

Workplace Culture 2.0: More Leadership, Less Management

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Title VII is not a “civility code.” Although the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaws discrimination in the workplace, it does not outlaw bad behavior. It does not require us to each to treat coworkers respectfully. It does not compel us to be inclusive, or tolerant, or kind. When the U.S. Supreme Court cautioned in a 1998 sexual harassment case that Title VII is not a “civility code,” it underscored the constraints of our country’s seminal anti-discrimination law. The law has its limits. So, as we read, again and again, about incidents of racial bias and profiling, of sexual misconduct, of the repeated, blatant abuse of power, it becomes clearer that the solutions (and sometimes, the troubles) begin with the leadership. The responsibility to build effective, productive organizations rests at the top of the hierarchy. Today’s example of leadership is Starbucks’ decision to close its stores to customers so it can focus on training employees about bias. Meanwhile, Silicon Valley companies are reportedly developing concrete strategies to invest in women; Congress is taking steps to train its members and their staffs about sexual harassment. Kicking off this week, our Labor & Employment blog team is focusing on these cultural, organizational questions with a series of blog posts on **Workplace Culture 2.0**. From inherent bias to systemic employment challenges, we will consider the oft-quoted business management mantra: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” In John Bogle’s 2009 book, ***Enough: True Measures of Money, Business, and Life***, mutual fund Vanguard’s founder devotes a chapter to “Too Much Management, Not Enough Leadership.” His first rule of leadership is to “Make Caring the Soul of the Organization.” Rule No. 2 is to “Forget about Employees.” Instead, Bogle notably substituted “crew members” for “employees.” Rule No. 3, “Set High Standards and Values – and Stick to Them,” is self-explanatory. Rule No. 4: “Talk the Talk. Repeat the Values Endlessly.” Rule No. 5: “Walk the Walk. Actions Speak Louder than Words.” I encourage you to read the rest of his rules on leadership, and Bogle’s advice, generally, about measuring success. Although there are limits to the rule of law, where law ends, leadership begins.

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