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# Media Release

28 June – 1 July 2007:  
Adelaide  
Convention Centre,  
South Australia,  
Australia

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**26 June 2007**

## **Bad manners detrimental to employee productivity**

Rude and undermining co-workers, managers or leaders can negatively impact employee engagement and productivity, a study has confirmed.

The research found one in five employees experience an incident of bad manners at work once a month.

“Rude and undermining colleagues are those who question your judgement, exclude you from situations, interrupt when you are speaking, make derogatory comments, withhold information or belittle your ideas,” said organisational psychologist and study co-author, Dr Barbara Griffin from the University of Western Sydney.

“This behaviour is more subtle and diffuse than outright bullying, which is targeted and occurs more frequently.

“But, it still has a large impact on employee engagement, including whether you stay in an organisation, speak positively about your job or go that extra mile. It can also cause psychological distress and poor physical health.

“Our study showed that even the occasional rude comment is enough to lower engagement and make you feel less committed to your job.”

Dr Griffin said the research has widespread implications for Australian businesses.

“We know that poor employee engagement affects productivity and customer satisfaction, as well as increases staff turnover,” said Dr Griffin.

“Senior management can address the problem by modelling good behaviour and creating an atmosphere where people feel they are being treated fairly. Having procedures in place to manage rude behaviour and ensuring these policies are clear to all employees is also vital.”

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The study, *'Interpersonal mistreatment at work: impact on employee engagement,'* was undertaken in conjunction with Hewitt Associates' Best Employer Survey, with more than 54,000 employees from 179 organisations across Australia and New Zealand.

The results will be presented at the Australian Psychological Society Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP) Conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre from 28 June to 1 July.

### **Dr Griffin offers the following tips for dealing with bad mannered co-workers:**

1. Do not reciprocate the behaviour. Reacting with similar actions can quickly spiral into increasingly aggressive behaviours.
2. If circumstances permit, set up a discussion with the person and tell them that you find their behaviour offensive.
3. Understand your organisation's policies and procedures. If the situation worsens, you can then report the offensive behaviour in an official manner.
4. If you are stressed and upset by the behaviours, talk to a psychologist or make use of confidential employee assistance programs.

For more information visit: [www.iopconference.com.au](http://www.iopconference.com.au).

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**Dr Griffin is available for interview during the conference. Please contact Elaine Grant on: 0412 683 068.**

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