



Workplace Undercover Survey

May 2010



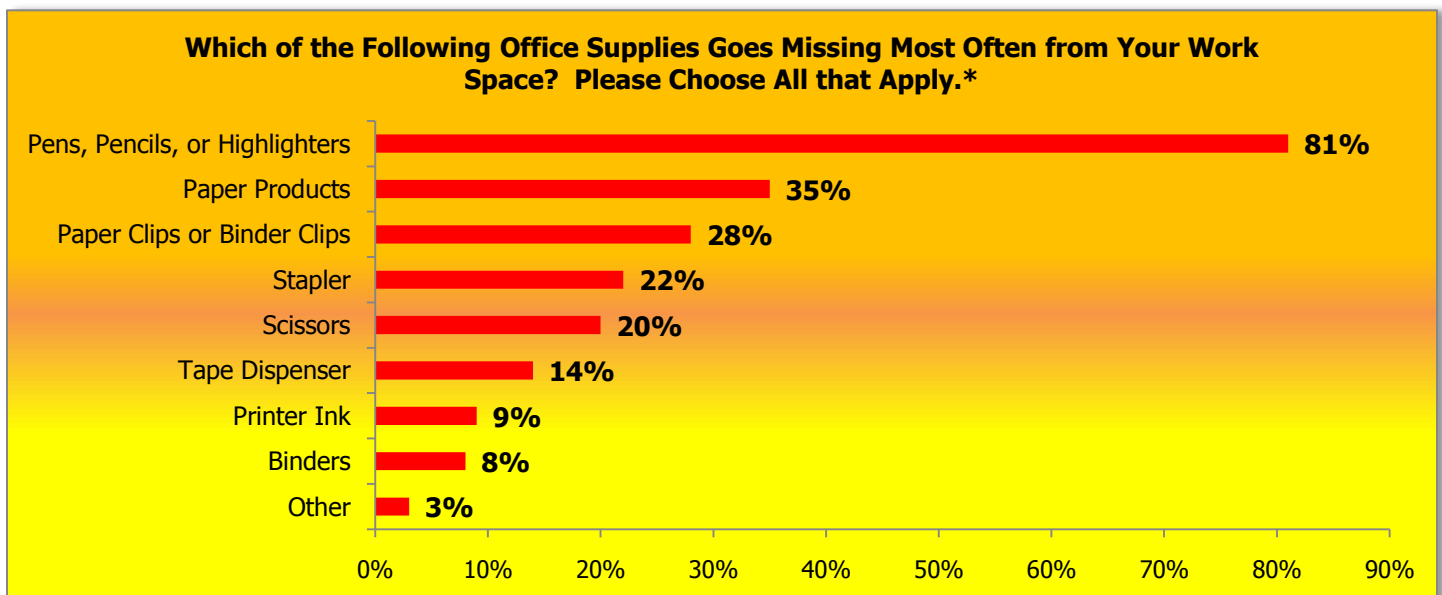
The Truth Behind Disappearing Office Supplies

New Survey Reveals "Supply-Jackers" in Offices Nationwide, Why Working Americans Pilfer Supplies, and the Struggle Professionals Go Through to Protect Their Favorites

It happens all the time. You open a brand new package of your favorite pens. The quality, design, and color are just right. The day comes and goes and then suddenly, the pen is gone, never to be seen or written with again. According to the new survey OfficeMax Workplace Undercover Survey, employed Americans are no strangers to this scenario, as supplies in their workspaces go missing quite often. Working Americans admit they take supplies from the office for their personal use at home or hold on to borrowed products they should have returned to their colleagues. But when their favorite supplies aren't at their disposal, their workday suffers. When such productivity is put into question, the office supply enthusiast knows no bounds. They go the distance to keep their loot safe, from placing them in a special drawer to covering the item in labels sharing their contact information.

