



Flushing your work life down the pipes

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Poor washroom habits could affect you in the office

hand I would flatly refuse to shake if we were ever introduced? Whose tidbits I would reject if she passed food around the office? And guess how many paper hand-towels I've gone through to let myself out of the loo without having to make skin-contact with that main door handle?

They will be thought of badly by fellow-professionals, and this can affect their social networking – and even career advancement, if their bosses deduce that someone's shoddy treatment of shared facilities reflects her level of respect for her co-workers.

YOU might think that what you do in the toilet is absolutely personal, with no effect whatsoever on your working life. But you could be wrong.

Imagine if colleagues and bosses regularly see you not washing your hands, or not washing them properly, after leaving a toilet cubicle. Don't be surprised if they then become disinclined to shake hands with you, share food with you, or receive any item from you without decontaminating it first.

Co-workers will also have a poor impression of you as a person. I often see one woman in the ladies' who emerges from the cubicle, turns on the tap, but does no more than wet her fingers for literally one second before rubbing those very same unsoaped fingers over her eyes, nose and mouth, presumably to wake herself up on slow afternoons.

Then with those fingers, she grasps the door handle to let herself out of the loo. Guess whose

Sheer waste

If people suspect your fingers have traces of waste matter on them, who would want to let you use their stationery, laptop or phone? The only people whose hands have zero waste matter on them after a toilet visit are those who touched nothing on the way in or out – meaning that they didn't even wipe their own bottoms, and if that's so, we only hope their office chairs get disinfected every day.

Some people may wash their hands thoroughly but mess up the loo. In our office washroom, we've seen nauseating sights ranging from footprints on the toilet seats and paper strewn all over the floor to unmentionable body liquids and semi-solids sprinkled or smeared over the seat, floor and partitions.

Perhaps the culprits think they can get away with it. But if they should ever, somehow, be caught leaving a cubicle in a worse state than it was in when they entered it, word will spread.

Should such irresponsible people work in food, health or hygiene-related industries, that sort of toilet behaviour could even get them fired.

Small details

The littlest things matter in the washroom. Some people behave like pre-school children after washing up – they flick their hands at the sink, flinging drops of water over everyone within a two-metre radius. I can't imagine someone looking kindly upon a colleague who's just rained tap water over her custom-tailored silk suit.

It doesn't look good either if you carelessly drop your paper towels onto the floor instead of into the bin, and just walk away. Or if you're a well-dressed executive who noisily hawks up everything in your gullet and spits into the sink.

People notice. They remember. And they talk. So be on your best behaviour in the washrooms. Don't flush your office life down the toilet.