



## MAKE TEA NOT WAR

### Women get worst deal in workplace tea round

**23rd February 2010:** Trouble is brewing for British businesses, as rows over the office tea round stir up fresh tensions between colleagues.

British men stand accused of a new form of workplace inequality by conning female counterparts out of cuppas, according to new research by Cafédirect, Britain's largest 100% Fairtrade hot drinks brand. The study of 3000 workers found that each week, female workers make more than three times as many cups of tea for male colleagues as men make for them.

Two thirds of men (62 percent) regularly invent bogus reasons to avoid making workmates a brew, while over a quarter (28 percent) admit to sneaking off to make themselves a cuppa on the quiet.

And although men make marginally bigger tea rounds than women – by just one cup – they tend to moan for half a minute longer each time it's their turn.

But women aren't entirely blameless. Almost half (46 percent) admit to using the office brew as a chance to bunk off work, while a quarter (24 percent) reveal their apparent act of generosity is merely a cover for sharing office gossip with colleagues.

By sector, recruitment consultants – the UK's biggest tea drinkers – are the most hot-tempered hot drink addicts. Two thirds of the sector's staff admit to regularly coming to blows over office brews, generally spending almost as long moaning about tea (4 minutes) as making it (5 minutes). They're also the most likely to use dirty tricks to duck out of making workmates a drink, with 44 percent admitting to making deliberately poor tea to avoid repeat orders.

Builders by contrast are least likely to complain about a bad cuppa, with barely a third saying they have berated workmates for a bad-tasting brew.

Almost six million British workers claim they couldn't get through the day without a cuppa. But given its part in workplace bickering, the humble brew has become the cause for some unlikely battles between colleagues.

Overall, two thirds of tea-loving workmates dispute whose turn it is to stick on the kettle once a day, with a quarter (24 percent) saying it's led them to secretly harbour bad thoughts towards those who haven't pulled their weight.

More than a third (37 percent) of arguments are caused by staff only making themselves a cuppa, whilst a further quarter (22 percent) of tea round rows result from suspicions that workmates have deliberately whipped them up a bad-tasting drink.

The survey showed that 91 percent of workers would like their company to offer Fairtrade tea. In response, Cafédirect is calling for companies to make the office tea round fairer in time for Fairtrade Fortnight (22<sup>nd</sup> February to 7<sup>th</sup> March) by making the 'Big Swap' to Cafédirect tea. Other



businesses backing Cafédirect's "Turn over a New Leaf" campaign include Google and John Lewis.

Cafédirect CEO Anne MacCaig commented: "As office politics goes, the humble tea round would seem an unlikely cause of controversy. But with some making markedly more tea than others, workers are coming to blows over brews. So to celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight, we're calling on businesses to make the company cuppa fairer, by asking bosses to make the Big Swap to Cafédirect tea. And while they're at it, to put the kettle on for their staff!"

A spokesperson for Google said: "We love a good brew at Google HQ. That's why we're pleased to be backing Cafédirect's call for businesses to make the office tea round fairer and make the Big Swap to Fairtrade."

Workers can lobby their companies to turn over a new leaf to Cafédirect by going to [www.cafedirect.co.uk/fairtradefortnight2010](http://www.cafedirect.co.uk/fairtradefortnight2010)

- ends -

**For more information, please call Phil Drew at Unity on 0207 440 9814/ 07725 986509  
or Paul McNicholl at Unity on 0207 440 9810**

#### **About the research**

3000 British adults took part in the Cafédirect/OnePoll survey between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2010.

#### **About Cafédirect**

Cafédirect is the UK's first and largest 100% Fairtrade drinks brand.

Founded in response to the 1989 plunge in market prices, following the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement, Cafédirect is a successful and pioneering ethical business.

Providing an important link between the grower and consumer communities, the business works with over 40 grower organisations across 14 developing countries, encompassing over quarter of a million farmers and directly improving the lives of more than 1.6 million people around the world.

In the past ten years, the business has invested more than £3 million of its profits directly into the businesses and, in total, paid more than £10.5 million towards the businesses and communities of its grower partners.

Pioneering grower initiatives and consumer engagements for 18 years, Cafédirect has developed and works to its own Gold Standard, consistently setting the bar for ethical business leadership. In 2009 we won the coveted Ethical Business of the Year Award at the Triodos Bank Women in Ethical Business Awards. In 2010 we have been shortlisted for the Sustainable City Awards, hosted by the City of London, in the 'Tackling Climate Change' category.