Robert Half Canada

INDECOROUS DECOR - Survey Reveals Unusual Objects Seen Around the Workplace

TORONTO, March 21, 2013 /CNW/ - Many professionals try to make themselves at home at the office, but some take the concept to an extreme. In a new survey from The Creative Group, advertising and marketing executives were asked to describe the strangest or most surprising item they have seen on an employee's desk or in his or her workspace. Here are some of their responses:

- "A live pig"
- "A punching bag"
- "A mermaid sculpture"
- "A pair of men's underwear"
- "A rock collection"
- "A hair dryer"
- "A drawer full of clothes"

The survey was developed by The Creative Group, a specialised staffing service for interactive, design, marketing, advertising and public relations professionals. It was conducted by an independent research firm and is based on more than 750 telephone interviews -- approximately 575 with marketing executives randomly selected from companies with 100 or more employees and 175 with advertising executives randomly selected from agencies with 20 or more employees -- in the United States and Canada.

Creative professionals often have unique "tastes," and these individuals were no exception as evidenced by the snacks found in their offices:

- "A jar of pickled pigs' feet"
- "A pineapple"
- "A rotten orange"
- "My supervisor eats a banana every morning and leaves the peel on the floor until the end of his shift."

No need for fancy accoutrements for these workers, whose decor was homemade:

- "A wall of empty soda cans"
- "A jar of soda pop tabs"
- "A desk full of paper airplanes"
- "So many paper dolls that you can't see anything else"

These employees had only to look to their desks for a blast from the past:

- "A cell phone from 1986"
- "A LIFE magazine from 1934"
- "Antique model cars"
- "A lava lamp"
- "A 1950s-era television"

Then there were those whose office accessories revealed a sombre side:

- "A bottle opener in the shape of an eye; when you open a beverage, it appears to be crying"
- "A flowerpot shaped like a skull"
- "A marble tombstone"
- "A bottle of vodka"

The office can be lonely, which may be why the next few workers showed up to work with these companions:

- "Siamese fighting fish"
- "A large black rat"
- "A tree frog"
- "A stuffed pink gorilla"
- "A bug-eating plant"

Finally, there was this sentimental individual, whose coworker may have left but isn't forgotten:

- "A person who sat next to the employee left the company, so the employee cut out a picture of the guy's head and put it on a wooden stick on his desk."

"Office design can have a big impact on an employee's productivity," said Alicia Brum, branch manager of The Creative Group. "Since many creative jobs entail coming up with new ideas, it's common for these individuals to surround themselves with items they find inspiring. However, professionals must always keep their company culture and colleagues in mind when decorating their work area, and avoid showing anything that may be offensive or distracting to others."

The Creative Group offers four tips for creating a polished workspace that inspires creativity:

- **Play nice.** Some companies have guidelines about what employees can and can't display in their work area. If your employer has no formal policy, take cues from how colleagues have customised their offices.
- **Don't offend.** Your workspace is on display for your coworkers, clients and bosses to see, so keep that in mind when selecting decor. Avoid off-colour calendars, political posters, racy photos and other items that can raise eyebrows.
- **Be a minimalist.** Showcasing a few souvenirs or gizmos can provide the eye candy you need to stay inspired, but filling your work area with too many knickknacks can be distracting.
- **Keep it neat.** Even if you're highly effective and efficient in your role, a cluttered or messy workspace can give others the impression that you're disorganised. Make time each week to clear your desk of old papers, food wrappers and additional debris so you have room for new projects and paperwork.

About The Creative Group

The Creative Group (TCG) specialises in placing a range of highly skilled interactive, design, marketing, advertising and public relations professionals with a variety of firms on a project and full-time basis. More information, including online job-hunting services, candidate portfolios and TCG's award-winning career magazine, can be found at www.creativegroup.com. Gain insights into the latest hiring and salary trends in the creative and marketing fields at **www.creativegroup.com/salarycentre**.

SOURCE: The Creative Group

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