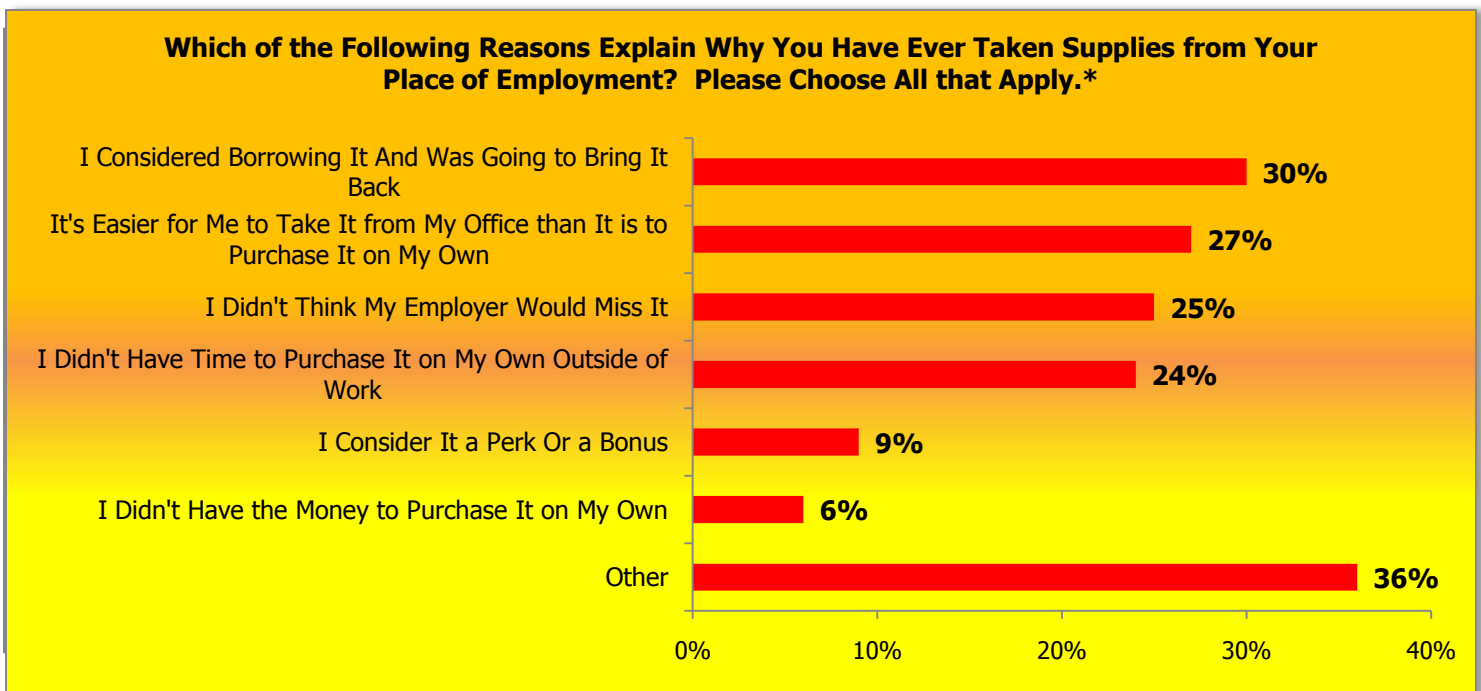
1) NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T

- **Disappearing Act.** There seems to be a lot of dwindling workspaces popping up across the nation. Eighty-one percent of employed Americans who report missing supplies from their work area say that pens, pencils, or highlighters are M.I.A. most often. Other disappearing goods include paper products (35%), paper clips or binder clips (28%), staplers (22%), and scissors (20%).



*Among Respondents Who Report Missing Office Supplies From Their Work Area

- **Coworkers Confess.** Perhaps it's the people working closest to you who are responsible. More than four in ten (42%) confess they've borrowed supplies from a colleague and never returned it. The most popular loot 82 percent of them have taken are pens, pencils or highlighters.
- **Behind the Borrowing.** Eighty-four percent of those who come clean as to why they've held onto their colleague's goods confess they simply forgot to return the product. Others (26%) say they just didn't think their coworker would miss it. Close to a quarter (23%) admit they never returned the materials in the past because their colleague had done the same thing to them!
 - More men than women (32% vs. 14%) willing to report why they borrowed supplies from a colleague and never returned it say it's because their coworker had once done the same thing to them.
- **Homeward Bound.** This obsessive behavior isn't restricted to the workplace. In fact, employed Americans are so attached to some office products that close to six in ten (56%) have taken products from work to use at home.
- **Always an Excuse.** For those who aren't afraid to admit why they did this, they sure have their reasons. Three in ten (30%) say they considered it an act of borrowing and planned to bring the supplies back, while 25 percent just didn't think their employer would miss it. Others admit they pilfered products because it was easier to take the supply from the office than purchase it on their own (27%) or because they didn't have the time to get it outside of work (24%).

