Question:
We have two employees who openly dislike each other. How can we help them work together effectively?

Answered by the HR Experts
Personal animosity can create a toxic environment and obstruct productivity beyond the individuals directly involved. We recommend the following practices to help improve the situation.

- Investigate the cause or causes of the conflict. It's easy to jump to conclusions about what's happening. Speak separately with the employees involved and try to understand the tension between them. Is it a personality clash, a misunderstanding, or a difference in working or communication style? Once you understand the cause, you can work to address it and find a solution.
- Encourage the employees to communicate openly with each other. You may need to facilitate a conversation to help them mediate the situation and communicate openly. If your employees are struggling to communicate effectively, they may benefit from communication training, including active listening and conflict resolution.
- Set clear expectations for behavior, communication, and performance, and make sure everyone is on the same page. Tell your employees that they don't need to be friends, but they do need to be able to work together and should be professional in the workplace.
- Lead by example. Model open communication and positive conflict resolution with your teams and peers.
- Follow up to ensure that things are improving (or have reached an acceptable stasis) and that your expectations, as well as each employee's needs, are being met.

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.