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HRMORNING

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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.

Heading back to work? New federal regs to stay compliant

■ *Guidance from the CDC, OSHA, EEOC*

There's a lot of confusion and anxiety surrounding returning to the workplace. Naturally, employers and employees are both concerned.

But several government agencies have issued guidance to help companies reopen as safely as possible.

Keeping employees healthy

Every state and county is going to have its own unique reopening guidelines, so employers have to keep up with their local regulations.

On the federal level, however, many different agencies have released policies and guidance that

employers must follow, no matter where they're located.

Here's a breakdown of what the CDC, OSHA, the EEOC and the DOL are requiring.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released a document 60 pages long, detailing specific instructions on social distancing, cleaning and sanitation, worker safety, testing and contact tracing. You can find the entire document here: bit.ly/CDCrules558.

While the guidance details criteria for reopening certain businesses such

(Please see Compliant ... on Page 2)

U.S. workers have lost \$1.3T due to pandemic

■ *Average employee out \$8.9K because of job loss, pay cuts*

The coronavirus pandemic has cost American workers roughly \$1.3 trillion in annual income, according to new research by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Oxford Economics.

The \$1.3 trillion breaks down to about \$8,900 in lost annual income per person, due to both job loss and pay cuts for those who are still employed.

Very slow recovery

These staggering numbers further prove what a devastating effect

COVID-19 has had on both businesses and employees.

The research further predicts that only about 20% of metropolitan areas will reach pre-pandemic employment levels by the end of 2020.

It could potentially take some smaller areas until 2024 to fully recover.

The challenge for all businesses right now is to reopen as soon as safely possible – something that many are struggling with.

Click: bit.ly/incomelost558

Compliant ...

(continued from Page 1)

as child care centers and camps, restaurants and bars, and mass transit, the CDC also has general requirements that all employers with high-risk employees should follow.

First, the CDC says you should try and identify your high-risk workers, such as those 65 and older and anyone with an underlying medical condition – but proceed cautiously.

Encourage these employees to self-identify, and avoid invasive medical inquiries. Those who are at greater risk should continue to work from home until your company is in the final stage of reopening.

Here are some other safety guidelines once your doors are open:

- Require employees to wear cloth masks, and enforce hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes
- Sanitize frequently touched surfaces at least once a day, and avoid

sharing items that can't be easily disinfected

- Ensure your workplace has good ventilation and increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows
- Conduct daily coronavirus symptom checks
- Continue to provide remote work options when needed, and
- Implement flexible sick leave policies if possible.

Safety and discrimination

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has additional recommendations.

The agency recently released a 35-page document ([bit.ly/OSHArules558](https://www.osha-slc.gov/bit.ly/OSHArules558)) that employers can consult as they prepare to bring their employees back into the workplace.

OSHA says employers should designate one person to serve as a workplace coronavirus coordinator to address employee concerns and track those with the virus.

OSHA also has its own set of guidelines, including limiting the number of employees in the office, staggering arrival times and putting up barriers for meetings.

As for the EEOC, it focused on coronavirus-related discrimination in its guidance. The commission encouraged employers to give reasonable accommodations to those affected by COVID-19 and are at risk, such as allowing remote work for a more extended period of time.

Pandemic-related harassment is also a potential issue, and the EEOC recommends employers conduct specific training on this.

Employers also have notice requirements under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), in which they must inform employers of their rights under the act. The DOL has released a poster ([bit.ly/FFCRAposter](https://www.dol.gov/bit.ly/FFCRAposter)) that will allow employers to remain compliant.

Info: [bit.ly/FFCRAposter](https://www.dol.gov/bit.ly/FFCRAposter)

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.

■ Two break rules, only African-American worker is fired: Bias?

HR manager Lynn Rondo was browsing travel sites, wondering if she'd get to go on vacation this year, when company attorney Eric Bressler strolled into her office.

"Hi, Lynn," Eric said as he sat down. "Sorry to barge in, but we've got a problem. Charles Miner is suing us for race discrimination.

"What?" Lynn asked. "Charles was fired because he forged a document. That's a clear policy violation. It had nothing to do with his race."

