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**HRMORNING****Keep Up To Date with the Latest HR News**

With HRMorning arriving in your inbox, you will never miss critical stories on labor laws, benefits, retention and onboarding strategies.

HRMorning, part of the Catalyst Media Network, provides the latest HR and employment law news for HR professionals in the trenches of small-to-medium-sized businesses. Rather than simply regurgitating the day's headlines, HRMorning delivers actionable insights, helping HR execs understand what HR trends mean to their business.

## 'I quit!' 5 common resignation problems & how to solve them

### ■ Handling cultural impact and legal pitfalls

**Y**ou can have the greatest workplace in the world, and employees are still going to leave. It's inevitable.

Some losses are greater than others, but regardless of how valuable the departing employee was, resignations can be tricky to handle properly – and a lot of potential challenges await.

#### Business impact

When an employee turns in their resignation, it has a giant ripple effect. And HR pros and managers have to juggle the business impact of losing a worker while also avoiding legal pitfalls.

Here are the top three major effects resignations have on daily operations along with two legal snags – and how best to cope:

1. **Employee morale drops.** Whether the employee was well-liked by their peers or an essential team member, a lot of your staff could be saddened by the loss of their colleague.

Not only that, but employees could become anxious, wondering why the person jumped ship. Should they look for a new job, too? Did their colleague know something about the company they don't? Any time someone leaves,

*(Please see I quit ... on Page 2)*

## New hires getting bigger pay bumps than vets

### ■ Companies spending more on recruiting than retention

**O**ver the past few years, wage growth has been fairly stagnant, with employees seeing salary increases of about only 3%.

It's a different story for new hires, though. Due to a tight labor market, employers are giving competitive offers to young talent. Workers between the ages of 20 and 24 have seen their wages increase by over 5%.

#### Heavy recruiting focus

So why aren't veteran employees' wages increasing at the same rate

as new hires'? Low cost-of-living adjustments are partly responsible. But mostly, it's due to employers' heavy focus on recruiting.

Experts warn this mindset could backfire. Existing employees won't be happy to learn new hires' salaries are getting higher increases. And replacing a worker is usually more expensive than retaining one.

To avoid pay imbalances and high turnover rates, employers should consider salary adjustments.

*Click: [bit.ly/wages547](https://bit.ly/wages547)*

# I quit ...

(continued from Page 1)

it's sure to make others think about their future at the company.

The best way to avoid a morale drop? Be up front about wishing the employee well and have a small celebration for the departing staff member so everyone can say goodbye.

Another way to calm employees' anxiety is to be transparent about why the person is leaving.

2. **Managers are short-staffed.** The first question managers ask themselves when someone leaves: Who's going to do their work?! This can result in a lot of scrambling, temporarily overworked team members and pushing back deadlines.

Managers should think ahead of time about who could step in if someone were to resign suddenly. Another thing managers can do is to work hard and cultivate good relationships with their team members – because it still holds true that

employees often leave jobs because of their manager, not the work itself.

3. **Turnover is expensive.** When an employer loses someone, they need to spend a lot of time and money hiring a new person and getting them up to speed. Many experts estimate it costs 150% of the departing worker's salary to replace them.

The best way to prevent employees from leaving is to put in the effort now to retain them. This can include recognition, rewards, raises and promotions – all of which are less costly than replacing someone.

### Legal concerns

HR pros are aware of their legal obligations regarding a resigning employee (paying out all accrued wages, providing required notices, etc.). But there are some tricky situations that can lead to lawsuits if not handled properly.

1. **The resigning employee is vague about their end date or gives too much notice.** Employers have a legitimate business need to ask for the worker's last day, so don't let the employee hem and haw about it. Settle on a final day as soon as the person tells you they're leaving.

You also might encounter an employee giving you too much notice. For example, someone might want to stay until after their wedding for the PTO. You'd be wise to decline and insist on two weeks' notice as indicated in company policy.

2. **You want to send the resigning employee home immediately.** Employers aren't required to let workers complete their last two weeks. Sometimes it makes sense to say goodbye right away, especially if they're going to a competitor.

But it's best to compensate them for that time, or the line between resignation and termination starts to blur. And you don't want it to look like you're firing people who resign.

Info: [bit.ly/effects547](http://bit.ly/effects547),  
[bit.ly/legal547](http://bit.ly/legal547)

## Sharpen your JUDGMENT

*This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.*

### ■ Can manager on medical leave be fired for misconduct?

On the way to refill her coffee cup, HR manager Lynn Rondo saw company attorney Eric Bressler out of the corner of her eye, quickening his pace to catch up with her.

