

To: The Bubble
From: RJon Robins, Founder & CEO
Re: Amendment To No Assholes Policy
Date: Sunday June 14, 2020

For several days I have been thinking about and drafting a letter to share my personal thoughts regarding the way many black Americans are treated in this great country of ours.

I am up to more than seven pages in that separate other letter. It speaks to my thoughts about the true origins and real root-causes of racism and discrimination. It also explains some of the personal and pragmatic reasons why I am so very much opposed to all forms of discrimination and why I feel so strongly that all lives matter. Plus, how The Doctrine of Sacrifice you've heard me speak about, actually contributes to racism and discrimination.

That other letter also shares some of my own family's experiences with racism which I've personally been largely protected from in ways I understand black parents can't protect their own children.

Which is all to say: "I get it".

More specifically, I get, that no matter how much I try I'll never fully "get it" at all. That is why I'm not going to patronize anyone who does get it by pretending that I do.

I am a white man. I'll probably never fully understand what it's like to be a black man living in America. Just like no black man will ever fully understand what it's like to be a black woman. So, let's not waste time pretending. Because all that time & energy used, pretending to know what it's like can instead be put to so much better use: Making things better.

And now that I've said that, let me not engage in any of the posturing I've seen happening across America the past few weeks every time I turn on the news. Instead, let me tell you what How To Manage A Small Law Firm is doing and what we've been doing for more than 10 years to promote equality and empowerment. And one small thing How To Manage A Small Law Firm has done to clarify our official position on racism and discrimination.

But before we get to the rest of what I have to say...and even though I think it should be obvious to anyone who knows me or has done business with my company...before we proceed I'm just going to come right out and say this because as one of my trusted advisors recently reminded me "It's not enough to believe it. And sometimes it's not even enough for people to be able to see that you believe it. Sometimes you also have to say it". Black lives matter.

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I am obviously deeply troubled by what is happening in the world today with regard to racism, prejudice and discrimination.

There is simply no-excuse for judging another person's merit or intentions based on his or her race, creed, color, gender, physical condition, age, national origin, religion or sexual orientation...ever!

Instead, I am confident our whole team shares the view that the world will be a better place when each individual's merit, and intentions are judged by their words and actions.

As a species we have made great strides over the past thousand years in terms of how we live and work-together in most parts of the world. And there is obviously still, much that remains to be done. The world we live in still provides far too much evidence of individuals and whole groups of individuals who are being treated in ways that those acting upon them (or making decisions about how they are to be acted upon) would NEVER want themselves or their loved-ones to be treated or acted upon because of assumptions made about merit or intentions based on race, creed, color, physical characteristics, national origin, religion and/or sexual orientation.

I also see cause for great optimism.

Due to the convergence of a variety of factors, we as a society may be on the precipice of a quantum-leap-forward in terms of equality, understanding, civility and better appreciation for the melting pot that makes and has always made this country great.

Unfortunately, it is also possible we could all miss this unique opportunity in history when the paths of politics, technology, media, the economy & a pandemic have all crossed; and individuals the whole world over are perhaps now ready for meaningful change.

What concerns me is that instead of thoughtful and deliberate leadership, I am seeing a rush to one-upmanship. Too much focus on appearances, not enough real, deep, deliberate thought and analysis. Too much talk, not enough thought. Too many gestures, not enough substance. What happened in Minneapolis, both the incident itself and what it says about us as a people that it could happen, is all too important for just a meme or a few pithy lines of support. So that's not what you'll get from me and that's not what you'll get from our company.

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A lot of what comes next for our society, I think can be very positively influenced by entrepreneurs taking thoughtful, contemplative actions and focusing on doing what we can each do best, to make the world a better place.

Entrepreneurs are in a unique position to advance society by demonstrating the practical value of equality and profitable empowerment.

As you may already know, especially if you read The Statement Of Values, Philosophies and Standards (a.k.a. our "Manifesto") given to you when you first started working with us, we've been thinking for a long time about the way(s) in which we can have the greatest and most durable positive impact on the world.

Just as I would imagine each of our Members has given deliberate and contemplative thought to this same question at least ever since we asked you to define what a "Successful" business means to you?

Recall, our definition of a "Successful" business which you were invited to adopt and take-seriously is one which:

- Generates enough net profit for you to live the way you choose to live instead of settling for living however you must due to a poorly managed business;
- Affords you enough control and freedom of time to engage in activities which are meaningful to you, be those personal or civic in nature; and
- It should be a business which is at a large-enough scale to be used as a tool by you to make the world a better place at whatever scale suits you.

