassment complaint, 17% would certainly do so and 20% probably would.

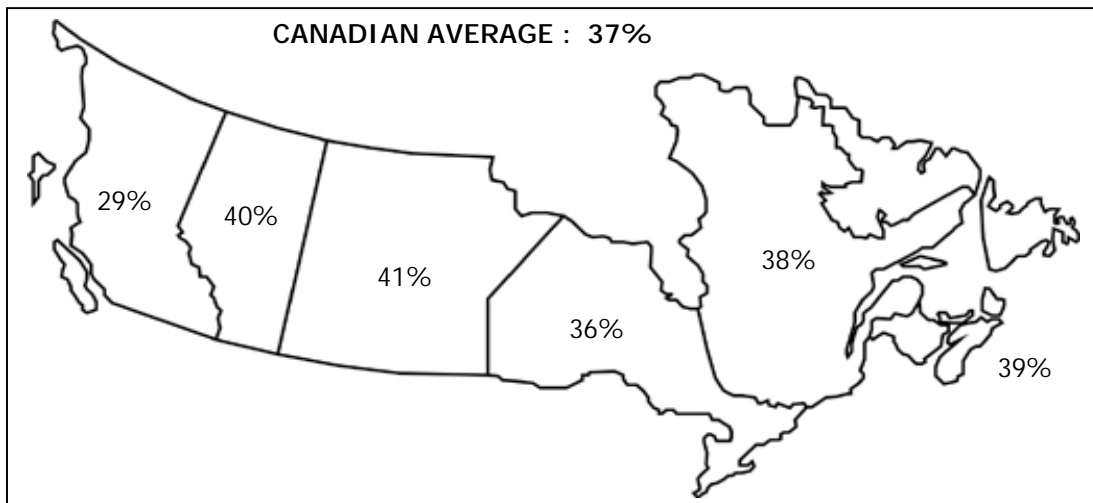
48% of women, 43% of those who have never flirted with co-workers and 24% of men were among those most likely to complain.

Question : *If a superior made an advance, would you CERTAINLY, PROBABLY, PROBABLY NOT, or CERTAINLY NOT consider making a sexual harassment complaint?*

n=1500	Certainly	Probably	Probably not	Certainly not	Don't know / Refusal
Men	10%	14%	39%	25%	11%
Women	23%	25%	30%	11%	12%
Canada	17%	20%	34%	18%	12%

37% would lodge a complaint

### Percentage of Canadians who would lodge a sexual harassment complaint if a superior made an advance



## 2.5 People do get promoted for sleeping with the boss

According to 8% of Canadians, some of their co-workers at their present job have received promotions after having engaged in sexual relations with their superior or boss, while 63% say no, 18% don't know or refuse to answer and 12% are not working currently.

Question : *In your present workplace, have any of your co-workers been promoted after having had sexual relations with their superior or boss?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Not currently worked	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic Provinces	7%	59%	16%	18%
Quebec	9%	62%	16%	12%
Ontario	8%	63%	12%	17%
Prairies	10%	58%	11%	22%
Alberta	6%	68%	6%	20%
British Columbia	5%	63%	11%	20%
Canada	8%	63%	12%	18%

Lastly, 38% of Canadians would like to see stricter rules forbidding flirting and intimate relations between co-workers. However, this position was rejected by 53% of respondents and 9% would not say.

44% of women, 53% of those over 65 years of age and 47% of those with a grade or high school education supported the ban, while 65% of those under 35, 62% of Quebecers, 61% of high income earners and 63% of university graduates didn't.

Question : *In your opinion, should companies have strict rules forbidding flirting and intimate relationships between co-workers?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Don't Know/ Refusal
Atlantic Provinces	42%	50%	8%
Quebec	36%	62%	1%
Ontario	38%	51%	11%
Prairies	44%	50%	6%
Alberta	41%	47%	12%
British Columbia	32%	50%	18%
Canada	38%	53%	9%

### 3.0 Methodology

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This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1500 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between June 4 and June 9 2002. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1500 respondents is of  $\pm 2.6\%$ , 19 times out of 20.