



ADDRESSING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

COMPANY

Large international multidisciplinary firm

CHALLENGE

Breach of workplace behaviour standards

CLIENT BRIEF

Solution needed quickly, must be effective with impact on culture

INTERVENTION

Facilitated workshop that targets core issues

BENEFITS FOR CLIENT

Minimised risk of reoccurrence, a more tolerant and better-functioning team

ATTENDEE OUTCOME

Increased knowledge and awareness of issue

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CASE STUDY

Recently we were contacted by a large firm who was dealing with a breach of workplace standards. An investigation by HR had revealed that one of the teams had an ingrained culture of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

This finding came as a huge surprise. The firm's core values around diversity and equality in the workplace are regularly communicated through a purposely created network, and reinforced by policies, use of inclusive language and yearly e-learning for compliance (Salt).

Unfortunately, this team also had a culture of not speaking up when inappropriate behaviour occurred, and it took for an ex-employee to lodge a formal complaint to set the ball rolling.

After a thorough investigation it became clear that a number of team members had experienced ongoing bullying and harassment based on:

- age
- gender
- race
- religion

CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

The offenders were subjected to disciplinary action. HR further considered it necessary to reinforce the message to the wider team that the company is serious about establishing a diverse and inclusive workplace, and that misconduct is never tolerated. It also wanted to reinstate a sense of trust to the team members, to encourage anyone to speak up and to let them know that it's safe to do so.

At this stage, the company involved GRC's senior consultants Nathalie Nuijens and Liam O'Brien to look through the options, recommend the best course of action and implement an effective solution in a matter of weeks. Considering the company's commitment to diversity and equality, and the extensive risk and compliance processes already in place, we decided to focus on developing a facilitated workshop targeted directly at the team in question.

This training session would form part of a blended learning approach that references back to the company's Code of Conduct and the theory of Salt e-learning, but also takes full advantage of the face-to-face component of a workshop and all the participation opportunities it provides. Often these participation opportunities are particularly useful when dealing with issues of trust.

The session had three aims:

1. Reinforce the company values and what is (and isn't) acceptable with respect to a diverse and inclusive workplace
2. Emphasise the illegality of bullying and harassment, what the penalties are and the hidden costs to the business
3. Provide a forum where team members (as individuals) can add personal insights, contribute their own suggestions, ask questions and voice concerns



The workshop was a success. Due to the input of the client and their commitment to tackling workplace bullying, Nathalie was able to facilitate a fast-paced session that was interactive, informative and on point. The company was impressed with the level of group participation and overall positive feedback, and feels reassured the breach has been adequately addressed. The company is currently scheduling to roll out the training across its Asia Pacific offices in the first half of 2016.

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