"Charles mentioned his white colleague, Shawn Detweiler, did the same thing he did, yet Shawn wasn't fired for it. In fact, Shawn was eventually promoted."

Thorough investigation

Lynn frowned. "I don't completely remember the circumstances around Shawn's incident," Lynn admitted. "But I do remember we thoroughly investigated Charles' conduct before we let him go.

"We did this by the book," Lynn continued. "Charles violated our policy and we investigated, then terminated him due to our findings. How can a court call that race discrimination?"

"We should fight this, then," Eric concluded.

When Charles sued for race discrimination, 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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Not an ADA violation: Disabled worker misused equipment, got fired

■ Employee refused accommodation employer suggested

When an employee needs an ADA accommodation, it's important that the accommodation is effective and safe.

One worker was accommodating herself in an unsafe manner, which resulted in her firing. Here's why a court ruled in the company's favor.

Wouldn't use cane

Suzanne Tielle, who had a knee injury, was the head cook at a school, employed by a staffing company, The Nutrition Group.

Tielle had some trouble walking on her hurt knee, so she began leaning on a rolling cart to help her get around. Her employer told her not to do this, as it could cause the cart to tip over, leading to safety issues.

The employer told Tielle to

stop using the cart because it was dangerous, and instead she was permitted to use a cane to get around.

However, Tielle refused and continued to lean on the cart. She was then fired for the safety violation, and Tielle sued for ADA discrimination.

But a court ruled in favor of the company. It said The Nutrition Group tried to reasonably accommodate Tielle by allowing her to use a cane, and she was the one who refused that accommodation.

This case reiterates that an ADA-protected employee is not entitled to any accommodation they choose. The company clearly terminated Tielle due to her safety violation, not ADA discrimination, the court said.

Cite: Tielle v. The Nutrition Group, 5/7/20.

U.S. women's soccer team's equal pay suit dismissed by federal district court

■ Court ruled women earned more in cumulative, per-game pay

The U.S. Women's National Soccer Team made headlines in 2019 with a class-action lawsuit alleging they were paid less than the U.S. men's team.

However, a district court has dismissed the women's unequal pay claims.

Less pay, worse conditions

The female soccer players claimed that despite performing better, they were paid less than the male U.S. soccer players.

The women believed if they were under the same pay structure as the men, they'd be earning much more.

They also alleged they faced less

favorable work conditions, like being booked on worse flights than the men's team.

However, the court ended up siding with the U.S. Soccer Federation. It said the employer was able to prove the women ending up making more than the men in both cumulative and per-game pay.

The women's suit is dead for now, but the team plans on filing an appeal.

This case serves as a good reminder for employers to examine potential gender pay gaps that may be lurking within your company. Some go as far as complete pay transparency to ensure equity.

Cite: Morgan et al v. U.S. Soccer Federation, 5/1/20.

■ EEOC sues call center for firing two pregnant workers

It's illegal to fire an employee due to their pregnancy, but that didn't stop one company from doing so twice.

LogistiCare Solutions LLC, a call center located in Phoenix, allegedly fired two new hires one week into their training.

According to the lawsuit filed by the EEOC, the two pregnant employees were fired because LogistiCare assumed "they would not be able to comply with its attendance policy" due to their pregnancies. This is a violation of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA).

"Employers should not make employment decisions based on assumptions about what pregnant employees can and cannot do," said EEOC regional attorney Mary Jo O'Neill. The lawsuit is pending.

Info: bit.ly/pregnant558

■ Company owes \$650K for disability, age discrimination

One company was rejecting candidates due to age and potential health problems, and the EEOC is making them pay for their mistake.

Horizontal Well Drillers, located in Purcell, OK, discriminated against hundreds of applicants due to their health and age.

According to the EEOC, Horizontal Well Drillers forced an applicant to undergo a medical exam, then rejected him when the results came back.

The company also rejected hundreds of candidates who were 40 and older. These practices are a violation of both the ADA and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).

Horizontal Well Drillers agreed to settle the lawsuit for \$650,000, which will go to the 484 applicants who were discriminated against. The company shut down in 2019.

