

InFormation.

Autumn Edition 2007

WORKPLACE BULLYING... TOO COSTLY TO IGNORE?

"Bullying in the workplace costs the UK economy £2bn each year through sick pay, staff turnover and loss of production" according to trade union Unite.

A major cause of workplace stress, bullying can present itself in many forms and if allowed to go unchecked, can unwittingly become part of an organisation's culture. Bullying, or an attempt to control others, often involves repeated incidents or patterns of behaviour that can be both obvious and subtle. Sufferers may be unaware that they have been victims, and this can lead to humiliation, anxiety, anger, frustration and a feeling of helplessness.

Examples of bullying include:

- Ridicule or malicious gossip and jokes
- Unfair criticism
- Intimidation
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Assigning impossible tasks - setting people up to fail
- Physical and verbal abuse

Bullying can have many adverse effects on an organisation's "wellbeing", and can cause high employee absenteeism, increased staff turnover and therefore higher recruitment costs. It can also affect staff morale, motivation and productivity, and in some cases, can ultimately have a damaging affect on a company's image.



Barbara Pearce comments on the importance of a positive workplace culture.

Employers have a "duty of care" to provide a safe working environment for their staff; this includes protection against physical, mental or emotional bullying. Promoting a zero tolerance on bullying and putting in place clear policies and procedures can offer staff a greater sense of wellbeing, as well as providing clear parameters to allow the company to deal with bullying if it arises.

It is believed that more than one in ten workers are bullied in the workplace, and it therefore makes good business sense to create an anti-bullying culture. This can help make staff more secure and give them a greater sense of pride in both their employer and their work. Barbara Pearce, one of our directors, comments: "Starting work on creating this positive culture before any bullying starts is one way of staying ahead. At Formation, we see real value in involving all staff in training and awareness of bullying. All too often, those being bullied don't have the strategies to enable them to confront. Those perpetrating the bullying don't recognise their behaviour as being bullying".

Areas which our training and facilitated sessions cover can include:

- exploring perceptions - what is bullying?;



- reflecting on participants' own experiences, including an opportunity to reflect on their own behaviour;
- looking at approaches to problem solving;
- confronting the issues - to help people recognise that they may do things that could be construed as bullying;
- exploring the behaviours that people regard as good practice in order to gain a shared understanding.

If you would like to find out about these, or any of our other training sessions call us on 0115 952 4864.

£10 Makes a Difference Competition

As part of our 10th Anniversary celebrations, we recently ran a "£10 Make a Difference" competition, asking how you could make a difference using only £10. Winners will be announced in our Winter InFormation Newsletter and we would like to thank everyone who took part. For now, here are a few examples of the inspiring and quirky answers we received:

- "Buy material to make shopping bags so people can avoid using plastic carrier bags"
- "Create a delicious veggie meal for 4 people - to show that veggie food is tasty, healthy, and better for the planet!"
- "I'd probably put it towards some new shoes so that I'd be encouraged to walk into town!"



VOLUNTEERING - A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In a changing world, where stakeholders and the public expect higher levels of competence, more advanced skill sets and a well rounded attitude to social responsibility - volunteering in the workplace can be beneficial and rewarding, to both employer and employee.

Companies who support volunteering schemes can raise their profile and reputation, which helps not only with their credibility to existing stakeholders and potential clients, but can also pay dividends in terms of staff recruitment and retention. Overall, a successful scheme that actively encourages volunteering activity amongst staff can:

- increase staff morale, performance and skills;
- encourage new ways of thinking within a team, department or organisation;
- improve communication and understanding, by bringing different teams and departments together;
- help the organisation gain increased awareness of local community issues.

Employee's who volunteer:

- improve their skills and experience and potentially increase their career prospects;
- can increase their confidence;
- gain a sense of satisfaction and achievement;
- get the chance to try something new.

Employers sometimes forget the additional 'knock-on' effect that the opportunity can offer the employee in terms of motivation, enthusiasm and a renewed sense of purpose on getting back into the workplace after volunteering.

Our Finance Officer, Sue Wicks said, "My volunteering experience at a local school for severely autistic children has been rewarding. To see such highly individual and extremely demanding children at work and play is an experience I will never forget. It has also given me an insight into the grass-roots level of the early years sector with which we work."

Several members of the Formation team are involved in voluntary activities including facilitating university workshops, holding places on management groups and boards, offering support to local schools through enterprise programmes and running mock interviews. We are currently in the process of setting up our formal volunteering policy that will benefit both the company and our local community.

Formation.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Formation News



Laura Ling (Aim Higher Student) and Stephanie Price (Marketing Assistant) at the Aim Higher presentation evening.

Here's a round up of our latest news...

- We would like to congratulate Laura Ling who successfully completed her Nottinghamshire Aim Higher Student Placement with us at the end of September. Laura spent the summer assisting Stephanie Price with our 10th Anniversary activities. Laura gained valuable work experience of a marketing environment and will apply this to her HND Business Studies Course, when she returns to college. Thank you and good luck for the future Laura.
- In celebration of our 10th Anniversary year, we held a special craft afternoon for the children of our employees. Not only did it give the 'Formation Little People,' a chance to create lots of mess whilst having fun, they also created images which may be used for marketing purposes, later in the year!
- Congratulations to our Business Manager, Lindsey Newman-Wood, on the birth of her baby boy Alfie, born on the 21st July 2007. Mother and baby are well and we look forward to seeing Lindsey when she joins us for our 10th Anniversary celebrations.
- We welcome Steph Slater and Sam Gray to the Formation Team this month. Steph is our new Project Assistant (not to be confused with Stephanie Price, Marketing Assistant!). Steph will be working alongside Project Account Managers, Dennis Bradley and Carrie Blake and joins us from the Nottinghamshire Probation Service where she was a Probation Officer for 3 years. We also welcome Sam Gray, who is our Office Administrator. Sam joins us from Dove Building Services Ltd. Welcome to the team Steph and Sam.

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

According to the BBC's water saving tips; taking a 5-minute shower everyday rather than a bath, uses a third of the water and will save 400 litres of water a week.