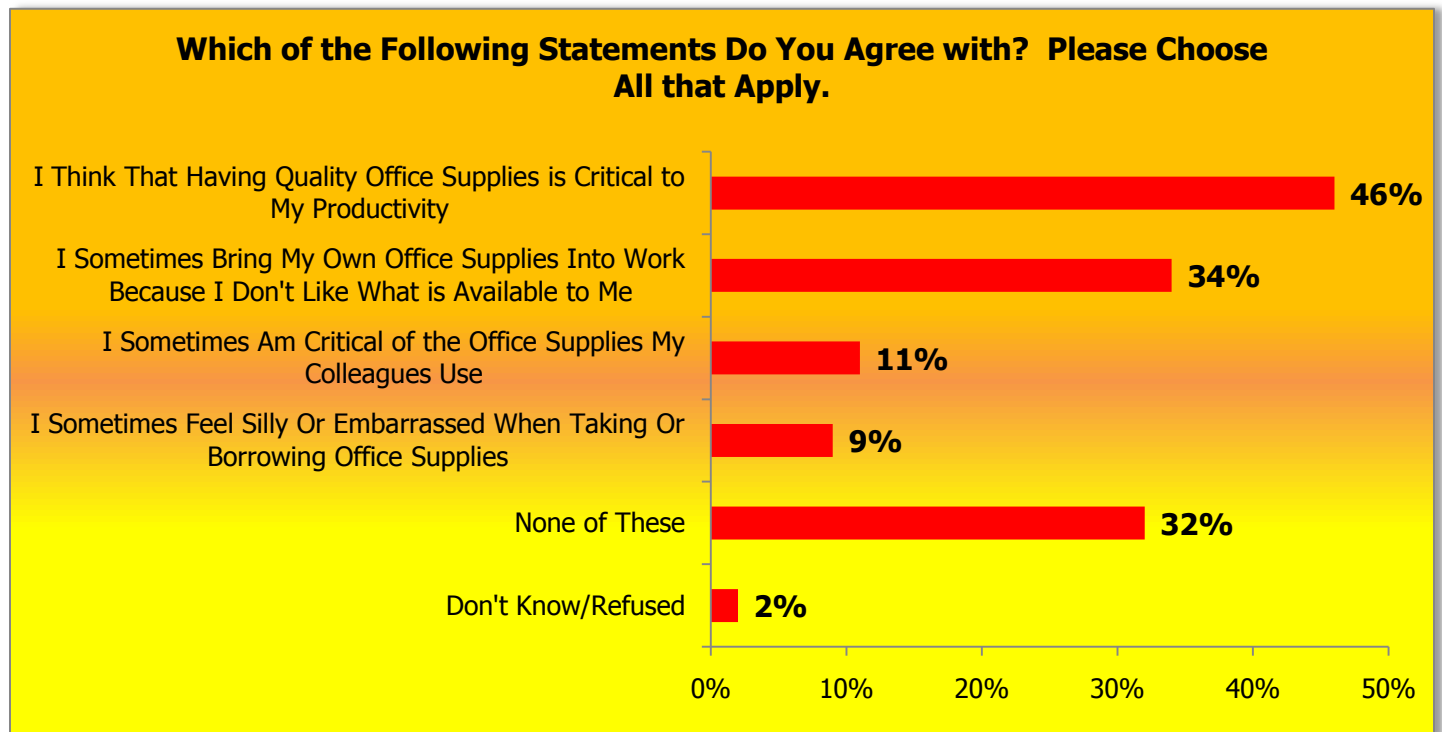


***Among Respondents Who Have Ever Taken Supplies from Their Place of Employment for Use at Home and Were Willing to Report Why They Did This**

- **Run and Hide.** So it's not surprising that a majority (68%) of working Americans have taken matters into their own hands by finding ways to ensure their favorite provisions don't go missing. Some keep their much-loved office paraphernalia in a special designated drawer (59%) or in a secret space in their work area (45%). Others order additional quantities of certain products to make certain they're never low (51%) or label their supplies with their contact information (31%).
 - More employed women than men (73% vs. 63%) report they've taken steps to ensure their office products don't go missing.

2) WHAT FAVORITES ARE MADE OF

- **Quality Matters.** So why do Americans go to such great lengths to protect their supplies? Perhaps it's because close to half (46%) think that having quality office equipment plays a critical role in being successful on the job.



- **Picky Fingers.** They are so influenced by their beloved products that 34 percent sometimes bring their own stash to work if what is available doesn't meet their requirements. And there are plenty of goods they need to have at work to perform efficiently. Seventy percent of employed Americans willing to weigh in on the topic say it's impossible to work without their favorite brand, type, or model of pens, pencils, or highlighters.
- **Failure to Work.** Others can't work if they aren't able to get their hands on paper products (41%) or printer ink (40%) in their favorite brand, type, or model.

- **A Few of My Favorite Things.** So what makes a product so amazing? Close to seven in ten (69%) say the functionality or performance of an office product can make or break how special they consider it to be. Quality (66%), value (47%), innovation (41%), and aesthetics (25%) also influence why working Americans are so particular about their products.

Research Methodological Notes:

The OfficeMax Workplace Undercover Survey was conducted by Kelton Research between April 23 and May 2, 2010 using Random Digit Dialing of listed and unlisted numbers. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4.0 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.