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LIE FOR ME NOT TO ME, SAY UK BOSSES

A new survey has shown that while the vast majority of company directors and senior managers believe it is wrong for their employees to lie to them, almost half are comfortable with those same employees telling untruths on their behalf to their customers. The research also reveals that female bosses appear more comfortable with lies in the workplace than their male counterparts.

Only 7 per cent of British bosses feel that it is acceptable for an employee to tell an occasional lie to them, according to research conducted by **The Aziz Corporation**, the UK's leading independent executive communications consultancy. However, 37 per cent of bosses believe it is acceptable for their employees to tell white lies to customers, and 46 per cent think telling untruths is acceptable if this could safeguard the company.

The research also found that slightly more bosses (11 per cent) find poor timekeeping more acceptable than lying, perhaps suggesting that the inveterate liar would be better not to turn up to work at all. By contrast, surfing the internet during office hours, sending personal emails and making personal phone calls are now considered acceptable by 36 per cent, 83 per cent and 85 per cent of bosses respectively.

Attitudes to lying in the workplace appear to depend, at least in part, on the purpose of the lie. While only 2 per cent of bosses believe it is acceptable to lie to take sick leave, and just 3 per cent when making an expenses claim, 14 per cent are comfortable with employees lying on their CVs and 24 per cent about being late for a meeting.

Professor **Khalid Aziz**, Chairman of The Aziz Corporation, which conducted the survey as part of the eighth annual Aziz Management Communications Index, comments:

“The survey shows that many UK bosses believe that it is acceptable for their employees to lie, so long as they aren't lying to them! These senior business leaders regard occasional lies from employees as more acceptable than poor time keeping and no worse than absenteeism.”

“Most remarkable is that 14 per cent of senior management felt that it was acceptable for an employee to lie when writing their CV. This very serious breach of confidence was regarded as more acceptable than taking a 'sickie' or fiddling an expense claim.”

“Honesty may not always be the best policy from a business point of view, but it should certainly be something that senior managers should encourage amongst their staff. The damage that can be done to their personal reputation and that of their company is often difficult to recover from. It is important for senior staff to lead by example.”

Female bosses favor fibbing more than men

When it comes to lying in the workplace, women seem to be more comfortable telling untruths themselves, or with their staff lying for them, than men.

10 per cent of women think that the occasional lie is acceptable from employees, compared with only 6 per cent of men. 22 per cent are comfortable with their staff lying about missed deadlines, compared with 12 per cent of men. 29 per cent of female bosses are happy for their employees to lie to cover for a colleague, compared with 18 per cent of men. And 61 per cent

of women believe it is right to tell an untruth to save an organisation, compared to 41 per cent of men.

Khalid Aziz adds:

“It has often been a staple on TV and in movies that female businesswomen use untruths to their advantage - from the humble secretary who out-schemes her scheming (female) boss in the movie **Working Girl**, to the weekly machinations of Joan Collins as Alexis Carrington in US soap **Dynasty**. It is interesting to speculate whether or not these portrayals are influencing the way that female bosses are behaving in the workplace.”

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Professor **Khalid Aziz** of The Aziz Corporation is available for interview on this story. If you would be interested in speaking with Khalid then please visit our [Contact us](#) page.

Notes to Editors

The Aziz Corporation

The Aziz Corporation is the UK's leading independent executive communications consultancy. Its mission is to add value to businesses by ensuring their people are effective communicators. Consultancy services offered by the Aziz Corporation include presentation skills, media training, crisis management, image consultancy and voice development.

About the survey

This survey was completed by 200 senior managers and directors of major companies based across the United Kingdom.