"Oh, Lynn, before I forget, I need your file on Alan Packer," Eric said.

"No problem, Eric. Why do you need to see it?" Lynn asked.

"He's suing us because he thinks he was terminated for taking FMLA leave. I want to make sure we have all our bases covered," he replied.

### Information comes to light

Lynn sighed. "It's terrible that Alan's cancer came back. But wait until you hear what we found out while he was on leave."

"What'd you find?" he asked.

Lynn shook her head. "Intimidating and bullying at least four people in his department, spreading rumors about his supervisor, cheating on a mandatory safety test ... the list goes on and on."

"The guy just came back from cancer though," Eric said. "After being out for 12 weeks, the timing of his firing doesn't look good."

"The intimidation was so bad that we needed to suspend him while we investigated," Lynn said. "What he did was serious, and we had to let him go."

Alan sued for retaliation for taking FMLA leave, and the company fought to get the case dismissed. Did it win?

■ *Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the court's ruling.*

HR MORNING'S

What's Working in  
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# 9th Circuit: ‘Offensive’ teasing not the same thing as discrimination

### ■ Employee claimed racially hostile work environment

An employee that quit over allegedly racist treatment by a co-worker filed a discrimination lawsuit against her former employer.

Here’s why the company came out on top.

### Off-color humor

Tanisha Tatum worked as a nurse for DaVita Palm Brook Dialysis Center when she began having conflicts with co-workers.

According to Tatum, one co-worker began singing the USA for Africa song “We Are the World” when she tried correcting another co-worker’s dosing procedures, and also told an African-American patient to “hang from a tree to keep dry” if it got rainy during an upcoming vacation.

She filed a hostile workplace complaint with the EEOC and quit her job as HR was investigating the claim.

The court called the conduct “offensive,” but wasn’t convinced these were anything beyond isolated “offhand comments.” It didn’t qualify as “physically threatening or otherwise so severe as to sufficiently affect the conditions of employment,” the court said.

The 9th Circuit went on to say discrimination couldn’t be proven because Tatum resigned before HR could interview her.

This case reaffirms that discrimination is usually more than a single racially insensitive remark.

*Cite: Tatum v. DaVita Healthcare Partners Inc., 10/30/19*

# Manager’s age discrimination suit falls flat with revelation of ongoing misconduct

### ■ Court rules employer had reasonable cause to terminate worker

When it comes to terminations, age doesn’t matter when someone’s professionalism and ethics are questionable.

Here’s a rundown of a recent employee lawsuit claiming discrimination on the basis of age.

### Nothing but a number

Patricia Gill had been a sales director for DIRT Environmental Solutions for about 10 years.

But when reports of Gill allegedly giving incorrect information to clients, trying to do co-workers’ jobs without notification and improperly marking contracts to increase her commission came to light, her employer hired someone 10 years younger than her

and made them co-directors.

When Gill was fired and the younger director was promoted, she sued for age discrimination.

Upholding a trial court ruling, the 5th Circuit noted all the misconduct complaints over a two-year period.

Even when Gill argued that her employer didn’t follow its policy to investigate all complaints, the court said the company had legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons to fire her.

Even though the company won, this case shows that employers can still run into trouble if they don’t investigate complaints, especially when their policy requires it.

*Cite: Gill v. DIRT Environmental Solutions Inc., 10/25/19*

### ■ Firm settles class-action race discrimination suit for \$6M

One major retail chain showed a clear preference for hiring white candidates – and caught the EEOC’s attention by doing so.

According to an EEOC lawsuit, a Dollar General in Chicago violated federal law when it consistently denied employment to African-American applicants who failed the company’s criminal background check, even though there wasn’t a job-related reason to do so.

The discrimination became more apparent when white candidates who didn’t pass the employment screening were typically still hired. This is a violation of the Civil Rights Act, the EEOC said.

Dollar General settled the lawsuit for \$6 million and agreed to a consent decree. If the retailer wants to continue background checks, it must use a criminologist to evaluate the results to ensure fairness.

*Info: [bit.ly/background547](http://bit.ly/background547)*

### ■ The cost of failing to accommodate? \$2.65M

The EEOC demonstrated in a recent lawsuit that employers need to accommodate disabled workers or pay the price.

Crossmark Inc., a Texas-based company that provides food demonstrators to retailers, allegedly violated the ADA by denying disabled employees reasonable accommodations.

