

HILL ADVISORY NEWS

“Working with the human side of business”



A Case 'From the Front Lines'



* Hill Advisory Services personnel were contacted by a medium sized industrial organization to work in partnership with them on a case of harassment in the workplace. A Hill Advisory Services investigator worked with an internal investigator from the organization. There was one Respondent with 10 Complainants. The Respondent was in a position of authority with the organization and was in a supervisory capacity over most of the Complainants. The company received word of the complaints through some anonymous correspondence and some complaints came in signed and packaged with other complaints. *The allegations included but certainly were not limited to:*

1. *Unwelcome sexual touching* - an allegation that the Respondent put his hand on a female co-worker's vagina and attempted to put his hand in her pants while returning from a company social function. The Respondent's wife was in the vehicle.
2. *Physical assault* - an allegation that the Respondent passed an employee in the hall and punched him in the shoulder on a couple of occasions - force was estimated as 8 or 9 out of 10 - with 10 being as hard as the employee felt the Respondent could hit. The employee indicated he had seen the Respondent do the same to others as well.
3. *Threat* - an allegation that the Respondent asked an employee to 'step outside' for a fist fight. The employee declined.
4. *Destruction of company property* - an allegation that the Respondent did not like what he was hearing on the company phone system, so he smashed and destroyed the phone. First, in his office in front of witnesses and second, outside on the front sidewalk. The company needed to replace the existing telephone system due to the model being discontinued.
5. *Denial of expenses* - numerous allegations that the Respondent denied rightful claims for reimbursement of costs to employees with the result being that shortcuts were taken and employee safety was compromised.

* The investigation proceeded with the interviewing of all the Complainants as well as the formal documentation of their complaints. The complaints were numerous and extensive interviews were held. Several of the Complainants expressed fear of retribution due to the volatility of the Respondent and his supervisory capacity.

* The Respondent was placed on paid leave pending the conclusion of the investigation and was provided with the Complainants' statements in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice. At the Respondent's interview, he indicated that he would not like to proceed and instead wished to proceed with 'buy out' discussions with the employer. The employer agreed to pursue that avenue and suspended the investigation. The negotiations regarding the 'buy out' option failed

Questions for Consideration

- * What do you think happened with the case?
- * What would you do in the situation?
- * Was the case handled well? Mishandled? How?
- * What is the worst case scenario here and how can the case be managed to avoid that outcome?

Contest Details

We want to know your answers to these questions.

E-mail dhill@hilladvisory.com (Dylan Hill)
or Mail responses to
57-B Apple Lane, Winnipeg MB R2Y 2G9

** Submissions received by September 28, 2005 will be considered for publication in subsequent newsletters and will be eligible for the prize drawing.

★ ★ *The published response will win 5 hours of complimentary telephone or e-mail consultation with Hill Advisory Services Conflict specialists. Consult time will be available for 6 months after the award of the prize.* ★ ★

NEW

Second Generation Solutions: 'Electronic Learning'



- * As we move into the 'second generation' of Harassment and Discrimination Education in the workplace, it is our feeling that we have an opportunity to look back at our mistakes, successes and identify areas that can be improved. At Hill Advisory Services we have been in the vanguard of the Harassment and Discrimination (H&D) area for many of our clients across the country. We want to stay there and have been looking at our own processes as well as those of our clients in the past few years. One area that we have identified as needing to adapt is the communication of the 'Awareness and Prevention' message to all employees. This message is essentially the 'do's and don'ts' of how the organization (and indeed the law) want their employees to behave at work.
- * In the first generation of H&D development, all employees were asked to meet in small groups and the message was communicated to them over a few hours or even a day long training event. The experienced trainers at Hill Advisory Services can well attest to the large amount of training they provided to their clients in 16 years of business - not to mention the work of innumerable internal trainers across the country!
- * As we move into the second generation, we believe that there is and needs to be a new answer to the question: *How do we train our employees about Harassment Prevention in the workplace?* We believe we have found the answer that will move us through the next phase of development.
- * The answer is Electronic Learning (*E-Learning*). What exactly is *E-Learning*? It is an electronic form of learning that will enable every employer to train their employees in the area of Harassment and Discrimination Prevention in a cost effective and efficient way. A way that will 'far surpass' the first generation answers to the concern of Return On Investment without compromising the concern of total employee training, completion tracking and legal compliance to notification of policies in the area.
- * Some benefits include:
 - * *Cost per employee is reduced from Hundreds of dollars to only several dollars per employee.*
 - * *Scheduling of training becomes more flexible as groups do not need to be assembled.*
 - * *Travel costs are eliminated.*
 - * *The E-Learning tool is easily updated and reusable for many years. Updates can be done to allow for changes in law and policy - keeping your company current.*
 - * *With a Learning Management System, attendance at the training and follow-up become easily managed.*
 - * *Case studies contain Canadian content and can be tailored specifically to your organization and the cases you have been dealing with.*
 - * *Hill Advisory experts blend 'real life' cases with theory to provide a superior learning mix which conforms to the principles of adult learning.*
- * In conclusion, though we do not believe that the challenges of the first generation of Harassment and Discrimination Education will be entirely eliminated, we do believe that this new tool can answer some of the concerns that could not be answered to this point. We believe that organizations should have an *E-Learning* system in place and further, that the Hill Advisory Services tool is superior in the marketplace. This is and has been our business for 16 years and we will continue to move forward well into the second generation.
- * We have developed a 'module' of the *E-Learning* for individual consideration. Further, we would be happy to meet with you at your location to have in depth discussions about this new and exciting service. *Please contact us to discuss how we might be of service as we all move toward a more effective training method.*

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Integral Interventions



- * *Hill Advisory Services (working with a group of talented Associates) are in the final stages of developing a new 'division' - one that provides ongoing supports to organizations and individuals in a variety of integrated ways in the areas of workplace conflicts, such as: personality conflicts; employees who can't change with the culture and create conflict; employees who don't seem to fit within the working unit; management staff having interpersonal difficulties within the organization; employees who blame others and refuse to look inward*
- * *Services will include an over-all assessment plan for any given situation with a strategy plan or restoration plan developed specifically for the situation - allowing the opportunity of a more integrated, more 'holistic' approach to a variety of conflict situations that develop within any working environment. This support will be separate from our investigation and training work. Stay tuned for further details!*

Harassment Investigations



Do you need support with harassment complaints in your organization?

Be sure to check out attached details!

For more information contact Sheri:

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