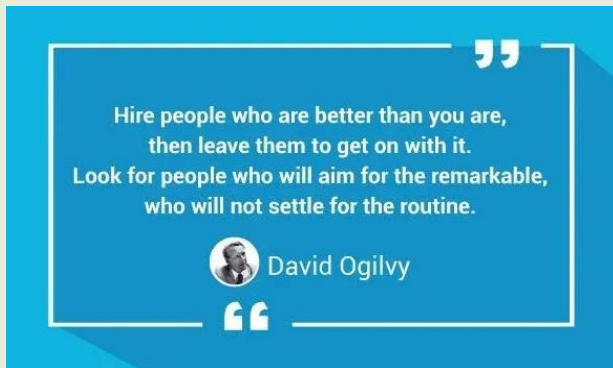


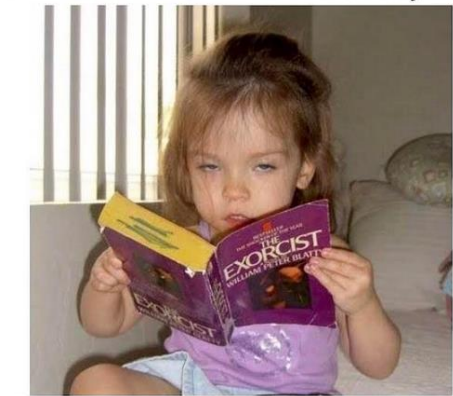
# People Ops Pulse

Bringing you the most up-to-date and helpful People Operations (HR) information for small business owners, entrepreneurs and partners

## Meme & Quote of the Month:



The 100th time someone walks into the HR office on Monday



## So – what is this “line” we speak of?

Hi everyone – welcome to the end of the first quarter of 2024 – WOW, is this year already flying by!

I can't tell you how many calls as a People Operations Professional that I receive that either start with, or include, this statement: "Bonnie, I want to make sure I'm not crossing the line". While there are certainly legal and compliance parameters to certain decisions and approaches to situations, "the line" can seem like one that is always moving and we are constantly trying to stay above. Very few decisions from a People Operations perspective come without some element of risk – how I seek to help my clients is to educate and support on how to best **mitigate** that risk to put you in the most effective position possible. So – let's dive in!



## IN THIS ISSUE

### Body Types: When Wellness Concerns Cross the Line

Employers and business owners genuinely care about employee wellness, and want to help ensure their employees are healthy – we'll discuss making sure that advocacy for employee wellness doesn't cross the line into potential discrimination.

### Employee Dating Policies: When Relationships Cross the Line

We'll discuss common questions surrounding policies regarding personal relationships in the workplace to help protect the overall health of your business.

### Politics Talk: When Free Speech Crosses the Line

We'll discuss very common employer concerns during an election year about employees speaking about politics in the workplace, and how you can encourage free thought while also protecting your business

## Body Types: When Wellness Concerns Cross the Line

In today's work environment, a focus on employee wellness is a necessary component to help ensure a healthy work environment. However, when does our concern become counter-productive?

According to data collected by SHRM in April 2023, 15 percent of U.S. workers say that others at work have made false assumptions about them because of their weight at some point in their career. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of U.S. workers who have experienced unfair treatment at work due to their weight say it made them feel like quitting their job. Common stereotypes of certain weight groups remain somewhat prevalent – obese employees are more likely to be perceived as lazy (27 percent), unmotivated (23 percent) and unprofessional (17 percent) while average weight employees are more likely to be perceived as high performing (35 percent), hard-working (32 percent), motivated (31 percent) and as leaders (30 percent). Based on this data, public support has been growing to add legal protections against weight discrimination to existing anti-discrimination laws.

### Key Ideas to Support Your Employees:

**Anti-bias training** for your company may be helpful in combating this potential concern. An **ADA accommodation process** may be required – are there reasonable adjustments based on the employee's medical condition that can be made? Creating an **inclusive work environment** is a must that celebrates diversity (including based on body types), combined with providing **visibility to healthy living program information** in the workplace, including nutrition, exercise and weight management interventions. Many of these resources can be found for free on the CDC website.

Want to discuss more ideas? Let's connect!

## Employee Dating Policies: When Relationships Cross the Line

"Bonnie, I have two employees that I think "have something going on together" outside of the workplace, what should I do? I don't want to control what they do in their personal lives, but...". According to a SHRM survey in December 2022: "77 percent of U.S. workers say their employer doesn't require them to disclose a workplace romance, and a majority of workers (77 percent) who have been in a workplace romance have not disclosed their relationship to their employer." So what can, and should, you do? The first is to **have a policy and set expectations**: a disclosure and conflict of interest policy is recommended regarding reporting personal relationships of any type (romantic, familial, etc.) between employees. It will be important that the personal relationship cannot disrupt the workplace culture (things such as gossip, etc.) and that both employees understand that the relationship cannot impact the duties of and performance in their roles. The second is the **reporting structure**: It is generally *not* recommended that employees with an interpersonal relationship are in any type of reporting structure together (i.e. a supervisor is dating an employee, etc.). Is this a concern in your business? Let's chat!

## Politics Talk: When Free Speech Crosses the Line

With another election season upon us, employees have extremely strong opinions on political topics that they bring into work– is this OK? If discussions and actions relate to terms and conditions of employment (such as hiring practices, employee wages and work conditions, etc.), they may be protected under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). However, the NLRA does not protect these actions from being disruptive to the workplace if the above actions are **not** related to conditions of employment – such as advocating for a certain candidate or policy – interactions between employees cannot be disruptive, unprofessional or harassing in nature. Also, as a private employer – for non-protected speech, company policies that outright prohibit discussion of political issues have been found through research to be largely ineffective. However, you have the right as a business owner to place limits on showing insignia in the workplace, and set expectations regarding political discussions, including when discussions are potentially turning into unprofessionalism and harassment.



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

"Happy to vote for you Bonnie. And good luck!" - Holly Gray from Holly Gray, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services AZ Properties

"Awesome people and a great company." - Rob Ham from Academy Disc Plumbing & Repair

"With Bonnie's grit and determination, she's dedicated to helping grow the Alignable community!" - Tom Kavanaugh from New Coaching Strategies

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Alignable 2024 Maryvale (AZ) Local Business Person of the Year

From recruiting to onboarding, to training and ongoing management, and everything in-between: let Wolf-Rose People Solutions help put strategies into place to support the success of your employees – and in turn support the success of your small business.

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In-person and virtual consultations are available – providing services nationwide

### Bonnie Anderson, PHR, SHRM-CP: Owner & Consultant



Phone: 602-492-2636

Email: [bonnie@wolfrosesolutions.com](mailto:bonnie@wolfrosesolutions.com)

Website: [www.wolfrosesolutions.com](http://www.wolfrosesolutions.com)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/wolf-rose-solutions/>

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