The lawsuit claims that several food demonstrators with medical conditions weren’t permitted to sit down on stools while they worked – an accommodation that would have no impact on their ability to do their job, the EEOC said. This is a clear violation of the ADA.

Crossmark Inc. settled the suit and will pay \$2.65 million. In addition, the company will have to revise its reasonable accommodation policy and conduct ADA training.

*Info: [bit.ly/accommodate547](http://bit.ly/accommodate547)*

# Experts give their solutions to difficult workplace problems

*HR professionals like you face new questions every day on how to deal with workplace conflict and employment law. In this section, experts answer those real-life questions.*

### How should we discipline gossip employees?

**Q:** We have an employee who often participates in gossip and talks about co-workers a lot. What's the best way to handle this?

**A:** Gossip and rumors can cause serious damage to morale and productivity, so it's important to address this issue right away, says Barbara Holland, HR Knowledge Advisor for SHRM.

But first, it's important to see if the alleged gossip is actually that, or if the employee is voicing legitimate problems. If it's unclear which is happening, you'll have to investigate the rumor to get the whole picture.

If you find that the rumors have no merit and are just mean-spirited, discipline the gossiper the same way you'd handle a bully. To make sure this isn't an ongoing problem, look for patterns in the gossip. Is it always about the same person? Are managers participating or unknowingly condoning it?

It's also a good idea to create a policy specifically addressing rumors and gossip. Include a definition of what gossip is: Overly negative criticism or conjecture that can harm another person's reputation.

### Can we ask staff not to give us bad Glassdoor reviews?

**Q:** To boost our online reputation, we want to encourage our employees to write reviews on sites like Glassdoor. Can we also discourage them from

writing negative reviews?

**A:** In general, it's a bad idea to do this, as it can interfere with employees' rights under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recently issued an advice memo regarding an employer that required workers to sign an agreement not to criticize or disparage the company online.

The NLRB decided this agreement infringed on employees' Section 7 rights under the NLRA, which gives them the freedom to act together to improve their pay and/or working conditions.

### Is it worth it to start allowing remote work?

**Q:** Our company traditionally hasn't allowed employees to work remotely. Are we missing out by not embracing this?

**A:** It's up to you to weigh the pros and cons of a remote workforce, say the employment law experts at Davis Wright Tremaine LLP.

Most employees enjoy the added flexibility, resulting in morale and productivity boosts.

Some potential pitfalls to be aware of include communication issues, inability to monitor employees' work, and increased difficulty in keeping work and home life separate.

*If you have an HR-related question, email it to Rachel Mucha at: [rmucha@HRMorning.com](mailto:rmucha@HRMorning.com)*

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

### ■ Always saying 'yes'? 5 things to ask before committing

A lot of the time, it can seem like being insanely busy at work is just the norm. Good employees are always tackling big projects and saying yes to more work, right?

But being too overwhelmed can lead to burnout and slip-ups. The problem is, a lot of hard workers can find it difficult to say no when they're asked to take on more.

### Think, then answer

So how can you decide when to say yes and when to say no?

Leadership expert and coach Scott Mautz has a good system to help you determine whether you can actually take on the assignment. Here are five questions to ask yourself:

1. **What's really involved?** We may try to kid ourselves, but things almost always take longer than we think. Understand the scope of what you're signing up for before saying yes. Think about how much time and effort the task will actually take – and it's better to err on the side of caution.

2. **What's the cost of saying 'yes'?** There might be more effort required than completing the actual assignment. You might need to learn a new skill or get assistance.

3. **Will taking this on serve my mission?** Think about whether this task will help you contribute to your career goals. Does the assignment really matter? If it's a small mundane task, it most likely isn't worth your time.

4. **Is this on my 'to-do' list?** Are there specific things you try not to get sucked into? Is this one of those things?

5. **Can I give a different 'yes'?** If you can't do the task yourself, but want to help out the asker, suggest an alternative solution or co-worker to assist. This shows support without burdening yourself.

**Info:** [bit.ly/sayno547](http://bit.ly/sayno547)

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## WHAT WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

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Our subscribers come from a broad range of companies, both large and small. In this regular feature, three of them share a success story illustrating ideas you can adapt to your unique situation.

### **1 One-on-one training gets the info to stick**

Training on important issues like FMLA, harassment and documentation is something we do on a regular basis.

But we were still worried people might not be paying attention closely enough. So we changed our training methods this year.

