

by Dwayne Phillips

I implore technology companies to teach skills that seem to be lacking with the majority of their employees. And, no, this is not a joke. And, no, I am not kidding.

Dear Technology Company HR Department,

I have noticed recently that companies in your industry are susceptible to lawsuits concerning how your employees behave towards one another in the office and at company-sponsored social events. As these lawsuits are expensive both financially and in the area of employee morale, I write to you this day to recommend a training program with which I am happy to assist.

I am sure we can find a title for the course that fits your company and its culture. For now, here are some working titles, "How to Behave in a Social Setting," "Etiquette and Manners," "If You don't Keep Your Hands to Yourself, I will Rap Your Knuckles with a Ruler," or even "Were You Raised in a Barn or Something?"

The learning goals for the course are:

- How to act at a social gathering
- How to engage in polite conversation
- How to approach a person at a public place of recreation
- How to invite a person to a one-on-one social event, a.k.a., "a date"
- How to act when such an invitation is declined
- How to behave as a gentleman during a one-on-one social event, a.k.a., "a date"
- How to behave as a gentleman while at the place of employment

Please note the standard references at the end of this letter for possible texts.

The intended audience for the course includes:

(1) Persons who dedicated themselves to academic pursuits while in college or post-secondary schooling and, thereby, neglected to develop social skills. These persons are sometimes referred to as "brogrammers," "geeks," "nerds," or even "losers."

(2) Persons who excel at work and whose success leads them to have the mistaken belief that they are exempt from the rules of a polite society.

(3) All other persons who, "just don't get it" or have never met a beautiful young woman's older brother and his six friends.

The rationale for the intended audience includes:

Companies in your industry tend to hire many young males. Sometimes 70 or 80 percent of your workforce are young males. These fall into one of the categories of the intended audience listed above, mostly in category (1). These young males are intelligent, hardworking, and able to learn. They, however, have been taught neither formally nor in the school of hard knocks, i.e., category (3). While

some of these young males are beyond adjustment, in my experience most welcome the opportunity to increase their confidence in social settings.

While this suggested training may seem quaint, naive, outdated, or even something horrible, I remind you of my opening sentence and how companies in your industry seem to have many employees who lack knowledge in this area. It also appears that the leaders and managers of companies in your industry lack the resources to impart such skills to employees. Some, in fact, seem to lack these skills themselves.

You may have noticed that I, a male, have focused this course on the behavior of the males in your company. As a male with two brothers and no sisters and a father with three sons and no daughters, I feel unqualified to offer such training to females. Perhaps you can locate someone to assist with that course if you deem it is necessary.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dwayne Phillips, PhD

References:

Emily Post's Etiquette, 19th Edition: Manners for Today (Emily's Post's Etiquette) by Emily Post, Published by William Morrow, 2017.

How to Be a Gentleman Revised and Expanded: A Timely Guide to Timeless Manners by John Bridges, Published by Thomas Nelson, 2012.