



“that’s what she said”

a ford & harrison blog about the popular television series “the office”

Veggie Tale of Terror

January 21, 2011 - by: [Kristin Starnes Gray](#)

Litigation Value: Inappropriate Comments by Kevin, Creed, Michael, and Darryl = Yet More Expensive Fodder for Hostile Work Environment Claims; Cost of Sparkly Resolution Board = \$4; Michael Force-Feeding Broccoli to Kevin = Priceless.

It’s a brand new year, and our friends at Sabre are determined to start off on the right foot by sticking to their resolutions . . . at least until Michael assaults Kevin with veggies and Creed cracks under the pressure of learning to do a cartwheel. It looks like we have many more Office antics to look forward to in 2011.

Pam’s goal for this year, aside from avoiding caffeine, appears to be boosting employee motivation and morale by encouraging them to keep their New Year’s resolutions. While many wise employers have learned that happy employees are generally more productive and far less likely to file a charge or lawsuit, I think we could all tell that Pam’s glittery “Resolution Board” could only end in disaster (and giggles). This was particularly true, given Michael’s rising anger over Holly’s decision to keep her boyfriend despite his failure to propose by her New Year’s deadline. Let the fireworks begin!

<http://blogs.hrhero.com/thatswhatsheaid/>

After Kelly spills the beans about Holly's ultimatum to her boyfriend, everyone can hardly wait to find out if she's engaged or if Michael still has a chance to win her heart. To ensure he's prepared for either outcome, Michael decides to create "happy" and "sad" boxes full of supplies to celebrate his happiness or drink away his misery. Nothing, however, prepares Michael for learning that Holly decided to ditch her ultimatum completely. Instead of turning to booze, Michael hijacks Pam's motivational meeting and berates everyone for not sticking to their resolutions. The meeting ends with Holly upset and Kevin spewing broccoli all over everyone. All is not lost, though. Michael gives a touching apology, and it looks like he still has a chance with Holly.

It may be hilarious television comedy, but this episode also illustrates the very serious implications of office romances. An employer generally isn't liable for failing to prevent office liaisons. As a practical matter, however, employers should be aware that liability may occur if an office romance goes "sour." This is precisely why some employers ask employees to sign "love contracts" acknowledging the relationship, stating they are aware of the employer's harassment policy and promising to inform the employer if one of the employees believes the policy is being violated.

After Holly cools things off with her boyfriend at the end of the episode, it looks like Michael may be signing another love contract before the end of this season. I hope it ends better than his contract with Jan. Love is certainly in the air in time for February, especially with Angela resolving to make more time for romance. So tell us your resolutions and what you thought about this week's episode.