To address our concerns, we started using a combination of in-house and online training.

With the addition of online

training, we think our employees are retaining the information better.

#### **Easy and online**

We recently had online training about diversity and inclusion. It's a topic that goes hand-in-hand with harassment – a topic we preach about here.

When it comes to diversity, we just want employees to be aware of potential problems and to be proactive about inclusion, instead of reactive.

Our online training is

one-on-one, so we know that workers are actively paying attention.

The training is pretty easy to do, too. All they have to do is log in, go through each step of the training and sign off at the end that they completed and understand it.

The interactive training forces employees to engage and holds them accountable, which gives management confidence that they got the message.

*(Barbara West, HR manager, South River Electric Membership Corporation, Dunn, NC)*

**REAL  
PROBLEMS,  
REAL  
SOLUTIONS**

### **2 Added student loan repayment offering**

We always look for ways we can help alleviate employee stress. It sends a message, especially to younger staff, that we value them.

After helping my own children pay for college, I can see how much of an impact student debt can have on an individual. Paying even a small portion of workers' loans can reduce some of the financial burden.

So we began offering employees \$100 per month toward their student loans. This could result in more than

\$10,000 in savings on loan principal and interest.

We're offering the repayment program through Gradifi, a student loan provider.

We've gotten positive feedback on the offering. We employ about 250 people and 60 workers are already taking advantage of it.

#### **Edge in recruiting**

We expect to incur \$60,000 in annual costs as a result of the program, with costs increasing as we

continue to grow and hire new people.

The new benefit gives us an edge in recruiting.

In addition, we cover 100% of the cost of workers' health care and a one-month sabbatical after employees have been with the company five years.

These benefits, as well as the new student loan repayment program, are just a few of the ways we're aiming to make workers' lives a little bit easier.

*(Ed Mitzen, founder, Fingerpaint, Saratoga Springs, NY)*

### **3 Employee assessments help managers succeed**

We have a diverse workforce at our company, especially when it comes to age.

With all these different personalities – who have various ways of approaching things – our managers have the challenge of knowing each team member's strengths and personal style to help their team work together.

If the people in a department can't get along or are having conflicts with their manager, it becomes hard to get anything done.

One way we proactively address that is by giving a personality assessment to new hires.

#### **Better communication**

When someone new comes on board, we have them take a Myers-Briggs questionnaire, which indicates how individuals perceive the world and make decisions.

We put their pictures up on a big chart to see where they fall on the spectrum of personality types. No type is better than another; it just tells us their preferences.

The test gives our department managers an idea of what the best ways of communicating with their team are. They also have a deeper understanding of what motivates each employee.

By using this questionnaire, managers get a better sense of how different people work, and they learn how to tailor their leadership approach.

I feel like I know our people a lot better, too.

*(Yvonne Warner, HR business partner, Legility, Nashville, TN)*

### NY: Reproductive decision discrimination now illegal

Attention employers in the Empire State: Workers' decision-making regarding their reproductive health is now a protected class.

Governor Cuomo passed New York Labor Law 203-e last month, meaning employers can't discriminate against employees due to the "decision to use or access a particular drug, device or medical service" for their reproductive health.

The new law prevents companies from accessing information about employees' reproductive health, taking retaliatory action against them based on their decisions and requiring workers to sign a waiver that interferes with reproductive decisions.

*Info: bit.ly/reproductive547*

### Employees expecting raises, promotions in 2020

Whether you intend on giving raises and promotions in the new year or not, your employees are most likely expecting to be rewarded for their hard work.

According to a quarterly survey done by *HR Today Magazine*, workers have the most confidence when it comes to receiving promotions, followed by raises. Both

confidence levels are at an all-time high. The one area employees have less confidence in is job security.

These high numbers correspond with historically low unemployment rates, indicating employers are willing to invest in their talent.

*Info: bit.ly/raises547*

### Half of candidates have bumpy hiring process

If you needed a sign to put more effort into the candidate experience, check out this shocking statistic: Half of all candidates have turned down a job offer due to a bumpy hiring process.

This is according to a new PwC survey, which also indicated more than 50% of candidates would discourage family and friends from applying somewhere they had a bad experience.

One area employers can improve? Better communication throughout the whole hiring process.

*Info: bit.ly/experience547*

### Lighter side: New HR pro fires wrong employee

How's this for a terrible first day on the job? A brand-new HR manager was asked by her supervisor to let an employee go. So the HR pro called the

## WHAT COMPANIES TOLD US

### Managers' top challenges

What do team leaders struggle with the most?

