Religion in the Workplace

Leah Smiley, CDE – Presenter
On Today’s Agenda

- To discuss how religion and non-religion means many things to different people
- To distinguish between the top 5 religions in the U.S.
- To ascertain the best practices for reducing and/or eliminating workplace discrimination as it pertains to religion
Who Is Your Presenter?

- Leah Smiley, CDE
  - Founder & President of the Society for Diversity
  - 15 Years in HR / 10 Years of Experience in Diversity

- About the Society for Diversity
  - #1 and Largest Professional Association for Diversity & Inclusion in the U.S.
  - Focuses on Cultural Education & Leadership
  - Parent Company of the Institute for Diversity Certification
Religion Around the World
The 5 Major Religions

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism

- Atheists
- Agnostics
- Non-Religious
Christianity

- The World’s Largest Religion with a Foundation on Jesus Christ
- Believers rely on faith—which is “being sure of what is hoped for and certain of what is not seen”
- Christians Read the Bible and Generally Worship on Sundays and During the Week
- More than 38,000 Christian Denominations with the Major Groups Being: Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant
Judaism

- Judaism is the monotheistic religion of the Jews, based on the laws revealed to Moses
- Jews Read the Torah and the Sabbath is Saturday
- Jewish Days Begin at Sundown and Holidays May Coincide with Some Christian Holidays
- Kosher Refers to Food and Dietary Restrictions
Major Types of Judaism

- Orthodox
  - Resists Changes to Beliefs & Practices
  - Individuals Must Learn & Practice the Laws

- Reform
  - Relaxed Restrictions
  - Decisions Regarding Rituals and Observances Made by the Individual

- Conservatives
  - A Combination of Orthodox and Reform
Islam

- The World’s Second Largest Religion
- Muslims Believe in the Quran and the Sabbath is on Friday
- Muslims Adhere to a Dress Code and Islamic Etiquette
- Food permissible for Muslims is known as *halal* food
- 85% of Muslims Sunni, While 10% are Shi’ite
The 5 Pillars of Islam

- There is no god but God; and Muhammed is the prophet of Allah (Shahada, Testimony)
- There are Five Pillars of Islam, Which are the Foundation of Muslim Life
  - Say the Confession of Faith
  - Pray
  - Give Alms
  - Fast During Ramadan
  - Make a Pilgrimage to Mecca
Hinduism

- A Hindu is an individual who accepts and lives by the religious guidance of the Vedic scriptures.
- The 3rd Largest Religion but primarily exists in India and Nepal.
- One of the oldest & most diverse and complex religions—having millions of gods.
- The basic scriptures of Hinduism are collectively referred to as Shastras.
- Yoga, Karma, etc. Originate from Hinduism.
Buddhism

- The word comes from 'budhi', 'to awaken'
  - Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, was awakened at age 35
  - Wealth & Luxury Does Not Guarantee Happiness
- Advocates for science
- Buddhists pay respect to images of Buddha
- Follows a moral code, or precepts
Religion at Work

- Employees Want Deeper Sense of Meaning and Fulfillment While at Work
- Investors Seeking Socially Responsible Organizations
- Promoting Tolerance
- Title VII Prohibits Discrimination
- Lawsuits on Both Sides of the Fence
Lawsuits

- EEOC vs. Convergys Corp.
- EEOC vs. Imperial Security
- EEOC vs. Pliant Corp.
What the Law Says

- Workplace Discrimination Based on Religion Prohibited; Applies to Employers with 15+ Workers
- Employment Protection Provided for:
  - Workers in Organized, Traditional Religions
  - Workers with Sincerely Held Religious, Ethical or Moral Beliefs
  - Treating Individuals Different Because of their Connection to a Religion or Marriage to Someone in a Religion
  - Harassment Prevention
Reasonable Accommodations

- Types of Accommodations
  - Flexible Scheduling
  - Voluntary Shift Substitutions
  - Job Reassignments
  - Modifications to Policies or Practices

- The Employer Cannot Force Someone to Participate or Not Participate in a Religious Activity as a Condition of Employment

- Undue Hardship
Reflection

Key Points

Talking Back
  ◦ Questions
  ◦ Comments
  ◦ Suggestions
Thank You for Attending!

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