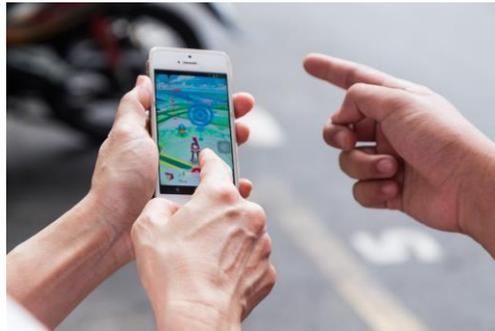


Has Pikachu Invaded Your Workplace?

Brain Teaser



You have noticed some of your employees getting caught up in the Pokémon GO craze, chattering about the mobile game. You know it's only a matter of time before this current fad creeps into the workplace and your employees are on their smart phones during work hours or on extended breaks in search of "Pocket Monsters".

You fear this new obsession will affect productivity and possibly cause accidents and other workplace issues. You believe the only way to avoid complications is to establish a policy against playing Pokémon GO.

How should you handle this issue?

- **A.** In order to discipline employees for playing Pokémon GO during working time, you must have a specific policy prohibiting employees from playing this game.
- **B.** Playing Pokémon GO during working time likely violates one or more of your existing policies (e.g. a Cell Phone policy, Computer and Network Use policy, Safety policy and Rest Break policy). Use your existing policies to discipline employees playing Pokémon GO during working time.
- **C.** You cannot prohibit employees from playing an online game, even during working time. This is a right protected by the National Labor Relations Act.
- **D.** Enact a policy that prohibits your employees from bringing cell phones into the workplace. (answer on next page).



- **The correct answer is B.**
- Explanation:
- Fads will come and go. First, it was Facebook. Then it was Candy Crush. Today, it is *Pokémon GO*. Tomorrow, it will be something else.
- Employers are free to enact whatever workplace policies they want -- provided those policies don't violate the law and as long as such policies are uniformly applied with no exceptions for any reason.
- While implementing a cell phone ban in the workplace is technically legal, it may cause a mutiny in the workplace. Moreover, an all-out cell phone ban may be difficult to enforce, as some of your employees may legitimately need their cell phones to perform work.
- Enacting a policy that specifically prohibits playing *Pokémon GO* is also a viable option, but it might not be the best solution. Creating a narrow policy will solve this problem, but it will not address future mobile gaming trends. When the next trend hits, you will need to create another policy to prohibit that trend. Ultimately, your employee handbook could become as large as a phone book.
- Instead, create policies that prohibit employees from playing games such as *Pokémon GO* during work time (even if it is downtime) and restrict when and where such games can be played on work property during non-work hours.

You may already have such policies in place (e.g. policies prohibiting employees from using company-provided computers and cell phones for personal use and from using personal cell phones during working time). Review these existing policies and determine if they effectively address the problem and then modify the policies as necessary. Then, discuss these policies with your employees. Remind them that playing *Pokémon GO* during working time would violate these policies, which may result in disciplinary action.

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