*(More than one answer accepted)*



*Source: SoapBox*

Managers have a huge effect on employees' overall performance and happiness. When focusing on improving morale and development, employers may also want to help support their managers.

*Each issue of WWHR contains an exclusive survey to give executives insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.*

worker into her office and fired her.

A few hours later, the supervisor asked why the worker was still in the building performing her regular duties. Turns out, the HR manager had mixed up two employees and fired the wrong person!

This is why it's a good idea to let new hires learn co-workers' names before giving them a big job to do.

*Info: bit.ly/wrongfire547*

## Sharpen your judgment...

## THE DECISION

*(See case on Page 2)*

Yes. The company won when a court dismissed Alan's case.

Alan's attorney argued that the company was punishing him for having an illness and discriminating against him for exercising his right to FMLA leave, which are violations of federal law.

But the court rejected those arguments and said the company had legitimate concerns, including inappropriate behavior on the job, poor management and leadership failure.

Firing someone for those reasons isn't discrimination,

the court said. And the company had documentation to back that up.

### ■ Analysis: Document all misconduct

This case goes to show that terminating an employee, even if they were on legally-protected medical leave, is possible if you have a clear case of misconduct and the proper documentation.

In this instance, the company had legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons to fire Alan.

Terminating an FMLA-protected employee can be risky, but in the case of well-documented misconduct, it's essential to handle the situation as soon as possible.

**Cite:** *Williams v. Graphic Packaging International Inc., U.S. Ct. of App. 6th Circ., No. 18-5485, 10/31/19. Fictionalized for dramatic effect.*

# We ditched job applications and found candidates through texting

■ *Conquered the challenge of filling 200 positions in four weeks*

We were facing a unique hiring challenge while opening a new location in Baton Rouge, LA.

We needed to fully staff the facility – somewhere between 150 and 200 employees – in six weeks or less.

This in itself was daunting, but the task was all the more difficult because we were new to the region, and no one had heard of us before!

We knew we were a great company to work for, but job-seekers didn't know that. We had to come up with a way to get our name out there *and* find enough talent to staff our store in a short period of time.

### Brand campaign

The first thing we needed to do was get our name out there and show potential candidates who we were.

So before we even began the hiring process, we launched a full-blown brand campaign.

We started with designing a website specific to our Baton Rouge location. It was colorful and eye-catching, and gave information on when the location was opening and what kind of positions we were filling.

This helped us get our first few applicants, but we stumbled across another issue. A lot of candidates who started applications ended up bailing before reaching the end.

Our process had 10 steps, and people were quitting after two. So we shortened the application right away.

This caused us to examine the entire hiring process for other areas we could improve on. Our goal was to make it as quick and easy as possible for candidates to apply.

That's when we decided to give talent the option of skipping the

application completely and simply sending us a text message to apply.

### Text to apply

We knew applicants were going to love being able to text to apply, but we had to get the word out. So we came up with the slogan, "Join the fun – text to apply," and put it on our website and on posters all over town.

All candidates had to do was text a code to us to RSVP for an interview. There was absolutely no application – anyone who wanted an interview got one.

Managers could communicate back to confirm interview times and send reminders like, "We're so excited to meet you. Don't forget your interview is Thursday!"

Once candidates interviewed, if it went well, we'd ask them to fill out application information. We had iPads shipped to our hiring centers to make it as easy as possible.

### Over 5,000 responses

We were stunned to receive over 5,000 RSVPs for interviews. For the first time, we had the opportunity to be really picky and hire only the best of the best.

We ended up hiring 202 employees (our goal was 165) and were two weeks early on our deadline. Not to mention, the total application cost per candidate ended up being only \$1.52.

The best part is, we still have thousands of candidates' numbers saved for when we have any new openings.

*(Rhonda Merchant, senior director of talent acquisition, Main Event, as presented at the ERE Recruiting Conference in Washington, DC)*

**Case Study:**  
**WHAT**  
**WORKED,**  
**WHAT**  
**DIDN'T**

### ■ Look out on LinkedIn! How fraudsters are using the site

Employees, managers and job-seekers alike are familiar with LinkedIn, the popular social networking site for professionals.

LinkedIn has a great reputation and many consider the site to be polished and trustworthy ... which is why fraudsters have made it their most recent target!

