

BUSINESS EYE

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Failing to respect other opinions

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We are facing unprecedented anger and extreme aggressive expressions of it across the Western world.

This is having a major impact on my business – as it is yours – and we need to adjust for the impacts.

The problem today is that, as individuals, we have been sold the idea that what matters most is me.

Western democracies are now plotting on the nonsensical notion that we should all expect to have what we want,

ignoring the fact that this is impossible from both a resource basis and when people disagree.

It used to be that if I were to be deemed to have said something offensive it would be so because it were judged generally to be so.

Today the social benchmark is that I need to be worried that what I say might offend a single person in the crowd.

And woe betide anyone who dares to do so, because the mob will descend like a plague of social media locusts and rip away any remaining notion you might still hold that people are prepared to respectfully disagree.

Recently a friend sent a Facebook request asking that I sign a petition to ban the use of non-disclosure agreements in the wake of the Philip Green allegation.

I don't support this because, irrespective of my views about Philip Green, I

am appalled at the promotion of the cult of assuming someone is guilty even before a charge is made.

But what made me think was that I decided not to make this point because I knew the mob zealots would descend on me like a hunting pack of starving hyenas looking to gorge on the next hapless person willing to offer a contrary opinion to the populist psychosis.

I have the right to offend you as an individual, as do you me. Only through a respectful exchange of opposing views can there be hope for our way of life.

From pipe bombs in a synagogue to MPs asking the Prime Minister to 'bring her own noose', the polarisation of angry debate is a cancer in society.

Society is you, your team and your customers.

What is it like in your office?

Are there cliques who look

down on others? Is it the sort of place where it is safe for someone to offer a view you don't share.

What if someone were to suggest longer holidays, more pay or free lattes?

Do you encourage debate or shut it down? Are you part of the psychosis or are you recognising the destruction of debate in our midst and doing something about it.

Last month a plane load of tourists took pity on a convicted rapist being deported and managed to prevent his deportation at a cost to you and me of £20,000.

We actually believe we know better even with no facts at our disposal.

Last week we had an issue at work because a couple of our international workers spoke together in their mother tongue, leading others to object vehemently.

We are all way too sensitive and it is killing our collective freedom.



LIBRARY PICTURE

Fear of speaking out is threatening freedom