

CareerBuilder.com Happy Hour Survey Reveals How Many Workers Attend, How it Impacts Careers and the Biggest Mishaps

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With summer in full swing, more workers may be heading to happy hours. According to the new CareerBuilder.com survey, one-in-five workers (21 percent) say they attend happy hours with their co-workers. Among those who attend, nearly a quarter report they go to happy hour at least once a month. And while 21 percent of those who attend say happy hours are good for networking, 85 percent reported that attending a happy hour did not help them get closer to someone higher up or land a better position in the company.

Why do workers go to happy hour? The majority (82 percent) of workers report that they attend happy hour to bond with their co-workers, while another 20 percent find it to be a great way to network. Fifteen percent of workers said they attend to hear the latest office gossip, while 13 percent only go because they feel obligated to be there. One-in-ten workers (11 percent) use happy hour as a way to bond with their boss.

Who is going to happy hour? An equal number of male and female workers say they attend happy hours with co-workers. Workers aged 25-34 were the most likely to attend (29 percent), while workers aged 55+ were the least likely at 15 percent. The Midwest leads with the most workers (23 percent) saying they go to happy hour with their co-workers, compared to 21 percent in the West and the South. Those least likely to attend were in the Northeast at 20 percent.

The industries who ranked highest for happy hours were:

- Professional and business services (35 percent)
- Financial services (34 percent)
- IT (29 percent)
- Sales (28 percent)
- Healthcare (24 percent)

Among those who attend happy hour, more than one-third of workers in retail sales said going to happy hour helped them to get close to someone higher up in the company and/or a better position, along with 21 percent of financial workers and 20 percent of those in sales.

When asked, workers reported the following incidents happened during a work happy hour:

- Bad-mouthed a co-worker or member of management (16 percent)
- Shared a secret about a co-worker (10 percent)
- Kissed a co-worker (8 percent)
- Drank too much and acted unprofessionally (8 percent)
- Shared a secret about the company (5 percent)
- Sang karaoke (4 percent)

On the other hand, close to four-in-ten workers (39 percent) who do not attend happy hours do so because they like to keep their work and professional lives separate.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive(R) on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 6,987 employees (employed full-time; not self-employed) between February 11 and March 13, 2008. Percentages for some questions are based on a subset of responses to certain questions. With a pure probability sample of 6,987 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.2 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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