



HR & Compliance
Centre

Thank you for joining us!

**This webinar
will start shortly**



Brightmine and the Brightmine logo are trademarks of LNRS Data Services Limited.

Compliant Employment Policies and Handbooks: Adapting in Times of Change

Presented June 18, 2025



Speaker



Kate Bischoff,
Founder,
k8bisch LLC

About Me

- Management-side Employment Attorney & HR Consultant
- Human Resources Officer for the U.S. Department of State in Jerusalem & Zambia
- Investigations
- Policies
- Trainings



K8's Rules for Handbooks

- What would a new employee think?
- Who looks at the handbook before talking to anyone?
- Must be easy to read
- Must be easy to understand
- Be transparent
- Take out the fluff & legalese
- Use the singular “they”
- Only goes to employees & applicants – NOT contractors
- When I cry



Basic Handbook Principles

- Sets out your culture
- You can be mean
- You can be permissive
- You can be in the middle
- Consider terms:
 - Employee vs. team member
 - Manager vs. supervisor
 - First or third person



Reminders

- Laws set floors
- Employers can always go above & beyond
- Drafting a policy to a law can often be a mistake
- You can be creative
- Hyperlinks are your friend





I'm Begging

- Use your critical thinking skills when drafting policies
- Do not just use the template you found on google
- What would work best for you & your people

MUST HAVES

- Disclaimer
- EEO/Discrimination
- Harassment
- Reasonable accommodations
 - Religion
 - Disability
 - Pregnancy
 - Nursing
- Retaliation
- Dependent on workforce
 - Attendance
 - Wage & hour
 - Dress code
- Depending on state/city
 - Wage disclosure
 - Personnel file
 - Sick & safe time
- Depending on size
 - FMLA
- Your values

Why?

- Immigration/I-9s
- Harassment provision that requires the target to say no
- Massive list of things the employee can do wrong
- A leave section that includes every possible leave under the sun
- Alcohol possession prohibition
- Anything that you won't actually do
- Policies that aren't yours
- Detailed description of benefits



WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN
?

Handbooks Can't & Don't

- Create contractual obligations
- Outlast the employment
- You don't need a policy for everything
- If you can identify the person the policy was drafted for, don't write the policy

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN
?

Compliance Vigilance

- Pay attention to trends
- Sign up for legal updates at big firms
- Sign up for free HR newsletters
- Subscribe to legal resources



Determining When



- Does this impact employees directly & immediately?
- What does the statute require?

