How Co-Workers Drive You Crazy

Don’t tell anybody: New research outlines exactly how employees can drive each other crazy.

It’s all in a new *Work Watch* study from staffing firm Randstad and pollster Ipsos Public Affairs.

The can’t-miss irritant: The misuse of work time — for things like long lunches, smoke breaks or extended online surfing.

More than four in 10 (43%) employees surveyed cited these “poor time management” complaints as their biggest pet peeve. Other entries in the category:

- people who abuse sick days
- meetings without agendas or structure
- meetings that cut into personal time, including starting before or ending after traditional work hours
- meetings that start late or run over
- people who are distracted on their Blackberry or who text during a meeting, and
- people who consistently miss deadlines.

Changing times

Coming in second in the Peeve Derby: People who gossip, with 36% of ballots cast. When Randstad ran a similar survey back in 2007, gossip was employees’ biggest pet peeve and time management issues came in second. Apparently, 2010’s increased pace and pressure has made workers more sensitive about how their work hours are spent.

The other seven top ways to get under co-workers’ skin:

- messiness in communal spaces
- loud noises
- potent scents
- use of personal electronic devices during meetings
- political conversations
- misuse of e-mail, and
- use of social media sites during work hours.

Two more sure signs of the times: In the 2007 survey, “political conversations” and “use of social media sites” weren’t mentioned as workplace concerns.