Apple Faces Backlash on Return to Work Policy

APPLE MINI-REVOLT SHOWS DANGERS OF MAKING REMOTE EMPLOYEES RETURN TO WORK

Having gotten used to working from home, many employees are reluctant to heed the call to return to the office. Apple is learning that lesson the hard way. Unlike tech giants Amazon and Google, Apple decided against allowing remote work to continue on a permanent basis and unveiled a Hybrid Work Pilot requiring all corporate employees to come to the office at least one day per week starting April 11, ratcheting up to two days per week on May 2 and three days per week on May 23.

The last thing Apple expected was to spark a mini-revolt. A group of employees published an open letter to executives criticizing the policy for being inflexible, inefficient, inimical to diversity and, above all, hypocritical. “We tell all of our customers how great our products are for remote work,” the letter states, “yet, we ourselves, cannot use them to work remotely?” At least one high ranking executive, Ian Goodfellow, Apple’s director of machine learning, has left the company because of the policy.

A Canadian company in a similar situation would also face another complication: risk of constructive dismissal lawsuits by departing employees who refuse to comply with the Hybrid Work mandate. Based on caselaw, forcing a telecommuter to return to the office does, in fact, constitute constructive dismissal warranting damages when employees are given the right to telecommute, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

Find out about the 5 things you can do to ensure you don’t commit constructive dismissal when requiring telecommuters to return to the office.