

LEGAL LESSONS FROM **MAD MEN**

Things you really shouldn't do in the office

AMC's hit Mad Men recently wrapped up its most-viewed season ever. Packed with drama and intrigue, ad-agency Sterling Cooper Draper Price isn't your typical office environment. And while the characters are vibrant, they're no role-models. So extinguish your cigarettes, set aside the scotch, and return to reality as we recount Mad Men season five's top examples of how not to act in an office environment.

Do not kiss or make sexually explicit drunken comments to your employees.

1



No means no, Lane: making sexual advances at the office is completely unacceptable.

Claims of sexual harassment can be brought in instances where the nature of the harassment gives rise to a hostile work environment. Offhand comments, teasing, and requests for sexual favors can lead to serious civil penalties. Employers can face hefty civil suits, and if the harassment includes unwanted sexual touching, potential criminal charges can be filed as well.

Do not contemptuously throw money in the face of your employee.

2



Don throwing money in Peggy's face was not only degrading, but also bullying.

While it may be a little much to refer to Don as a bully, it is important to alert all employers and employees to new legislation that is emerging throughout the country. The **Healthy Workplace Bill**, a piece of anti-bullying legislation tailored specifically for the workplace, is **gaining momentum** and may even be law in several states by the end of the year.

Do not hire someone specifically for gender or race.

3



SCDP's equal opportunity hiring ad and overall hiring practices are discriminatory.

The ad references Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. SCDP attempted to be an equal opportunity employer for race, but the partners forgot about gender when turning male applicants away. It is illegal for any employer to hire or fire an employee when gender is a motivating factor. An employer can argue that gender is an occupational qualification for the job, but in this case, gender should have no bearing on the hiring practices of a secretary.

Do not embezzle funds from the company by forging your partner's signature.

4

Don Draper



A gentleman's pride: rather than asking for help, Lane embezzled funds from the agency.

Lane's embezzlement is a purely criminal act. Depending on the amount, embezzlement can land the offender with jail time, hefty fines or restitution, and the black mark can follow them forever on a permanent criminal record. Any person accused of mismanaging funds for a company should seek a lawyer's help immediately.

Do not get provoked into conference room brawls.

5



Lane commits assault and battery by beating up Pete.

It may be exhilarating to watch an embarrassed Pete Campbell 'get his' on television, but in the real world, fighting should never occur in the office. Lane's conduct constitutes assault and battery and is a criminal offense. Depending on jurisdiction, Lane could face misdemeanor or felony charges.

and the rest... Although glamorous and entertaining, the entire season is a guide for how not to act in the modern workplace. In reality, office and legal drama isn't fun. To learn how to do things the right way, visit the [Rocket Lawyer Employment Legal Center](#).

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