

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NEWS

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**Note: Klaus will lead “soft serve” parties in select cities in conjunction with the book’s launch. Soft serve parties are an easy and fun way of serving up the soft skills so you don’t have to learn them the hard way. Klaus reveals essential but often-ignored soft skills lessons for the workplace interspersed with lively, experiential exercises. The program lasts about two hours—and, yes, soft serve ice cream tops off each event!**

## Manage Your Affairs: Kiss With Caution!

### Three Tips for Navigating The Do’s and Don’ts of Office Romance



Canoodling in the copy room? PDA’s (public displays of affection) in the elevator? Love e-mails gone astray? Does this sound like the plot of the latest soap opera or grade-B movie? Well, it’s probably already playing at a workplace near you. Peggy Klaus, author of the new book *The Hard Truth About Soft Skills—Workplace Lessons Smart People Wish They’d Learned Sooner* (Collins, February 1, 2008), says that while once considered taboo, office romance has come out of the closet. People are now finding Cupid at work in record numbers for the simple reason that—for better or worse—more and more of our time is spent at work.

According to an office romance survey by CareerBuilder, 43 percent of the U.S. workforce reports having dated a co-worker. Thirty-four percent of those who coupled up with a fellow employee said they ended up marrying them. One-in-ten respondents said they currently have their eye on someone at the office for dating in the near future. Thirty-four percent of workers said they had to keep their relationship with a colleague a secret. Twenty-two percent admitted having dated a colleague who was married and 27 percent went out with someone who holds a higher position than they do within their organization. Another 14 percent have dated their boss.

Providing further evidence of a shift in attitude about office romance, Southwest Airlines has openly publicized the fact that it employs more than 1,000 married couples. However, if you think what you do on your own time is “none of the company’s business,” think again. While 70 percent of firms have no written dating policies in place, more and more are developing them, particularly when it concerns a supervisor and a direct report.

“Relationships are a critical component of office politics. Given that one of the strongest and most intense connections you can form is a romantic one, you better be prepared before that first embrace with someone from the office,” notes Klaus.

Proceed with caution and consider what you are getting into. Think about how your actions might be perceived and the possible ramifications on your career. The effects it will have on the political landscape depend largely on how you and your companion handle yourselves and the particular situation. For example, if your partner works in an entirely different department or for a company subsidiary, getting together may have little

bearing at all. Conversely, if you are dating your boss' boss, the implications will undoubtedly be considerable.

Even if you've checked out that your company policy allows it or takes a don't ask, don't tell approach, a "never" policy might be a good idea, especially when it's someone you are working over or under. If you decide to go ahead, then consider the following guidelines:

1. Adopt a policy of no canoodling or PDA's at work. There's nothing worse than sitting at a table trying to have a business discussion when "two people are going ga-ga over each other," as one of my clients so aptly put it. It's extremely important to always maintain a sense of decorum and professionalism. For example, one couple I know stops holding hands just as soon as they get out of the car in the company parking lot. Another workplace couple decided it's best to commute separately to work.
2. Agree ahead of time about how to handle the inevitable conflicts that will come up both inside and outside of the office. If you have a fight at breakfast, for example, you need to leave that emotional baggage outside the office door. For disagreements that happen at work, refrain from making personal comments in front of others.
3. Consider the "what ifs:" What if one gets promoted and the other doesn't? What if the company goes under? Can you both afford to lose jobs at the same time? What if the romance doesn't work out? Be sure to have an exit strategy that works for both of you.

Visit [www.peggyklaus.com](http://www.peggyklaus.com) for a complete synopsis of the latest soft skills research and for an online "Take 24" automated self-assessment quiz that tests and tallies an individual's soft skills savvy in a number of key arenas. People respond to 24 items online and receive instant feedback on which soft skills areas they need to improve, along with customized advice from Klaus.

### **About The Author**



Peggy Klaus trains professionals world-wide at leading companies which include Credit Suisse, Disney, UNICEF, and Kaiser Permanente. Author of *BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It*, she has been featured in a wide range of media including the *Today Show*, *20/20*, *The Early Show*, *BusinessWeek*, *Fortune*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *the New York Times*, *Investors Business Daily*, *O Magazine*, *Working Mother*, *Pink*, *Glamour*, *Allure*, *Self*, *Woman's Day*, and *Family Circle*. Klaus has lectured at Harvard; the University of California, Berkeley; and Wharton. She lives in Berkeley, CA.

### **The Hard Truth About Soft Skills: Workplace Lessons Smart People Wish They'd Learned Sooner**

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