



focus: race discrimination

How to figure out whether a member of your crew might mistreat coworkers

When you consider that slightly more than half of Americans have at least some racist attitudes, you know there's a possibility that someone on your crew dislikes his or her black coworkers.

And that can be a problem.

If a crew member is allowed to engage in racist behaviors, he or she won't pay the price in the end. Your employer will. That's because the victim of the racism might sue for discrimination. And guess who'll pay if the allegations are judged to be true?

That's why it's important to identify members of your crew who might engage in racist behaviors.

One of the best ways to

identify racists is to look for staffers who frequently stereotype their coworkers. They make statements based on misconceptions and misinformation, and they apply broad generalizations and attributes to their black colleagues, ignoring people as the individuals they are.

Watch the language

Be wary of the topics discussed and the language used. Is a crew member applying terms like "us" and "them" when referring to black coworkers? Is he or she creating artificial divisions within the group? Does the person make derogatory comments about the culture or customs of black staffers?

Also take note when someone appears to be openly hostile to his or her African Americans colleagues. For instance, a racist might describe a black woman as being too aggressive. Significant levels of unjustified criticism directed at black coworkers is also a common sign of racism.

Of course, you also need to pay attention to the more obvious indicators of racism, such as the use of the N-word.

Important: If you think a crew member could be a racist, work with your HR manager to discipline the staffer or terminate him or her if the offensive behavior doesn't stop.
