

## HR STRATEGY

# Dell uses color-coding to track employees' office attendance

"It's going to be tough news for some, and I also think they are very, very clear in their messaging," Deborah Grayson Riegel, a leadership and communication expert, tells HR Brew.



Jhvephoto/Getty Images

By **Mikaela Cohen**

May 13, 2024 · 3 min read

## Quick-to-read HR news & insights

From recruiting and retention to company culture and the latest in HR tech, HR Brew delivers up-to-date industry news and tips to help HR pros stay nimble in today's fast-changing business environment.

[Subscribe](#)

Dell is taking a colorful approach to tracking employee office attendance.

On May 13, the tech company started rating hybrid employees' attendance according to a color-coded system, [The Register reported](#). Employees will receive blue (indicating strong attendance), green, yellow, or red (indicating poor attendance) ratings that will factor into performance reviews, promotions, and layoffs.

Texas-based Dell has roughly 120,000 global employees, nearly 43,000 of whom were in the US as of 2022. About half the US workers are remote, according to The Register.

Dell had been tracking employees' office attendance in the lead-up to this announcement, and in February [mandated that hybrid employees](#) work in the office 39 days per quarter; it also noted that those who opted to go fully remote would have fewer advancement opportunities.

"In today's global technology revolution, we believe in-person connections paired with a flexible approach are critical to drive innovation and value differentiation," Dell's media relations team told HR Brew. They declined to comment on the color-coding policy.

HR Brew spoke with Deborah Grayson Riegel, leadership and communication expert, about the implications of these announcements.

**Tough, but clear.** With its color-coding system, Dell is doubling down on its RTO stance, especially as it relates to career advancement.

"It's going to be tough news for some, and I also think they are very, very clear in their messaging," Grayson Riegel told HR Brew. "They're not playing a game. They're making it clear what you need to do and what you need to demonstrate in order for you to be considered for opportunities."

While the policy may come across as uncompassionate, Grayson Riegel said "I think that there has been a really tough balancing act for leaders, teams, managers, companies, to balance compassion and accountability."

There's a certain level of compassion that comes from honesty and transparency. "Being honest, open and transparent" is important, she explained, "because far too often people are trying to read between the lines...how much does working virtually or hybrid negatively impact my career and visibility?"

**Class system.** While Dell has made tracking office attendance and factoring it into promotions clear, Grayson Riegel said it's also important to acknowledge that employees may have an emotional response to being categorized based on colors, as this can create a corporate class system.

"Classifying people by color, I think, has some history to it that just doesn't feel good on a cellular level," she said. "It's not just a color system, but it's a class system...based

on your color, you will be more or less promotable for certain roles...I think Dell may have missed an unintended impact of classifying people by color, and creating a hierarchy within the company based on color.”

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [COPY](#)

## You might also like...

### HR STRATEGY

**The founders of SoulCycle want to revamp your corporate culture**

KRISTEN PARISI / 05.14.2024

### DE&I

**Just 36% of managers have received pay equity training, survey finds**

AMANDA SCHIAVO /  
05.14.2024

### COMPLIANCE

**Deel partners with Carta to offer equity tax withholding features**

COURTNEY VINOPAL /  
05.14.2024

## QUICK-TO-READ HR NEWS & INSIGHTS

From recruiting and retention to company culture and the latest in HR tech, HR Brew delivers up-to-date industry news and tips to help HR pros stay nimble in today's fast-changing business environment.

[Try it](#)

Follow Us



Brands

- Morning Brew
- Money with Katie
- Tech Brew
- Retail Brew
- Marketing Brew
- HR Brew
- IT Brew
- CFO Brew
- Healthcare Brew
- Bossy
- Brew Markets
- Morning Brew Daily
- The Money with Katie Show
- Founder's Journal

Search

- Stories
- Newsletter Issues

Brew

- Shop
- About Us
- Careers
- Advertise with Us
- FAQ
- Privacy
- Terms of Service
- Do Not Sell / Share My Personal Information
- Cookie Preferences

© 2024 Morning Brew, Inc.  
All Rights Reserved.