**POLITICALLY CORRECT BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

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The expression “politically correct” (PC) came about in the 1970’s. It referred to the use of language in business spheres that would not cause an individual of any demographic (social or cultural) group to feel excluded, offended, or diminished. A lot of people think that being ‘politically correct’ is just a frustrating joke. The press makes fun of po-faced pronouncements about avoiding expressions like ‘the man in the street’ or having to call your cat your ‘companion animal’ instead of your pet. And an internet search finds lots of anti-PC websites saying that it's almost the end of the world as we know it and makes business impossible. This isn’t the place for such a debate. Political correctness does not just mean watching what you say. In its best sense, being politically correct means learning about others and respecting the differences that make each of us unique. In the workplace, there are steps you can take to make sure you are not only following the “PC rules”, but are also making your life richer. Businesses partners and companies just need to avoid offending customers and staff so let's look at ways to do that [1; 2].

There’s no question that everyone should be careful when addressing groups or talking about others. Use language that would not make any person feel excluded, diminished, or devalued.

Avoid language that addresses only one demographic group unless it is intended for that group only, such as using “men” when you mean “all people”. Accurate descriptions are the essence of 'political correctness’ [4].

Avoiding overly-cautious racial descriptions that can be offensive is necessary. For example, say “African American” only when talking about Americans who are the descendants of African Slaves. Other Africans know what country they're originally from. Example: A person from Egypt is Egyptian American. In the case that you are unsure of a person’s citizenship, “black” and “white” are acceptable terms.

Respect the use of religious terms when speaking to a group that may include people who belong to different religions (ex., saying “God Bless” at a local event). The exception here is in the context of describing either academically or referentially specific characteristics of such a group, as in “Evangelical Christians hold certain beliefs...”, or “Jewish people commonly recognize Yom Kippur...” Even referring to your partners’ names can be daunting. Most of you would know to avoid ‘Christian name’ and ‘surname’ but what do you use instead? ‘First name’ and ‘last name’ worked for a while but there are some cultures that put these in a different order. Safest is to use ‘family name’ and ‘given name’.

Avoid titles that are exclusionary, such as “Chairman” (use “Chairperson”); “Fireman” (use Firefighter); and “Stewardess” (use “Flight Attendant”). The use of titles that exclude persons of a different gender or other social groups is usually acceptable when addressing an individual, as in a business setting, where Mr. Smith is the CEO, and you are introducing him as “Mr. Smith, our Chairman of the Board”. Sensible alternatives depend on the context. Here are some possibilities:

Fireman Fire fighter

Policeman Police officer

Postman Post carrier

Middleman Intermediary and etc [5].

Another point is changing attitudes about aging made people. Terms elderly, aged, old need to be replaced by older person and seniors [2].

Be careful about humor in the workplace. For many, a professional environment is a big change, particularly for those who are straight out of college. While being careful about jokes you tell outside the office is important, it is crucial inside the office. Many individuals have run into serious trouble at work by telling a joke he or she thought was innocent. However, what seems harmless to you could be hurtful to another. Your place of business needs to be safe and productive for every employee. Jokes about minorities, women, gays, individuals with disabilities, or senior citizens have no place in any environment.

Be aware of different communication styles. It's easy to misread or misunderstand someone who is from a different background because different cultures often have varying communication styles. In fact, many misunderstandings in the workplace stem from employees not being aware of their own styles or the styles of others. Observe coworkers and how they communicate with each other. Better yet, enroll in a class about communicating with others and learn about how to better communicate with a variety of people.

The basic premise behind being politically correct or tolerant in the workplace is treating others the way you would want to be treated. If you treat others with respect and caring, your overall professional experience will be much more positive [3].

“Some things are better left unsaid”.

To finish up, I’d like to cite a good quotation: “In modern era, “politically correct” does not mean you should not offend anyone; it means no one will be able to accuse you of having said anything wrong”.

LITERATURE

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