The Dos and Don'ts of Office Romances

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Whether you're considering an office romance or are currently in one, there are a few key things to keep in mind before completely falling head over heels. *AZFoothills* spoke with Karen Stafford, president of Arizona's Employers Council, about the dos and don'ts of office romance.

Do:

Know the Risks

"Lead with your head as you follow your heart." Meaning, follow who your heart wants, but be cautious and smart in your pursuit. You should consider if the relationship could cause any conflicts of interest and if it is worth changing your current work dynamic. "Really determine how this relationship might cause others to perceive you as a professional," she says.

Set Boundaries

Be sure to set boundaries with your partner. Determine what is appropriate in a professional work environment and what is not. Steer away from inappropriate conversations, pubic displays of affection and longing gazes. "Your teammates are not being paid to watch a soap opera," Stafford says with a laugh.

Disclose the Relationship to HR

Your Human Resources representative is more than happy to assist you in keeping a professional relationship with your partner while you are at work. Consider signing a "Love Contract," a formal agreement that the two parties involved in agree to the company's policies and allows the couple to know they have support if something goes wrong. It's a great protection for love birds.

Don't:

Violate Harassment Policies

This one is common sense, but a good rule of thumb to keep in mind to avoid unintentional violation of your company's harassment policies is to only ask out a person once. "Major companies like Google and Facebook have incorporated this rule into their company's policies, and I love it." The rule implements a safe and happy work environment for both you and your peers while allowing you the opportunity to try and pursue an interest.

Show Favoritism

Regardless if your partner is your superior or not, any form of favoritism or even nepotism shown can lead to serious consequences for both parties involved. It can also change your peer's perception of you and your partner and cause hostility in your work environment. "If you are dating someone who is a superior, don't give up on the relationship and disclose the relationship to HR. They will be more than happy to make accommodations to avoid nepotism and suspicion among peers," Stafford says.

Keep the Relationship a Secret

Keeping your relationship hidden can cause gossiping and rumors to develop and disrupts the work environment. But worst of all, hiding the relationship degrades trust between both parties involved and those they work with when the relationship is discovered.