



# Poll reveals South Africans' workplace likes, loathes and wants

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**Richard Andrews**

Director at Inspiration Office (Pty) Ltd

- Caffeine more important than safety
- Loud colleagues top list of annoyances
- Social aspect of work tops list of likes

A recent survey of 12000 office workers nationwide has revealed the most important things we demand from our workplaces.

The survey also uncovered the things we like best and hate most about the place where we spend a third of our lives.

Richard Andrews, Managing Director of Inspiration Office, an Africa-wide office space and furniture consultancy with offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town, said that the poll threw up some surprising findings.

"We asked people what was the most important thing for them in the workplace and 95% said access to good tea and coffee."

"This topped the list ahead of security (91%) and a healthy environment (87%) of what South Africans see as most important in the workplace."

Rounding out the most important things was natural light (85%), greenery (71%), canteens (65%) and comfortable chairs (52%).

"Essentially it's all the smaller things that people really need to be happy in the workplace," said Andrews.

The poll also quizzed people on their biggest annoyances at the workplace.

Top of the list was loud colleagues, followed by colleagues who "smelled up the place" by eating lunch at their desk.

Third was 'unbearable bosses.'

"It seems as many offices move to open plan design, the trend of squeezing more people into less space has brought workers in

closer proximity to each other. There is nowhere to hide from other peoples' habits.

"People talking loudly on the phone, endless talking to colleagues and making a general ruckus (88%) topped the list of the biggest peeve."

"This was followed closely by people who eat lunch at their desks thereby smelling up the workspace (76%)."

Andrews added that bad bosses (66%) was in third place particularly those that were hyper-critical and micro managers. Lack of privacy also featured with just over 50% citing that as an office downside.

Other strong office dislikes were dreary spaces, long meetings, dress codes and working hours.

When asked about the best things about the workplace, the social aspect of meeting new people and becoming friends with certain colleagues was the best thing about the workplaces according to 80% of respondents.

Also favourable was the 'learning and personal development' that workplaces offered (61%) and this was followed by 'a place to make money' at 49%.

Filling out the remaining office positives was 'stimulation', 'sense of worth', and 'contribution to society.'

Andrews said that more businesses in South Africa were moving to address concerns such as those highlighted by the survey.

"Quiet spaces, places to make private calls and a trend towards more comfortable and relaxed spaces will improve the day to day office experience."