### Networking nightmare

It's no secret that fraudsters have been more active in recent years – IT security company KnowBe4 reported social media phishing scams have increased by 75% in 2019.

But not only are fraudsters putting more scams out there – they're getting sneakier, too. You have to look out for more than just suspicious email addresses or strange monetary requests.

And scammers' newest tricky tactic involves targeting unsuspecting LinkedIn users who are just trying to expand their networks.

KnowBe4 recently looked at a large sampling of simulated phishing tests and discovered 56% of emails related to social media included "LinkedIn." Those emails also typically included phrases like "join my network," "profile views" or "add me."

The fraudulent messages can make it appear like a verified connection is trying to contact you.

Because most users trust LinkedIn, many wouldn't think twice before clicking on links such as these. And if employers don't warn their people about this scam, it can quickly cause a lot of issues for entire companies.

KnowBe4 says that while it's getting harder to spot these scammers' attacks, users are still smarter than the "bad guys" and can be trained to identify and avoid these fraudulent emails.

**Info:** [bit.ly/linkedin547](http://bit.ly/linkedin547)

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Companies face competing agendas when dealing with their employees. They must find ways to inspire their people to excel, while controlling costs and staying within the law. Here we present a challenging scenario and ask three executives to explain how they'd handle it.

### Loud co-worker is driving everyone crazy: Can HR get her to tone it down?

#### The Scenario

A people person by nature, HR manager Stu Capper gets along well with everyone at work.

"Morning, Jen. How are you?" he asked, greeting Jennifer Mack from Accounts Payable.

"Kind of anxious, to be honest, Stu," Jennifer began in a hushed tone. "I feel bad even saying anything about this."

"Seems like it's something you've been thinking about for a while. What's going on?" Stu asked.

"Why does it seem like whenever Tracy does anything, the entire office has to know about it?" Jennifer replied.

"I have noticed she orders a chicken parm sandwich every day," Stu said.

"You can't help hearing her call in her

lunch order because she's so annoyingly loud. I just want to lock her in a soundproof room," Jennifer said, laughing.

"Seriously though, she's also really loud on the phone when she's talking to customers. It's distracting to everybody, and I can't concentrate on my work.

"I'm worried about it being a turn-off to customers. Yesterday I took a call from one of Tracy's accounts and he said: 'She's a bit much.'"

#### A tactful response?

*Maybe Tracy never learned to use her 'inside voice?' Stu thought. What if she has some kind of hearing issue?*

"If it's impacting both our work environment and our customers, it sounds like something I need to look into," Stu said.

*If you were Stu, what would you do next?*

#### Reader Responses

##### 1 Todd Lofald, Controller, Highlight Inc., Sparta, WI

**What Todd would do:** I'd meet with Tracy privately to talk about some possible solutions, like taking her calls elsewhere.

**Reason:** When you have someone frequently disrupting the office, it's important to communicate with that person about being a little more cognizant of their surroundings. Does Tracy have an office door that she can close? Is there an option to go to a different place in the building to make phone calls, like a conference room? Hopefully we can work out a solution that makes everyone happy.

##### 2 Steve Chapman, HR manager, Paragon Geophysical Services, Wichita, KS

**What Steve would do:** I'd ask a few other people and find out more details to get a sense of how big of a problem this is – maybe Jen is the only one bothered. If it's really bad, I'd just come out and ask Tracy if

she realizes that she's yelling.

**Reason:** In a work environment such as a "cube farm," you're always going to overhear other people's conversations. Some people are just loud talkers who need to learn to tone it down. Sometimes, being blunt and asking them to tone it down is the best approach.

##### 3 Deirdre Rickey, HR manager, Voss Equipment, Harvey, IL

**What Deirdre would do:** I'd sit down with Tracy in a private meeting to ask if there's a way she can tone it down or a way we can help her be less distracting to her co-workers. Making and taking phone calls in another room with walls instead of a cubicle might help.

**Reason:** It depends on what's causing her to be loud. Maybe it's as simple as her not knowing she was being loud. If she's having a hearing issue, this is a good time to talk about that and find an accommodation. Sometimes, it's just that person's personality. Either way, it needs to be addressed.

#### QUOTES

I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter.

Walt Disney

The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat.

Lily Tomlin

If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?

John Wooden

He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.

Confucius

Peace has to be created in order to be maintained. It will never be achieved by passivity and quietism.

Dorothy Thompson

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Mark Twain

It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously you might as well not have lived at all, in which case you've failed by default.

J.K. Rowling