

HRM AT WORK EXERCISE

Cupidity agreements

REFERENCE: Susannah Moran, 'Cupidity agreements', *Australian Financial Review*, 13 May 2005, p.24.

CHAPTERS RELEVANT TO THIS EXERCISE: 4, 18 and 19.

Summary

Workplace romances are a fact of organisational life but they can also have a negative effect of staff morale and performance, particularly if and when relationships end. Consequently, many Australia firms now incorporate provisions relating to such relationships into their codes of conduct. An increasing number of Australian companies are also requiring staff to inform management when they are in a relationship with a colleague, although few Australian firms have as yet introduced compulsory 'couples registers' of the type use in some US and British firms. Employees are then required to sign so-called 'cupid' contracts, which oblige them to behave responsibly and to avoid discrimination or harassment. Some commentators argue that such disclosure policies may be seen as low-trust and one-sided. Others contend that compulsory disclosure may actually be dangerous for the firm in terms of the potential for discrimination on the basis of information disclosed.

Questions

1. To what extent are workplace romances of legitimate concern to human resource managers?
2. What are HR managers' professional, legal and ethical obligations here?
3. Why might compulsory disclosure of workplace relationships have unintended consequences?