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Houssein Boukhriss is a trainer and consultant in the field of diversity management and intercultural communication (at Trace BV).

According to this expert, when it comes to changes in work schedules, tasks and holiday arrangements, sufficient attention must be paid to **both the consequences for others and the long-term**. 'Take particular care not to (unwittingly and unintentionally) discriminate against others, out of respect for a specific group. Diversity management is about **pushing boundaries**, but also about **clarifying boundaries**. These are relevant principles when it comes to religious practices and the question of adapting to philosophies of life.'

CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES

'When adjusting work schedules, tasks or other matters as a result of a request from a particular individual or group, it is extremely important to consider the consequences for others. Good intentions in favour of one group sometimes have the opposite effect on others in the workplace. So, think carefully about the **long-term impact of a decision**. What may be initially workable, may ultimately negatively impact good relationships and cooperation.'

PUSH BOUNDARIES, BUT ALSO DEFINE THEM CLEARLY

'Diversity management is about pushing boundaries - and also about making them clear. When an organisation becomes more diverse in its composition, its corporate culture must be adapted to this new fact. Employees who feel that their differences are respected often function better in the workplace. This often has a positive, long-term impact on cooperation and on the functioning of the organisation. This results in a **win-win situation for all parties**.

'It is also important to set clear boundaries. It is impossible to grant every wish at every moment, purely out of respect for difference. The common interest could be compromised by personal interests. If so, boundaries must be defined. Anyone who works for a business knows that there are **internal regulations** that everyone must abide by. Respect must be mutual.'