



#### Readers Want More

Since the first issue of Solutions, readers have been telling us how much they enjoy our new magalog (magazine + catalog) format. Through emails and snail mail, they have raved about the fresh design of our office supply catalog interspersed with articles on contemporary topics. They said they especially loved the attitude and appeal of our cartoon character Morgan and would like to see more of her. Perhaps most surprising was the amount of correspondence we received with questions for Carmen; here is Carmen's response to one of those queries. By the way, we love receiving mail from our readers and hope you will continue to send us your comments at [editor@Solutionsmagalog.com](mailto:editor@Solutionsmagalog.com)

## WORKPLACE ROMANCE

# *Is it a Good Thing?*

*Dear Carmen:*

I recently graduated from college and just got my first “real” job as a production assistant at a rather large advertising agency. I love my job but it keeps me so busy – often times even weekends — that I haven’t been able to go out very much. To simplify my situation: my love life stinks. However, there is this cute guy, an account executive at work, who has smiled at me a few times and seems interested; I think he might ask me out. Is it okay for us to date since we are both employed at the same company?

~ Amanda G.

*Dear Amanda:*

Office romance is a tricky subject. Given a list of positives and negatives, the pro side is usually considerably shorter than the con side. Occasionally intra-office amour can work out, but more often than not, there are so many pitfalls that they begin to consume the relationship, sucking it dry of all of the infatuation and intrigue that made it so special in the first place. Let me explain.

If your first date with a company cohort is fun, and it leads to a second and third date and so on, then there will be quite a number of issues to consider. First and foremost, does your company have a “dating” policy? Some companies ban it altogether; others prohibit boss-subordinate relationships to ward off possible sexual harassment claims down the line. A few give tentative approval if both parties attest (give full disclosure) in writing that they entered into the relationship on their own accord without any coercion. Still

others have no policy what-so-ever and anything goes. Why so much red tape, you say, just to date someone you like?

Unfortunately, in today’s litigious world, it’s important to be conscientious about how life’s choices may be interpreted by others. For example, will dating a colleague lead other employees to assume you are planning to take a giant leap up the corporate ladder? Or on the other side of the coin, is there a conflict of interest, i.e. is there a possibility of communicating privileged information between the respective parties?

One excellent way to avoid exposure is to keep your love life on the Q.T. — be intelligent, be discreet, and ask your partner to do the same. Don’t tell the world that you are seeing someone at the office and definitely don’t fawn all over your funny valentine in front of the rest of the folks at the office. For one thing,

**Editor’s note: The column Dear Carmen is provided for information and entertainment purposes only; no legal advice is intended.**