

6 taboo topics to avoid--always

Given the “anything goes” times we’re living in where people share far too much online, here is your annual reminder of things you should *not* discuss at work:

Politics. This one feels almost impossible with a new political headline coming out seemingly on the hour. It’s a hot-button issue right now, and people from both parties are highly charged. In most cases, it’s best to keep your opinions to yourself. Never insult someone for believing differently than you.

Religion. While most people wouldn’t begrudge you mentioning your faith or referencing your church, you should never argue about religion. And you should never, ever insult someone else’s beliefs or lack of beliefs, nor try to convince someone to convert.

Your career plans. If you have goals to move up within the company, share those. However, if you see your current company as a mere stepping stone in your path to bigger things, don’t share that with people. Your boss and co-workers will undoubtedly question your loyalty. Plus, your boss isn’t likely to recommend a promotion, coveted projects and the like for someone who has one foot out the door.

Problems at home. Share details about your health, marital, familial or financial problems, and your supervisor and co-workers might worry that you are distracted or incapable of handling the job. Some co-workers might try to take advantage of that. Others will gossip about you. It’s best to just leave that stuff at home.

Sex. We shouldn’t have to say this, but we do. Your personal life is your business. Your co-workers’ personal life is their business. At best, these types of conversations make people uncomfortable. At worst, you could wind up in a sexual harassment lawsuit. Save the bedroom talk for your best friend—outside of the office.

Other people. If you want to hurt your reputation and become known as someone who can’t be trusted, go ahead and feed the rumor mill. But, if you want to maintain the respect and trust of your co-workers, refuse to participate in any gossip.