Info: bit.ly/agebias558

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.

Should we give special treatment to at-risk workers?

Q: As our workforce slowly returns to the office, should we assume our disabled/at-risk employees will not want to return due to the threat of COVID-19, and automatically accommodate them?

A: The EEOC recently released guidance on this, and essentially, the answer is no.

In its statement, the EEOC reiterated that the ADA doesn't require employers to act if an at-risk employee doesn't request an accommodation. Don't assume the person needs one – this is called benevolent discrimination.

The EEOC went on to say even if employers are concerned about the health of their at-risk workforce, they may not exclude employees from returning to work or take any adverse employment actions against them solely because of their at-risk status.

Employers may only take unsolicited action if an employee's disability poses a "direct threat" to their health or the health of their colleagues.

How do we protect info when laying off remote workers?

Q: We're in the unfortunate position of needing to lay off some of our employees, who are currently working remotely. How do we ensure our company data remains protected and we can get back employees'

company devices?

A: This is a particularly painful situation, but there are concrete steps you can take to ensure this goes as smoothly as possible, says Brian Schrader, CEO of digital forensics firm BIA.

The first step in protecting company info needs to occur before the employee leaves. Your company should have a clear policy in place outlining which data is protected.

Employers should inform employees of this policy and have them sign it.

The policy should make it very clear what company information cannot be taken and/or shared once the employee leaves the company.

If you don't already have these processes in place, you can have an employee sign this agreement upon their departure.

Once the employee has been laid off, it's important to disable their company email accounts and any other digital platforms they have access to.

As for collecting company devices from people who cannot come into the physical workplace, make it as easy as possible for them to return the equipment. Send them a flat shipping box with a prepaid label.

Devices should be held for at least 90 days before being reassigned to another employee.

If you have an HR-related question, email it to Rachel Mucha at: rmucha@HRMorning.com

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

■ Conducting virtual interviews? 6 easy body language tips

In the age of telecommuting and virtual interviews, it can be difficult to effectively get your message across or get to know someone through a computer screen.

And thanks to the pandemic, many companies are being forced to woo talent they can't meet in person. This can be a tricky task to accomplish over a Zoom meeting.

Communicating nonverbally

However, there are some easy ways to impress candidates just through your body language alone.

Here are six tips from Marcel Schwantes, chief human officer of Leadership From The Core.

1. **Look at the camera.** When video chatting, a lot of people tend to stare at themselves or the image of the person they're talking to. Don't do either – look at the camera in order to maintain eye contact.

2. **Use good posture.** Sit up straight in a chair instead of slouching on the couch. Good posture shows the candidate you're alert and engaged.

3. **Lean forward slightly.** Don't get too close to the camera, but leaning forward slightly while the candidate is speaking can show your interest in what they're saying. Stay about an arm's length away from the camera.

4. **Cut back on gesturing.** On the small computer screen, gesturing can be particularly distracting. Try to keep your hand movements to a minimum.

5. **Don't cross your arms.** Keep your arms relaxed at your sides – folding your arms can come across as grumpy or hostile.

6. **Nod and smile genuinely.** It's important to silently acknowledge what the candidate is saying, but be careful not to overdo it. Too much nodding or smiling can come across as disingenuous.

Info: bit.ly/bodylanguage558

WHAT WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

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 Recognizing employee 'conflict styles'

Nobody really likes dealing with workplace conflict, and so few people are really good at it.

To help our employees improve their ability to handle conflicts, we decided to break it down and talk about "conflict styles."

5 different styles

We asked employees to think about a current conflict they were dealing with at work.

Then we told them to consider who the players were, how each party perceived the situation and what was at stake.

After, we introduced five unique conflict styles:

1. Competing style essentially means "I'll do it my way."
2. Collaborating refers to "our way."
3. Accommodating means "your way."
4. Compromising refers to "half way."
5. Avoiding means "no way at all."

Once employees understood the differences between styles, we had them revisit their conflicts and decide what strategy they'd use to address it.

