
Religion In The Workplace: What Managers Need To Know: Analysis

In the article "Religion in the Workplace: What Managers Need to Know" by Dina Gerdeman, she discusses the problem with management regarding the lack of written policies that emphasize how to handle religion in the workplace. Two major high-profile cases were discussed, both sharing the common theme of religious discrimination in the workplace. One case is about a young Muslim woman who battled Abercrombie and Fitch for rejecting her application because she wears a hijab; and the second showing discrimination of heterosexism as a religious baker who refused to design a wedding cake for a gay couple. This article's major theme demonstrates many sides of how one's religious beliefs are affected by discrimination or can discriminate others in the workplace, another issue regards heterosexism and the discrimination harassment based on a stakeholder's sexual orientation or gender identity. The final issue is regarding the management policies dealing with discrimination and recruitment. In detail this article argues that management policies should be changed through the case of where 17-year old Samantha Elauf did well on the interview for Abercrombie but was later told her headscarf clashed with the store's dress code. The equal employment commission join Elauf's complaint against the company, but Abercrombie won the appeal.

Once this case reached the US Supreme Court, the judge announced that the court was siding with Elauf and that it's illegal to "fail refuse to hire or discharge any individual, because of such individual's race, colour, religion, sex or national origin." The second case discusses an incident at Jack Philips Masterpiece cake shop in Colorado, where two men wanted a cake made for their wedding reception but was turned away because it contradicted his Christian convictions. The couple then brought this to court and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruled in favour of the couple. In a statement the couple says, "This isn't about a cake..., it's about fair and equal treatment, and that's why we are here today." Further in the article Dina Gerdeman states that the law spells out rules for business leaders to follow, and for companies not to discriminate against protective classes and they must provide reasonable accommodation for their religion. Religious discrimination is the main focal point of this article and is portrayed through example from Samantha Elauf. A woman restricted from wearing what her religious beliefs entails her to wear if she wanted to work at the Abercrombie clothing store. This is against the Human Rights Legislation, an Act that entitles all individuals to equal opportunities without regard to race or colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation etc. In addition, this is against the OHRC, (Ontario Human Rights Code) where it's stated it doesn't matter whether discrimination is intentional or not: it is the effect of the

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behaviour that is important. Where a rule conflicts with religious requirements, there is a duty to ensure that individuals can observe their religion, unless this would cause undue hardship because of cost, or health and safety reasons.

Unlawful discrimination because of religion can include refusing to make an exception to dress codes to recognize religious dress requirements; and refusing to allow individuals to dedicate periods of prayer at certain times during the day.

Potential implications for stakeholders such as people of religion face mental and physical consequences such as depression, anxiety and stress since they are being mistreated and stripped away from a job that they are qualified for. Implications that affect companies for not abiding to the Human Rights Legislation are possible issues with commitment, loyalty and turnover because staff who observe discrimination are more likely to leave which increases turnover levels. This may affect productivity as they will be less invested in work and cause them to find other work as they may not intend to stay there permanently. Company reputation and recruitment is affected in the community it serves. It can directly impact clients and can reduce valuable candidates for the company. HR can learn to do strict background checks for their recruitment policy, enforce that everyone should feel respected in the workplace and if the situation does arise, it should be stopped immediately before it escalates as well as there should be reprimands for that behaviour. If customers are complaining about employees' religious clothing or performances employers should consider educating the customers in a positive manner.

Another issue mentioned in the treatment of clients for their sexual orientation because of one's beliefs. An example shown in the article is when a two men, Charlie Craig and David Mullins were rejected from a service because of they were a gay couple. This situation is against the Human Rights Act because the Jack Philips founder of Masterpiece CakeShop refused deliver the good/service, for the reason of it went against his Christian convictions. The OHRC states a person cannot be treated unequally or harassed in these areas because he or she is LGBT, it is also illegal to discriminate because some one is in a same-sex relationship. Homophobic conduct and comments are prohibited as part of the Code's protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, no matter who the target is or perceived to be for the case that many people do not disclose that information. Possible implications that affect the employees and clients that are apart of LGBT community are there may be a stigma can experience depression. One-fifth of LGBT Americans has experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation when applying for jobs and nearly two-thirds of LGBT employees heard gay and lesbian jokes at work(). LGBT employees face barriers such as revealing their gender identity or sexual orientation because they don't feel safe, they may encounter a glass ceiling and they will be treated differently. The effort workers invest hiding this takes a toll on their productivity as well as their mental and physical health.

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The implications that companies will face are constant throughout all discrimination as in there is a negative reputation associated with them. HR can learn to lead by example by showing that diversity is important, implement policies and procedures to support diversity and anti-discrimination and provide training and awareness in the workplace. Employment benefits to same-sex couples that includes medical and dental benefits, emergency leave, maternity/parental leave, pension plan, etc. If you are in danger of harassment you can contact the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario to file a complaint. The final issue is the management policies dealing with discrimination.

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