So it seems this is a good time to reflect again on what we as entrepreneurs can do to make the world a better place in order that society may benefit from the unique merits of all who would contribute, if treated equally.

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A lot of people think the only way to bring about equality is by legislation. But notwithstanding the many attempts that have been made throughout history to do so, we cannot legislate personal responsibility, peace, love or understanding. Because those are all volitional.

We entrepreneurs have something better to offer.

Consider three levels of "equality":

The lowest and most basic level is artificial equality. This is the equality of access we saw being fought for during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's & 1960's. This kind of equality is forced upon a group of people by a law, rule or regulation. And like a rubber band stretched too far beyond its manufactured shape, artificial equality forced upon people often snaps-back unexpectedly. True entrepreneurs don't need to be legislated into giving equal access, it's just good business. With that being said, I fully understand that this foundational level of "forced equality" is sometimes necessary when there aren't enough true entrepreneurs running successful businesses. The point is, it's not enough.

Willful equality is better than forced artificial equality because it's volitional. In other words, no-one is being forced to do anything. This "next level" of equality begins to happen when good people with good intentions willfully and by volition, open their minds, explore possibilities and take it upon themselves to educate themselves by getting to know their fellow citizens from different backgrounds. This level of equality is all about the inherent fairness of treating all people as we would each want to be treated. This is what's usually being referred to when people speak about being "politically correct". Unfortunately, this kind of equality is often overlooked or even shoved-aside in favor of appearances. And since this level of equality is mostly subjective, it can be easily hijacked by a person's feelings or agenda.

Pragmatic equality is not as politically-correct as willful or volitional equality. It lacks the "feel good" elements of P.C. driven equality but I would argue it's a higher level of equality. Pragmatic equality based on the pursuit of profit goes beyond merely "tolerating" a person who is different. Pragmatic equality is an essential element in the dedicated pursuit of profit, and it's based on self-interest which is the most reliable motivation in the world. I treat you as my equal

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because I am pragmatic. I value your merits and so I want you on my team. Not because I am being forced to employ you or incentivized by some artificial rule or regulation. And not because I feel any guilt or an obligation to give you an opportunity. But rather, strictly on your merit because you have earned it.

Someday I hope to be living in a world where people are at least pragmatic about equality and so we won't need artificial. In that world people will be free to have misunderstandings without fear of escalation based on racial or any other prejudices. And no-one will need to worry about being "politically correct" because everyone will be assumed to be pursuing profit, pragmatically and unapologetically. Someday I hope to be living in that kind of a world because it will mean everyone will have the security and self-confidence of knowing they're being judged on individual merit and nothing else.

Unfortunately, many people still think business and entrepreneurialism are tools of oppression; But really, business and entrepreneurialism have always been tools of equality and empowerment:

- Equality because the most profitable way to run a business is as a meritocracy where an individual's skills, attitude and abilities i.e., merit, and not race, creed color or anything-else is the ultimate decider of retention and advancement.
- Empowerment, because a well-managed business leverages every advantage regardless of race, creed, color, etc. And also, because well-managed businesses produce wealth and other resources that can be used to empower a person or a people.

But I know the world is still a very imperfect place and there remains much to be done to protect all minorities. And How To Manage is not a political organization. It has no particular political agenda except to liberate entrepreneurs so they can produce wealth and other resources to protect people against oppression and fight for equality, if that is what each individual owner chooses to do with his or her wealth and resources. We are pragmatic. We delight in liberating the entrepreneur by empowering our Members to build an engine of financial freedom, personal freedom and professional influence. But How To Manage does not presume to dictate how any of our Members may choose to use the wealth and resources we help you to create. Though we do try and educate our Members about the benefits of taking a pragmatic approach to all aspects of

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business and that includes judging a person's value to the organization based on his or her merit instead of a whole host of irrelevant (and unprofitable) factors including race, creed, color, religion, sexual orientation, etc. We simply want each of our Members to hire & retain the best person for the job, as measured by the person who can and will do the job best, for their business.

We do however have a formal "No Assholes". And that policy has now been amended to clarify our position with this additional bullet point to be added in our next print run: "Racists, bigots, misogynists, anti-Semites, and people who judge others based on religious beliefs, national origin or sexual preference, instead of individual merit." [Are deemed to be Assholes whom we will make every effort to prevent Assholes from engaging or their engagement terminated]. (See Page 45 of Manifesto "Statement of Values, Philosophies and Standards").

