

1 in 10 office workers approached for corporate espionage

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The latest insight from [The Global Payroll Association \(GPA\)](#), has found that almost a quarter of UK office workers have discussed sensitive work-related information with friends and family, with around one in five letting slip to other colleagues both internal and external to their organisation and one in 10 have been approached to engage in corporate espionage.

Last week, [Keith O'Brien hit the headlines](#), as it was revealed that he was asked to spy on his then employer Rippling by rival payroll company Deel in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage by learning Rippling's corporate secrets.

However, the latest workplace insight from the GPA suggests that the act of corporate espionage may be more common than we think.

A survey* of over 1,300 UK office workers, commissioned by the GPA found that almost a quarter (24%) admitted to sharing sensitive work-related information with friends or family outside of the workplace.

One in five (20%) also admitted to sharing sensitive work-related info with other colleagues within their organisation, whilst a similar proportion (18%) had also divulged such information to people outside of their organisation such as a client or other professional entity they worked with.

But whilst loose lips have the potential to sink corporate ships, one in 10 went as far as to say that they had been approached by another company or individual to share information about their current employer.

Of this 10%, only 1% said that they had obliged with the request, however, only 15% of those approached reported this attempt to their current employer.

Melanie Pizzey, CEO and Founder of the Global Payroll Association, says:

“Attempts of corporate espionage may seem like an exciting prospect and whilst you should probably take some workplace stories with a pinch of salt, it could be more common than you might think.

The reality is that it’s simply not worth it, as not only could engaging in such activity see you blacklist as unemployable, there could be some very real repercussions depending on just what information you choose to share.

As we saw last week with the Rippling and Deel fiasco, payroll is often the key area targeted when it comes to corporate espionage, as a company’s payroll will hold a wealth of sensitive information on every single employee, not least the sums they earn and that may need to be offered to tempt them to a competitor company.

The good news is that whilst a staggering one in 10 UK workers claim to have been approached to engage in corporate espionage, very few engage with such requests. Although worryingly, just a small proportion report it, no doubt out of fear that they may be somehow implicated.

It really highlights the importance of not only conducting thorough background checks on all employees, but also adopting an employee-first approach to business to prevent any disgruntled workers from spilling the beans to a rival.”

Data tables and sources

- [*Survey of 1,342 UK office workers carried out by ProperPR on behalf of The Global Payroll Association via consumer research platform Find Out Now \(4th April 2025\).](#)

[Full data tables and sources can be viewed online, here.](#)