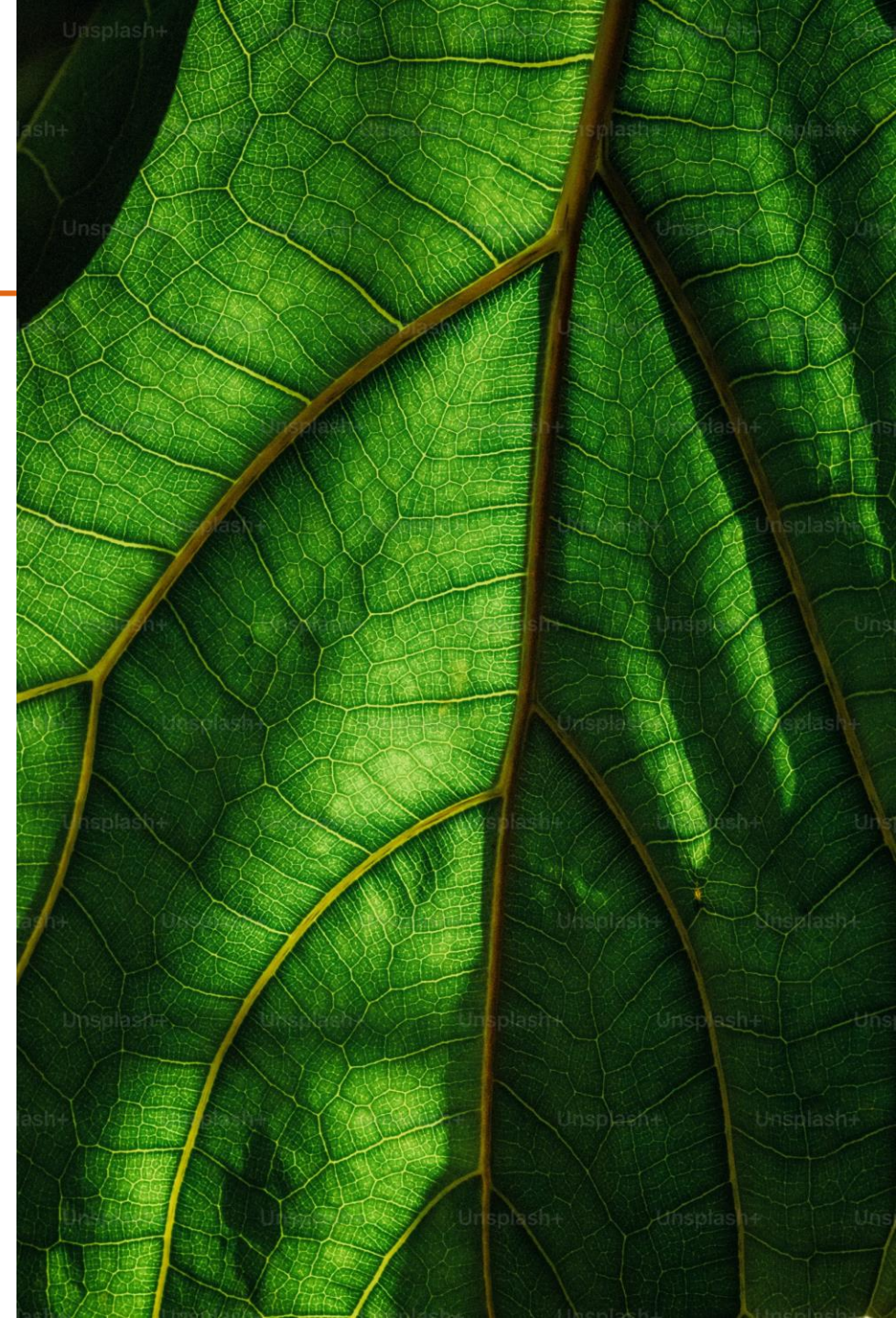
DEIB

- Under attack by EO & EEOC actions
- Handbook change?
- Unless changing values of the organization...
- Should not change discrimination & harassment policies



