

READING

Don't disturb me – I'm not working!

HOW do office workers spend their day? Well, they work of course, but they also find time for other things. A recent report reveals that UK office workers spend about an hour and a half a day on personal business. They spend 54 minutes gossiping, 16 minutes flirting, 14 minutes surfing the Net, 9 minutes emailing friends and family, and 3 minutes shopping online.

Surfing the Net in office time for personal reasons is common throughout Europe. Nearly half of workers in Italy, the UK, and Germany confess to visiting sites for holidays and finance when they should be working. In Italy, 4 out of 10 office workers flirt in the workplace and 1 out of 3 employees sends and receives text messages on their mobile during their working day.

Unsurprisingly, employers are not happy with this 'absenteeism in the office'. Many companies use filters to prevent surfing, and even turn off coffee machines to prevent gossip. In Milan, a worker who regularly surfed unsuitable sites was suspended for ten days.

But is the best solution to stop workers socializing and surfing the Net? After all, you don't stop thinking about work when you go home, and your private life doesn't stop when you go to work. A study of the best employers in the UK says that laughing with colleagues, socializing, and having fun creates a workplace where staff work the hardest! One successful company has a room with perfumed oils and music, where staff can relax. Another offers games rooms and satellite TV. It seems that only motivated workers give 100% attention to their jobs. ■

Read the text and answer the questions

1. How much time each day do UK office workers spend not working?
2. What's their most popular non-work activity?
3. How much time each day do they spend using the computer for non-work activities?
4. What percentage of Italian office workers flirts in the office?
5. What do some employers do to reduce absenteeism in the office?
6. What do some employers do to make their staff happier at work?