We've never required anyone to devote his or her time, energy or resources to anyone else's cause or to a cause that is not near & dear to their heart. Equally, we've never knowingly supported or tolerated anyone who knowingly acts to create a world which would deny the inalienable civil rights of anyone-else. And now we are amending our No-Assholes policy to formalize what I think our informal stance has obviously always been on racism, misogyny, religious intolerance and discrimination of any kind.

Changing Gears...

Let's all change the world. Let's all stop making excuses about not writing a business plan, stop hiding out from our firm's numbers, stop procrastinating about documenting our firm's PSP's and let's ALL build businesses that produce enough value and run efficiently enough to accumulate great wealth so we can use our wealth and freedom to fight for all these causes we individually believe in so much. I am proud of the way in which HTM contributes to all of those causes by giving you the tools to become the people of wealth, freedom and influence that all those causes need us to be!

I know more than anyone else in the world about one very specific thing. Outside of this one very specific thing, I freely admit that I don't know much. But inside this small "wheelhouse" of mine I know I have great power to help equip an army of wealthy and resourced influencers.

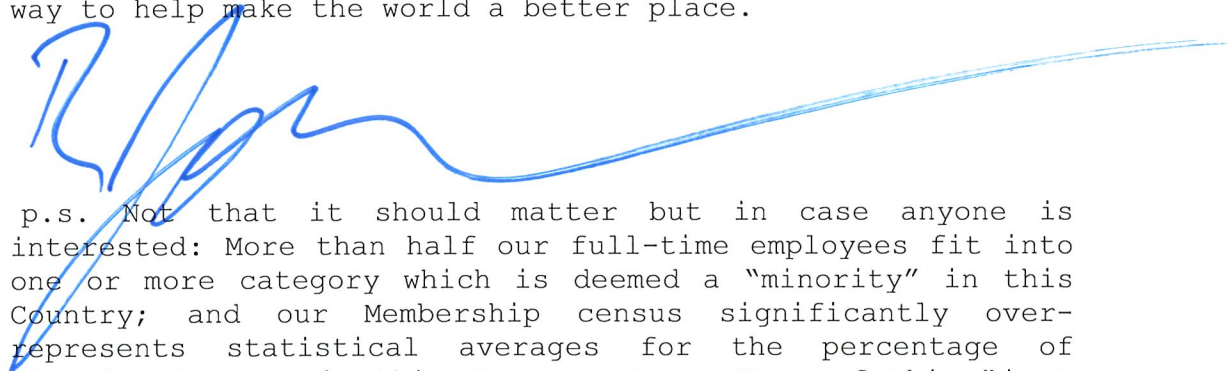
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HTM is the best in the world today and the best that has ever been at one very specific thing - and that is managing and maximizing The 7 Main Parts of a solo/small law firm so that the firm can make its owner(s) financially, personally and professionally successful.

But some of our Members have been trying to get me to step outside my wheelhouse. And I certainly understand the temptation to believe because we are the best in the world at one thing, that we ought to also try and be the best or even moderately effective in an entirely unrelated area.

But I'm not going to do that. Entrepreneurial maturity dictates that we stay focused and keep our businesses strong and vibrant. So what I am going to do is keep doing what I've been doing for the past 20 years and keep creating a place...a "bubble"... inside of which each of our Members can grow a strong and vibrant business that empowers them with time, money, energy, influence and other resources to make a positive impact on the world. And I'll ask you and I'll keep asking you to be deliberate and choose whatever way matters enough to you that you'll stick with it for the next twenty years or so, in order that you can make a lasting difference in your own unique way by standing-up, standing-up, and standing-up for the causes that are important to you.

For ten years our tagline has been "Happy Lawyers Make More Money". Because the alternative to having a profitable law firm that works for you is to be a lawyer who has the will but not the means to make a difference. This is MY way and my team's way to help make the world a better place.



p.s. Not that it should matter but in case anyone is interested: More than half our full-time employees fit into one or more category which is deemed a "minority" in this Country; and our Membership census significantly over-represents statistical averages for the percentage of minority lawyers in this Country, too. None of this "just happened". And none of it is the result of any legislation. Instead, as CEO of this company I am proud to say it's all because of merit based decisions regarding hiring, advancement and yes termination too.