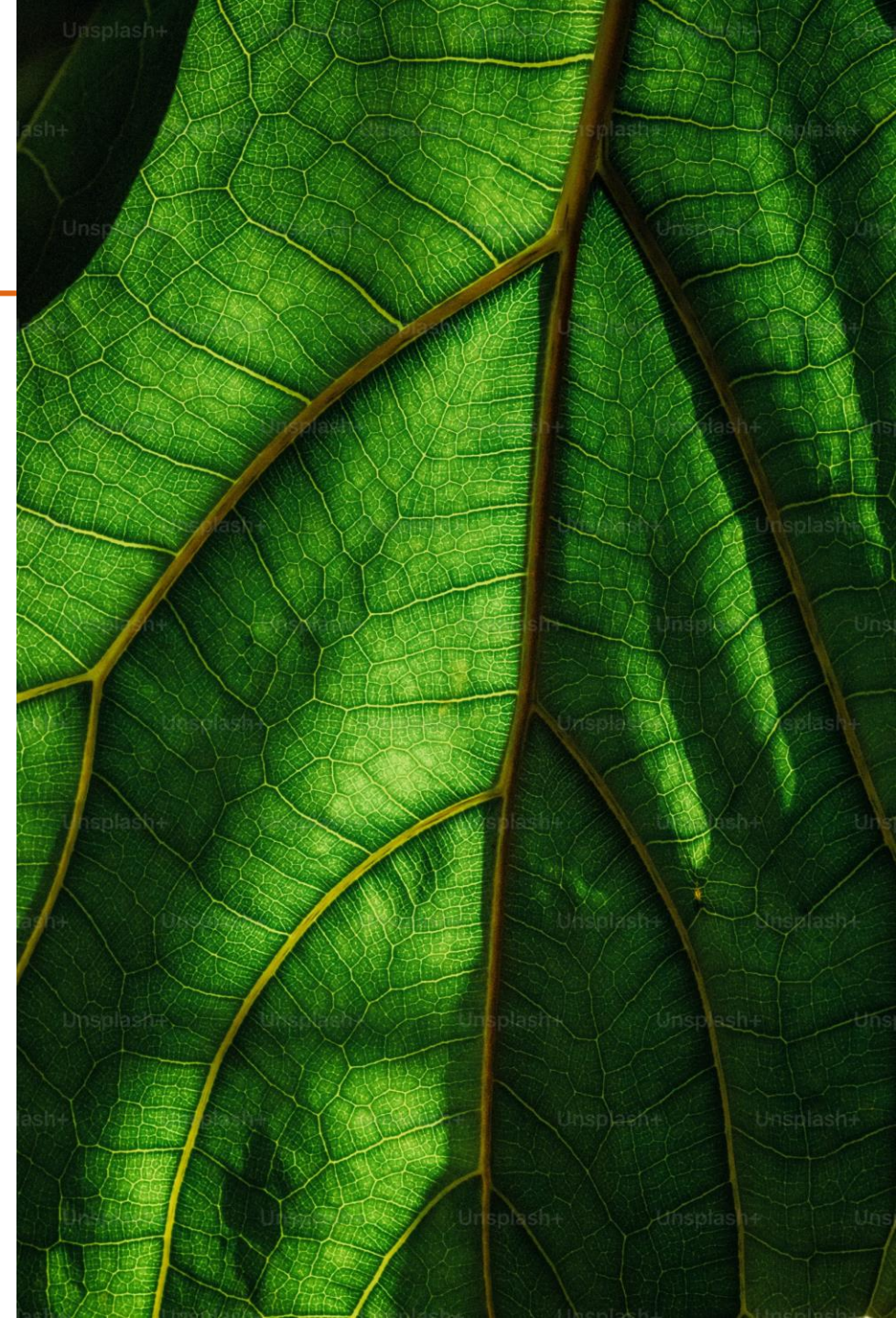
Paid Leave

- Government paid, employer granted
- Typically, operates like unemployment
- Provided employee meets entitlement for leave, employee gets the leave
- Runs concurrently with FMLA, parenting
- If you've never had these leaves before, you'll need a detailed policy
- If you've got them, add a hyperlink
- The money is not our issue



Discrimination

- Lots of changes
- Not all of them are going to affect your handbook
 - CROWN Act
 - Legal precedents
- Read through these regularly to make sure they are correct
- Be mindful of affirmative action



AI

- Artificial intelligence
- Could include what you allow employees to do, like use ChatGPT
- Likely to affect language in a handbook as part of the notice requirements
- Probably not effective for consent





WFH

- Working remotely
- The overall philosophy of the organization
- How to get remote approved
- Why approval is important
- What equipment you get
- When things could change

A photograph of a white wall with a sign that says "LOVE TO LEARN". The sign is yellow with a purple vertical stripe on the left and a white vertical stripe in the middle. The text "LOVE TO LEARN" is written in black, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The sign is mounted on the wall and has a shadow cast to its right. In the background, there are green bushes and a sunset sky.

Skill Upgrading

- How an employee can build their skills
- What programs could qualify
- What is & how costs are reimbursable

Takeaways

- Handbooks are hard
- Handbooks require vigilance
- Handbooks also need revisions as trends change
- Technology will also impact your policies
- Look at your handbook like a new employee would



Any questions?

Thank you!

Kate Bischoff,
Founder,
k8bisch LLC



@k8bisch
kate@k8bisch.com
k8bisch.com
(320) 249-9269