This exercise reminded everyone how important it is to consider multiple perspectives and approaches.

Plus, our team learned how to identify their own personal triggers and how to reframe an issue. Our people are well-equipped to handle conflict now.

(Scott Boozer, CEO, Boozer Leadership and Learning LLC, Atlanta)

REAL PROBLEMS, REAL SOLUTIONS

2 3 keys to keeping your best workers

If you went to any department head in your company and told them they were going to lose \$67,000 this year, finding solutions to avoid it would become a top priority.

According to SHRM, replacing an employee that was making \$45,000 a year will cost your company over \$67,000.

That's from loss of productivity, recruiting, job posting and the time managers spend training new people.

Because of how expensive turnover is, we knew we needed to start integrating employee retention into our culture.

Holding onto our people

Here are three strategies we employ for keeping our people longer:

- **Set expectations early and often.** It starts with the onboarding process when we introduce new employees to what we're about. We also ask new hires three expectations they have for the job.

- **Provide context.** We look at feedback like a traffic light: what should stop and why, where to

take more caution and great things to go on doing.

- **Connect our people to the company mission.** We pinpoint how their strengths help our business succeed. We find ways to treat them like partners, not just employees.

(Gabrielle Bosche, president, MillennialSolution.com, as presented during the BambooHR Virtual Summit)

3 The benefits of embracing remote work

Like almost every employer out there, we found ourselves blindsided by the current pandemic, and we were scrambling to adjust to the new normal.

Remote work was something very new to us. We'd always been in the mindset that it's necessary for our team members to all be in the same work location.

However, we knew working from home was the best way to keep all of our employees safe. And now that

we've embraced remote work and it's been a success, we can't imagine disallowing it again.

In fact, it's now become a crucial aspect of our talent acquisition process.

Talent without ZIP codes

Since discovering remote work is more than doable, we've expanded our talent search immensely. Instead of limiting our candidate pool to those within driving distance, we're now looking at any qualified candidate, regardless of their ZIP code.

We're also using this time to quickly get in front of talent we'd normally have to compete for. Remote capabilities allow us to quickly contact candidates and set up video interviews immediately.

The coronavirus changed the job market so drastically, and job seekers are jumping at our opportunities. And since we've embraced remote work, we have our pick of talented people all over the country.

(Tony Cornett, SVP of talent acquisition, Medidata Solutions, as presented at the ERE Digital 2020 Conference)

DOL makes OT exemptions for retail, service workers

Heads up – if you employ staff who work on commission, you might have to begin paying them overtime.

The DOL recently expanded an FLSA overtime exemption, which previously made certain retail and service workers ineligible for OT pay.

The original FLSA rule contained several lists of establishments that were recognized as retail, and therefore the employees were exempt from overtime pay.

The DOL withdrew these lists, instead promoting a “generally applicable analysis that is better suited to account for developments in industries over time.”

Info: bit.ly/DOL558

McDonald's employees sue for COVID-19 response

Five McDonald's employees have filed a class action lawsuit against the fast-food giant, claiming the restaurant is not providing adequate protection for its employees from the coronavirus.

The Chicago-based employees allege they weren't given any personal protective equipment initially, and only received masks and gloves after going on strike. Additionally, the

employees claim they only received one mask they had to continually reuse, and were not given any training on how to protect themselves and their customers.

Other McDonald's employees are joining the fight, too: Workers in 20 different cities plan to strike.

Info: bit.ly/mcdonalds558

New app can help screen workers for COVID-19

UnitedHealth and Microsoft have teamed up and created a new app that aims to alert employers about workers with COVID-19.

ProtectWell will screen employees for coronavirus symptoms, then notify employers. Anyone exhibiting symptoms will be directed toward obtaining a test.

UnitedHealth will handle the medical information and ensure it remains confidential.

Info: bit.ly/protectwell558

Lighter side: Man wins lotto right before interview

HR pros know this scenario all too well. You have an interview with a great candidate all set up, only to discover he's a no-show.

It can be frustrating, and often

WHAT COMPANIES TOLD US

PTO during pandemic

How are you adjusting your PTO policy due to an increasing number of unused vacation days?

