

TALKING THE WALK

CONVERSATIONS FOR ETHICS & COMPLIANCE TEAMS

Case Scenario

Case 3

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

I stumble out of bed, finally deciding that braving the spinning floor is a necessity. Must. Get. To. The. Loo.

A few minutes later, I make it over to the sink and splash some water on my face. I look as haggard as I feel. The mascara under my eyes has settled into newly-formed wrinkles, a product of too many nights spent working late. It's been a long time since I felt this bad. I feel as old as I look.

"Wow, Kayla, you're extra lively tonight," my boss had commented to me, as she handed me my holiday gift from the company and a nice handwritten card from her. At the time, under the influence of multiple martinis, it felt like a compliment. But I think it may have been a warning, her way to trying to stop the train I'd gotten on.

As more of the night comes back to me, my regret, embarrassment, and shame add a new layer of queasiness to my fragile stomach. I try to figure out exactly where I went wrong. The company paid for two drinks at the holiday party; should I have stopped at one? Should I have begged out of after-partying at the bar with Sheri and her friends? Should I have stayed away from the dance floor rather than practically throwing myself at Hot Eric who, it turns out, isn't interested in the least? Could I have found a way to opt out of the group shots? Could I have just let our Uber driver's obvious

disapproval slide rather than making a vicious remark about how, no matter what his religion says, women have just as much right to get drunk as men?

The last memory hurts the worst. I didn't even know I had it in me to say or even think such things about a colleague, let alone put my thoughts in writing in a text. But I did. And Sheri now has my evaluation of her character on her phone to read again and again. Or to forward on to others. So much for my new friend from work.

Work. Where I have to go on Monday. Work: Where I spend all day thinking of ways to help our employees live out our values. Where I champion the importance of managers setting a good example and employees being thoughtful about what they do and how they do it. Where I'll see my boss, who's pretty sharp and probably noticed that I was getting tipsy. Where I'm part of a team with Eric, who I'm not sure I can look in the face. Where I really enjoying chatting with Sheri, who's now seen ugliness in me I didn't even know was there.

Where do I go from here?

THE CHARACTERS

Kayla, a young member of the E&C team

Sheri, the newest addition to the E&C team

Eric, Kayla's colleague

Kayla's boss, the CECO

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Questions for Discussion

TALKING THE TALK

- Where should Kayla go from here? How should she handle things with Eric?
- Kayla sent a text to say something awful to Sheri. What should Sheri do in response?
- What can she do to try to repair her relationship with Sheri?
- Is there anything Kayla's boss could or should have done differently at the party? Beforehand?

WALKING THE WALK

1. Kayla's story starts with a holiday party gone awry, but similar things could happen after any company event or even conferences. What are some guidelines for living out our values while on the job but not at the job?
2. Kayla's decisions after the work event will have an impact on her relationships at work. What is the appropriate line between professional and personal?
3. How well do we as a team get past conflicts and times we upset or disappoint one another? How can our values help us weather such challenges?
4. Kayla feels particularly mortified about her behavior because she is a member of the E&C team. What unique challenges pressures, and responsibilities are inherent in being part of E&C? Do you have the support and guidance you need to meet them?

FROM THE ECI DATABANK

60% of HR professionals say their company plans to serve alcohol at the annual holiday party¹.



1 in 4 people say that they have had an experience where they regretted their behavior after over imbibing at a work-related event².

80% of people surveyed have observed a co-worker embarrassing him/herself after drinking too much³.

Just over two in five employees (41 percent) are offered additional ethics and compliance training prior to the holidays.



"Just-in-time" training is triggered and delivered in the context of real-time employee needs, e.g., calendared meetings with vendors or foreign government officials, scheduled overseas business travel, etc. Only about a third (36 percent) of companies provide just-in-time training to employees.



1. Source: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/alcohol-and-work-holiday-parties.aspx>
2. Source: <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/12/16/459700591/from-tipsy-to-regret-your-tales-from-the-office-holiday-party>
3. Source: <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/12/16/459700591/from-tipsy-to-regret-your-tales-from-the-office-holiday-party>