

What managers shouldn't say

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As a HR expert, I assume that most managers understand what is expected of them as leaders. But you remember that old saying about what happens when you assume?

It is evident from the horror stories I hear, and the lawsuits I read about, that managers often overstep their boundaries. This often costs companies a lot of money.

In case you didn't know, here is a crash course on the five things bosses should never say:



"You look nice in that outfit." It goes without saying that in these days of heightened awareness about sexual harassment, this simple compliment could end up being taken the wrong way. It's safer for management to refrain from commenting on the appearance employees.

"Who are you going to vote for in the election?" Politics is one of the three things

you are not supposed to talk about at the dinner table. This same rule can be applied to the business world. Politics is such a heated and sensitive issue that any conversation about it can easily veer into dangerous areas. There have also been cases of employees who were fired for voting a certain way, and a few years ago a Walmart store was accused of encouraging employees to support a certain political issue.

"Where did you go to church?" Religion is a very personal issue. Asked in that manner, the question assumes that that person is a Christian. And as we know there are many different faiths in this country. Anyone with or without religious beliefs could take offense to this question.

"What are you doing this weekend?" This question implies that the manager is asking for a date. This is generally a no-no for superiors. Some companies are so strict about office romances that they forbid managers from dating subordinates.

They do this because it can be argued that a subordinate is really not in a position to say no to a manager, because that person has power over their job. If the relationship goes

sour, and they often do, it is fairly easy for the subordinate employee to file a sexual harassment claim.

"What are you?" or "Where do you come from?" Employers should not ask any questions about ethnic background or national identity. The only thing they can do is make sure the employee has the correct documentation allowing them to work in this country. The United States is a country of many ethnicities, cultures and religions. Also, don't assume because someone has an accent that they are a recent immigrant.

These are all things that good managers should know not to say.

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