24%

Increase carryover limits

22%

No changes planned

16%

Require employees to take days

Source: Willis Towers Watson

Due to travel advisories and stay at home orders, most workers aren't using vacation days right now. To address the build-up of PTO, 42% of employers are planning or have made PTO policy changes.

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

hiring managers are left wondering why it happened. But did you ever consider it's because your candidate just won the lottery?

A man in North Carolina was on his way to a job interview when he stopped to buy a scratch-off ticket, from which he won \$200,000.

It's probably safe to assume he won't be calling to reschedule.

Info: bit.ly/lotto558

Sharpen your judgment...

THE DECISION

(See case on Page 2)

No. The company lost when a court said Charles' case could go to trial.

The company tried to argue that Charles was fired for just cause – he forged a document, which went against company policy, the alleged conduct was investigated and, as a result of the findings, he was fired.

But the court wasn't buying it. It said the issue wasn't the investigation into Charles' conduct and the resulting termination, but the way in which the company handled similar conduct by Charles' white colleague, Shawn.

Shawn, even though he committed the same policy

violation as Charles, wasn't fired. In fact, Shawn's conduct hadn't harmed his career at all, as he eventually went on to be promoted.

Due to the different ways the company handled these employees' policy violations, the court concluded that race may have been the real reason for Charles' firing.

■ Analysis: Apply discipline evenly

This case is a great reminder of how important it is to treat every employee the same when it comes to discipline. Charles and Shawn, who committed the same violations, should've either both been fired or both allowed to keep their jobs. The uneven discipline makes it appear there was another factor at play behind Charles' termination.

Cite: Spratt v. FCA US LLC, U.S. Ct. of App. 6th Circ., No. 19-1420, 5/13/20. Fictionalized for dramatic effect.

Total salary transparency helped us create the culture we wanted

■ *Idea demonstrated fairness and held employees accountable*

When I started my company, it was founded under these core values: transparency, equity, belonging and impact.

My main goal was to create an environment in which my employees could thrive and feel a sense of ownership in everything they did.

I realized transparency and openness was the key to achieve this goal. So, I shared things like company revenue and business strategies with my employees. And in turn, everyone's salary would be known.

Compensation model

If every employee's salary was going to be public knowledge, we had to be able to explain where those numbers came from.

So, we came up with a fair compensation model.

First, there was a guaranteed base pay, which was the same for everyone in similar positions. On top of that figure, we added team pay, which was based on collective results for each team. How big of an impact did an entire team have by working together?

Finally, we added individual rewards based on each employee's personal goals. How did each person contribute to the company's overall success? Did they reach the goals they'd set for themselves?

Every single employee has access to their colleagues' job descriptions, goals and salaries, so no one has to wonder why someone is making more than them.

Negative impact on recruiting

Not only was this concept new for us, but it's new for the majority of employees and candidates. We knew

that a lot of people weren't going to be fans of having their salary on display for all to see.

In fact, our salary transparency repelled some talent. Those who were initially interested in working for us would back out after they learned about our salary transparency practices. Some people just aren't comfortable with it, and we fully recognize and respect that.

Effectiveness & accountability

Despite some new struggles with recruiting, we ultimately found our salary transparency practices to be worth it when it came to employee effectiveness and accountability.

Since everyone knows what their colleagues earn, poor performance simply isn't tolerated among the collective group. This drives every employee to work hard, since other workers won't hesitate to call out when someone has dropped the ball.

We also found that with salary transparency, people are more effective at their jobs. Due to the goals we have them set, employees aim to achieve these in order to justify their salaries.

All-around equity

Fairness and equity was another huge benefit of our salary transparency. Due to the way we calculate pay, we have no issues with pay inequity based on gender, race, etc. Everyone is compensated fairly, and they all know it.

(Kimberlea Kozachenko, CEO & founder, Kolmeta, as presented at the ERE Digital 2020 Conference)

■ Business post-pandemic: 3 strategies to thrive

With companies slowly starting to reopen their doors, many business owners aren't sure what to expect.

