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“ 75% of our readers have a college degree. ”

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## It's best to avoid hot topics at work

By [Donna Dilley](#)

There's an old expression that says that pig farming is a better topic of conversation than politics or religion.

In the workplace, many believe political discussions can create obstacles that make harmonious cooperation more difficult.

Tips for handling situations that involve non-workplace politics from author and management consultant, Rick Brenner, are offered below:

Avoid joking about divisive issues.

Assume that everyone in the room disagrees with you. If someone else jokes politically, limit your laughter.

You never know whether or not your laughing will offend someone.

Excuse yourself if you can.

If the conversation turns political, politely excuse yourself if you can, and find something productive to do.

If you can't leave, keep mum or as mum as possible.

Decline requests for money or volunteers.

If someone at work asks you to volunteer to work on, or to donate money to, a political campaign, decline politely. Depending upon the circumstances, such requests are often illegal.

Company policy should forbid such requests by supervisors.

A story recently was told about a CEO who gave a morale-boosting speech to employees in a midsize company. During this pep-talk, he let his political preferences be known and then made a number of disparaging remarks about the intelligence of those who did not agree with his viewpoint. Remember that it may be considered unfair if you are in a position of authority and express your political views in such a manner.

Backtalk

Dear Ms. Dilley,

I have two observations ("If your kid plays sports, act like an adult," Oct. 3 Journal), Having coached at all levels and age groups, both boys and girls:

- 1) The children that show the most athletic ability before age 10 are usually the children that are more physically mature than their peers.

They excel simply because they are bigger, stronger and more coordinated.

By ages 10-13 their peers catch up and the children that showed athletic ability early are typically passed by other children that have developed more skills along the way.

2) From a coaching perspective, the parents of children 6 through 10 are the most difficult to deal with.

They tend to have the highest expectations and can be very vocal.

When the players are older, the parents have developed more realistic expectations and the players are in a league that matches their individual skills and desires.

Mike Zinni

Zincastle Software Systems

Roanoke

(Donna Dilley, who owns ProtoCorp in Salem, can be reached at donna.dilley@gmail.com.)

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