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Talk it out

By Post Staff Report

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As Election Day nears, political banter at work is all but inevitable. Here, career experts weigh in on how to keep yourself out of trouble — and when to keep your mouth shut.

FLIP THE QUESTION

A pesky colleague asking what do you think of Obama's tax plan? The best way to get out of it is to turn the question right around on him. "You know they have an opinion, or else they wouldn't be asking you the question," says Nicole Williams, a New York career expert.

STAY OBJECTIVE

If you have to state an opinion, stick "with the general public — what they're saying on the morning shows," Williams says. "That way, you're not going to be so controversial."

AVOID HOTHEADS

Unless your goal is a cable-news-style spat, avoid getting into it with your office's die-hard politico. "The majority of us can have a conversation and not feel like it's the end of the world if we have different affiliations," says Williams, "but people who are passionate about it tend to be the most dogmatic."

TREAD LIGHTLY

Sometimes it's impossible to bite one's lip — in which case, says Williams, the tenets of civil conversation become particularly important.

"Start with, 'I see what you're saying, but this was my thought...,'" she suggests. "You want to validate that you've heard their point and you get where they're coming from."

ZIP THOSE LIPS

You should never bring up politics during job interviews or while courting new clients, says Amy Friedman, CEO of Partners in Human Resources International, a Manhattan career coaching outfit. "People can't help judging. They might say, 'oh you're really conservative, so you're not going to fit in this environment.' Or, 'you're so liberal, and we don't need that kind of liberal approach here.'"

STAY OFFLINE

With our personal social-media networks so often including co-workers, clients, and business contacts, posting political diatribes on Facebook and Twitter can be risky business. "Presume that everything you say is essentially public," Nicole Williams says. Remember that potential employers troll social media sites to learn more about candidates.

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“They can infer or assume things that may not be true at all,” says Amy Friedman, CEO of Partners in Human Resources International. “Sometimes when beliefs are in writing, it can be even worse than when two people are face to face.”

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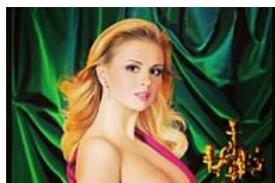
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