

Netflix “Sees What’s Next” with New Policy Addressing Employee Activism

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In a significant change of course among major employers, Netflix recently made several changes to its employee culture memo, which is now called “[Netflix Culture – Seeking Excellence](#).”

Among other things, Netflix inserted a section on “Artistic Expression.” In it, the company acknowledges that “[e]ntertaining the world is an amazing opportunity and also a challenge because viewers have very different tastes and points of view. So we offer a wide variety of TV shows and movies, some of which can be provocative.” The memo goes on, “[d]epending on your role, you may need to work on titles you perceive to be harmful. If you’d find it hard to support our content breadth, Netflix may not be the best place for you.”

This change stands in stark contrast to the position of many other employers which, in the recent past, have been relatively deferential to employees’ opinions regarding corporate decisions and actions vis-à-vis controversial social and political issues.

Some news [outlets](#) have suggested this policy change may be in response to the backlash Netflix received from some of its employees after the release of the recent Dave Chappelle comedy special “The Closer.”

Notably, Netflix also added sections regarding employees treating all information as confidential, its commitment to philanthropy (by doubling donations to charity), and its representation-focused drive to see “a variety of stories and people on screen.”

Finally, Netflix changed the name of the “Real Values” section to instead be called “Valued Behaviors.” Now, this section lists the following as “valued behaviors”: judgment; selflessness; courage; communication; inclusion; integrity; passion; innovation; and curiosity. The characteristics underlying these categories include things like spending Netflix members’ money wisely, seeking to “understand members’ changing tastes and desires,” and recognizing “we all have biases” while working to counteract them.

This memo was released shortly before it was [reported](#) Netflix notified approximately 150 full-time

employees—roughly 2% of its US workforce—and 70 part-time employees of their pending termination. Most of the terminated employees are based in the United States. Certain news outlets have noted that these terminations and culture changes coincide with Netflix’s cancelling production for several youth-focused “woke” programs, including *Wings of Fire*, *Antiracist Baby*, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You*, and *With Kind Regards from Kindergarten*. Netflix stated these lay-offs are due to “slowing revenue growth” and “business needs” rather than individual performance.

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