How long will it take for sales to return to normal? Will remote work become a permanent measure?

The fact of the matter is, most businesses won't be able to return to work as normal, and leaders will have to rethink the old ways of doing things.

Out with the old

But instead of stressing out about all the necessary changes, Bill Higgs, founder and CEO of Mustang Engineering, says companies should embrace this opportunity and improve on things that were never really working in the first place.

According to Higgs, many companies – even before the pandemic – had culture or communication issues that have been preventing them from prospering.

Now's a great time to improve on these processes and come out of the pandemic strong.

1. Leaders need to be a visible presence. Don't hide behind closed office doors as you struggle to right the ship. Managers should be communicating face-to-face with their employees as much as possible. This will not only engage your team, but reassure them you have a plan.

2. Use this opportunity to hire. With so many unemployed people desperately needing jobs, you'll have a larger candidate pool than usual to choose from. Now's your chance to be picky and build a team of top talent.

3. Don't stop moving forward. Once your business begins to recover from the pandemic, don't relax. Keep pushing to become even more productive and efficient. Don't revert back into old bad habits once times are good again.

Case Study:
WHAT
WORKED,
WHAT
DIDN'T

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.

Co-worker conflicts: Stressed-out employees keep getting into arguments

The Scenario

HR manager Stu Capper was trying to focus on the job applications he was reviewing, but the noise coming from the hallway kept distracting him.

When the noise escalated to yelling, Stu couldn't take it anymore. He got up and stepped out of his office.

"What is going on out here?" Stu asked. Jamie and Ryan, the two arguing employees, abruptly stopped when they saw Stu.

"Oh," Jamie said, looking embarrassed. "Sorry, Stu. We'll keep it down."

"Yeah, sorry," Ryan mumbled. He then walked away without saying another word.

Tensions running high

Stu sighed. "Come tell me what's wrong, Jamie," he said. Jamie walked into Stu's

office and sat down.

"What was that all about?" Stu asked, annoyed that he'd had to stop what he was doing to deal with this. "I thought you and Ryan got along."

"We usually do," Jamie said. "I don't know, it started off really small. Ryan made a mistake on a form and I had to fix it. I just reminded him to be more careful, and it blew up from there."

"I think tensions are just running a little high right now," Jamie continued. "A lot of people have been bickering. We're all still stressed and just trying to get used to being back in the office together again."

Stu nodded. "I can understand that. This all is a big adjustment after months of being at home – but that doesn't excuse yelling in the hallway."

If you were Stu, what would you do next?

these disagreements – ignoring each other, being condescending, etc. We'd also discuss other factors such as the timing of the disagreements and people's stress levels. It's also a good idea to train employees to thank each other for sharing opinions rather than getting defensive.

Reason: By teaching people how to recognize the things that can cause arguments, they'll be more aware and less likely to escalate disagreements.

3 Kristen Kenny, director of people operations, Hubspot, Cambridge, MA

What Kristen would do: I'd start periodically shuffling around seating arrangements. I'd even make different departments sit together to help everyone interact with those they normally don't.

Reason: This could get people away from those they bicker with, as well as teach employees how to get along with all different people. Rotating seating arrangements can help people make friends and communicate more efficiently.

QUOTES

Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.

William James

It doesn't take a lot of strength to hang on. It takes a lot of strength to let go.

J.C. Watts

Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

Mark Twain

For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others; for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness; and for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone.

Audrey Hepburn

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Anne Frank

Reader Responses

1 Heather Seville, HR director, INX International Inks, Schaumburg, IL

What Heather would do: Since it's important to nip these situations in the bud, I'd encourage bystander intervention, where those outside of the conflict can step in before it gets any worse. I'd train employees to interrupt arguments with simple phrases like, "We don't do that here," which emphasizes company standards and keeps personal feelings out of it.

Reason: Intervening in a conflict before it escalates is crucial. By having employees trained to diffuse arguments, we can keep everyone calm and prevent HR from having to step in.

2 Christine Porath, associate professor, McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University, Washington, DC

What Christine would do: I'd start leading employees in a periodic exercise in which we talk about what usually triggers