



#DoSomethingNow

Three Things You Should Be Doing Right Now About Workplace Harassment

February 7, 2018

- I. **Overview:** Harassment policies and training are essential for every company; however, it's the company's employee complaint process that truly determines whether the company's words (policies and training) match their actions (*e.g.*, complaint investigation). This process has a polarizing effect for employees by either reinforcing a company's values or undermining them. The following three actions need to be taken now to protect all employees with a fair, effective, and efficient complaint process.
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- II. **Action #1:** Review (or create!) and revise your company's complaint process.
- a. Incidents of harassment are personal and emotional. Inherently, there are numerous reasons why an employee may choose not to report the incident; many of which are beyond the company's control or awareness. If the complaint process is not simple, fair, and efficient, then it becomes yet *another* reason – which is entirely within the company's control -- for the employee to not report the incident.
 - b. Ensure the following components are included in your complaint process:
 - i. Multiple ways to submit complaint (online/phone/in person);
 - ii. Clarity as to which departments or individuals will be made aware of complaint;
 - iii. General timeline to set expectations for timing; and
 - iv. High-level description of process (life cycle). Visual/pictures are very helpful!
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- III. **Action #2:** Plan for the fire now.
- a. Don't wait for a complaint to show you that your company's complaint process is outdated, impractical, or cumbersome. Your employees deserve better. Do something about it right now.
 - b. Once you have a draft or revisions of the complaint process, schedule a meeting to include all individuals with a role or responsibility in the complaint process.
 - c. Purpose of the meeting is to: (1) using a hypothetical, run through all steps and different variations of complaint to identify any gaps or improvements in the process and (2) obtain buy-in and process ownership by all involved.
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- IV. **Action #3:** Force the issue.
- a. If executive management team has not bought into process, it will fail. When a complaint arises that directly or indirectly affects someone on the management team, it is highly likely that an exception or deviation to the process will occur.
 - b. You need to have executive team agree now that the process will be followed without exception – even to an executive team member or the highest performing employee.
 - c. Reiterate to executive team that everyday employees are watching the executive team and evaluating whether their actions match the values and policies.
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- V. **Cubeta+Clarke** is here to help. Don't wait. #DoSomethingNow.
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