

Insights, News & Events

## STARBUCKS' 'RACE RELATIONS' CAMPAIGN WAS BREEDING GROUND FOR LAWSUITS, EXPERTS SAY

News  
Mar 25, 2015

Ed Harold was quoted in *SHRM* on March 25, 2015. The article "Starbucks' 'Race Relations' Campaign Was Breeding Ground for Lawsuits, Experts Say" discussed how Starbucks' week-long campaign urging employees to write "Race Together" on coffee cups to spark conversations about race relations has the potential to open the coffee giant to liability.

Ed said employers are obligated under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to protect employees from racial harassment by customers.

"You can't assume everyone's going to respond to this in a respectful and intelligent manner," Ed said. "I have this picture in my head of a customer looking at these words on their cup, and he's having a bad morning, and it angers him and he says something nasty."

Or: "Perhaps [a customer says] there was an affirmative action candidate in my law school and he was the dumbest guy I ever met in my life. If that offends an employee, and an employee reports it and a manager investigates, and then [the employee is] saying, 'Hey, wait a minute, you told us you're trying to start these conversations.' "

To read the full article, please visit [SHRM](#).

### Related People



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