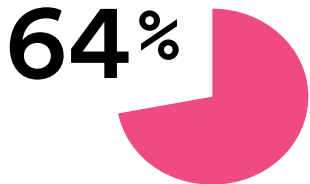


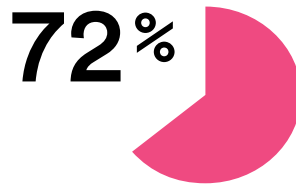
## How to Navigate Political Conversations at Work

Companies have historically **avoided taking a stance** on political issues, but today's employees want to know where their employer's stand on key issues and if those values align with their own.

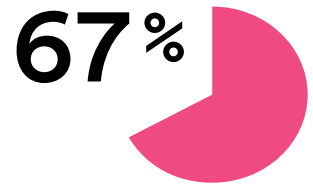
**Business leaders need to recognize this change and create a safe space for dialogue.** We asked our top panel of business leaders how to navigate political conversations at work during a charged election year.



say political discussions have grown **more heated** over the past 5 years



feel **stressed** or **anxious** when heated arguments occur



millennials have **quit their job** over political differences

"Sharply divided U.S. political climate is reflected in the workplace, randstad U.S. study finds." *Randstad*, 24 Oct. 2018. <https://rlc.randstadusa.com/press-room/press-releases/sharply-divided-us-political-climate-is-reflected-in-the-workplace-randstad-us-study-finds>. Press Release

### How can companies join the political discussion?



#### Define your company values

"No company should ever think about engaging in these types of conversations unless they've established what their values are... If you know the answer to that question at your core, then I think the answers that will follow will be a lot easier."

- Malcolm Glenn



#### Listen to understand, not convince

"Give up on convincing and be curious about the underlying values. We might never agree on the facts, but when we get to the value level we can understand what is important to that person and find some level of agreement where that person feels heard."

- Brian Emerson



#### Find some common ground

"On some political issues, there is may be no agreement - but its helpful to find common ground around work, to look for things we can agree on, and connect as human beings around a shared purpose. "

- Alisa Cohn



#### Don't be afraid to take a stand

"You need to think about who are my customers, and who are the talent that I'm trying to attract and retain today. Young people who live in cities are politically active, and they want to work for a company that has a strong sense of purpose, and makes a stand."

- Jenny Dearborn

### Conversation Starters

How do you see this issue impacting our business?

What are some ways our business can show support for this political issue?

How are you feeling about this political issue and how can I support you as a manager during this challenging time for you?

What is so upsetting/ exciting about this issue for you?

# How can managers help?

## Reach Out to Employees

“If you know someone is upset, simply ask them, ‘What is the most upsetting thing about this for you?’ You want to learn their values and make people feel heard.”

- Brian Emerson



## Branch Out

“Seek out people who disagree with you and try to understand their point of view. It’s helpful for you to be exposed to other people who are outside your bubble, so you can bring a different perspective when you go back to work.”

- Alisa Cohn

## Sanction Space

“Sanctioning space for people to have thoughtful conversations actually gives them the outlet they need so that they’re not as predisposed to get into the fights, or the contentious arguments, or the Slack back and forth.”

- Malcom Glenn



## Lead by Example

“This election is a great opportunity to lead with kindness, empathy, and curiosity. This is another opportunity for us to practice these skills because, we’re all in this together.”

- Jenny Dearborn



Managers are the ones leading the way. You need to showcase that we can, to quote Ruth Bader Ginsburg, **‘Disagree without being disagreeable.’** If you can model that behavior, you’ll be the glue that ties your team together and empowers them to be able to have uncomfortable conversations.

- Alisa Cohn

## Experts and References



### Jenny Dearborn

Recognized as one of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Tech for five consecutive years, **Jenny Dearborn** is a thought leader in HR, HCM, the Future of Work, and data analytics. She is the Chief People Officer at Klaviyo, and the Founder of Actionable Analytics Group, an advisory firm that supports Human Capital Management and Education Tech startups from Seed to IPO.



### Malcom Glenn

**Malcom Glenn** is the Director of Public Affairs at Better.com. He's also a Senior Fellow at The Center for Workforce Inclusion, and a Fellow for the Future of Property Rights program at New America. He was previously the Head of Global Policy for Accessibility and Underserved Communities at Uber Technologies.



### Alisa Cohn

**Alisa Cohn** works with senior executives and high potential leaders to help them create positive and permanent shifts in their leadership impact. She was named the #1 Startup Coach in the world at the 2019 Thinkers50 Marshall Goldsmith Coaching Awards and one of the Top 30 Global Gurus for Startups of 2020.

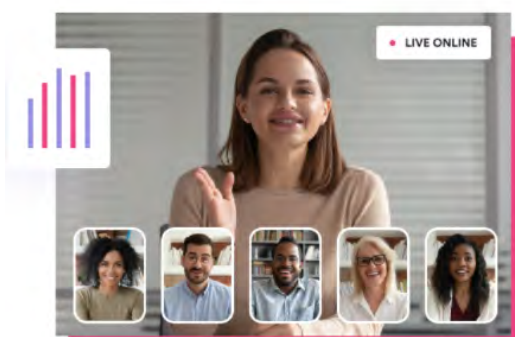


### Dr. Brian Emerson

**Dr. Brian Emerson** is the Founder and Principal of Riverstone, where he partners with clients of various sizes across diverse industries. He teaches leaders and organizations how to leverage paradoxical tensions at the University of Notre Dame, the University of Maryland, and at Georgetown University.

## About Hone

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Find more resources on navigating political conversations at [honehq.com](https://honehq.com)