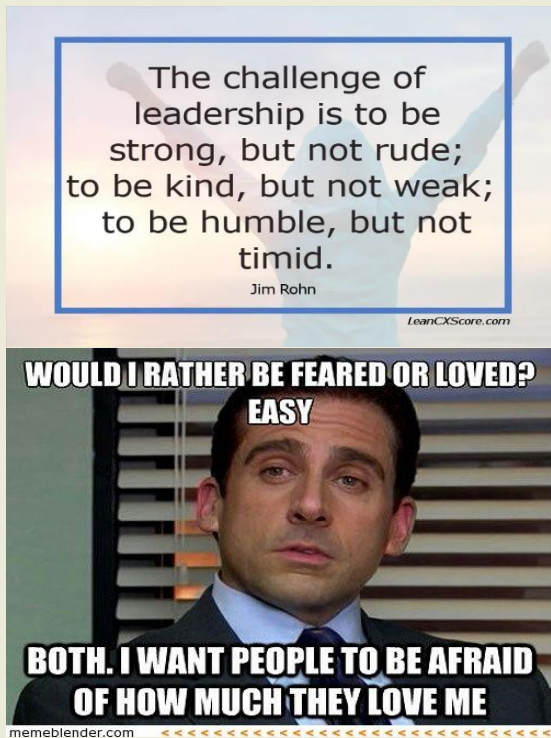


# People Ops Pulse

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:



## A New Focus in the Workplace: Civility

Here in Arizona, the end of summer means that the heat is going to start to turn down for the rest of the year (thank goodness!). However, when we look at the “heat” of our current attitude climate in the United States, the heat is certainly starting to turn up. At the annual Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) conference earlier this year, a renewed and refreshed focus on civility in the workplace and businesses overall is at the forefront of the HR profession. As an HR consultant for small businesses and entrepreneurs, I want to help support my clients and business partners as in this topic as we head into the end of the year – while we encourage employee individuality and diversity, how do we encourage **civil** discussions within the workplace? Let’s go through this together – and as always, if you need help, don’t hesitate to reach out!



## IN THIS ISSUE

### Civility & Customer Service – Is the Customer Always Right?

We’ll take a look and further examine the age-old question – when it comes to civil interactions, is the customer *actually* always right, or where does the line fall in making sure you and your employees are being treated respectfully by your customers?

### Civility in the Workplace – Four Strategies to Apply Civility to Your Business

With the respect of different opinions and perspectives in the workplace, we’ll discuss ways to focus on civility within your business to support these discussions being inclusive, not divisive.

### Civility in the Workplace – “Can We Chat About Politics?”

With upcoming elections upon us – we’ll visit effective strategies to help mitigate disruption to the workplace while still encouraging open and respectful interactions.

## 4 Strategies to Apply Civility to Your Business

In order to most effectively support and promote civility as a business owner, a gameplan on how to do so will be very important. From SHRM, here are some very effective strategies to help guide this approach:

### Understanding the Challenge:

"Organizations first need to take stock of their workplace's current needs and how discord has been handled in the past. If polarization is already a problem, a full reset may be needed."

**Guiding the Discussion:** Let specific data lead the way – "starting with data can help you make the business case for civility and justify the need for any organizational changes."

**Setting Boundaries:** "Sometimes, these are just unwritten standards understood by everyone in the workplace. However, written policies are more effective. Such policies should be clearly communicated to employees and regularly reiterated, even if there haven't been any concerns to date. Additionally, policies shouldn't just dictate what *not* to do, but also what employees *should* do."

**Taking Action:** Business owners "need to feel empowered to bring about change in their workplace and act to prevent incivility. A sample action plan could include the following steps: assessment, policy development, training, support, reviews, and adaptations."

### Important Touch-Base: Concerted Activity

An important point to touch on that applies to *all* businesses within the United States is what is called "concerted activity" – this means there is discussion activity in the workplace that business owners are *prohibited* from not permitting employees to discuss.

Examples of activity that is considered to be concerted (protected) include: concerns regarding pay, potential union activity, safety concerns at work, and improving workplace conditions.

## Is the Customer Always Right?

Business owners want to help ensure that their customers are *always* treated with civility and respect. With that said, employees want to make sure that their managers "have their back" when it comes to how their customers treat *them*. What can you do to make sure that your customers are giving you the same respect in return? Here is a suggested response from Julie Lodge-Jarrett, the chief people and purpose officer at Dick's Sporting Goods, to support addressing this concern. In response to direct feedback from their employees – Dick's changed course on their approach from an "automatic apology" to the customer, and instead now balance both customer service and employee support.


"Sir, I can tell you're unhappy and I would like to do everything I can to help you get what you came in here for today. But I want to start by saying that at Dick's Sporting Goods, we don't tolerate lack of respect and we expect that everyone's treated with the dignity that they deserve. And how you're treating my teammate is unacceptable. So, we've got two choices. You can choose to be civil, and if you do, I'd love to help you get what you came here for. Or if you don't think you can do that, I'd politely ask you to leave.' That one small step paid big dividends to create greater civility within our stores and to create that reciprocal agreement between both employees and customers."

## "Can We Chat About Politics?"

Every four years, a question that I tend to receive without fail is – "Bonnie, my employees are talking about politics at work; am I allowed to ask them to stop?" According to a recent study by ResumeHelp, 51 percent of respondents believe workplace political discussions hurt the work environment. While the First Amendment provides protection against the government limiting speech, private employers are free to regulate speech for their employees as long as it does not conflict with concerted activity under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRB). Therefore, this is a careful and thoughtful decision that business owners must make that falls into the "can you" vs. "should you" category – employers can limit speech; however, according to the DDI's Center for Analytics and Behavioral Research, if employers "simply ban political discussion from the workplace, they risk making employees feel silenced, disengaged and distrustful of leadership." Also, if you are taking an approach to limit speech, it is imperative that this company policy is *documented* to ensure employee understanding.



#2

 **Bonnie Anderson**  
Wolf-Rose People Solutions ...  
Human Resources  
Phoenix, AZ  
Local  
PREMIUM

★ Highly Recommended (14)

24 votes received  
14 testimonials

Refer us to:

- Warehouse
- Transportation
- Small Business
- Healthcare +11





"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.

<b>COMPLIANT</b> 	<b>CONSULTING</b> 	<b>CONNECTIONS</b> 	<b>COST-EFFECTIVE</b> 
---	--	--	--

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/>

Alignable: <https://www.alignable.com/phoenix-az/wolf-rose-people-solutions-consulting>

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