

The HR 'Bully'

False accusations, Intimidation, Threats



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About 6 months ago my employer hired a new woman to take over HR, she is now the only HR person on staff. She has successfully targeted me and a few others. I am told that my employer does not want to hear my petty crap when I try to address issues with HR to HR, (tried the direct approach), I am told that "I would hate for anything to be misconstrued and you get fired for this", she has written me up for being "rude", she continuously tries to get me into trouble with my direct supervisor for things I did not do or say, she recently took something said and turned it so completely around and told another in the office which prompted a nasty email to be sent to me by the other individual (Friday), she told me on Friday that I was pulled for a random drug test then told me this morning (Monday) that she would send me some other time (our randoms are DOT and the drug testing facility draws the pool and if I were truly chosen, I would HAVE to go - intimidation).

Her mail to me Friday just before being off for the weekend was a bunch of BS followed with "IT'S FRIDAY GET OVER IT. IT'S THE WEEKEND" (she saw me crying over the incident she caused), I was warned not to go to my employer (the owner) with any of this as I would be causing her a

disservice due to the personal stress she is under (my employer) and she would hate for me to lose my job for going to her (my employer). I do not know how much longer I can come into this work environment and successfully continue my work... I am having a hard time focusing, I don't want to be here, I dread running into her in the office. I surely hope that my state enacts a law about this soon."

In August 2013, Know Bull! published the results of a poll that queried the effectiveness of HR in dealing with workplace bullying. In a 'nutshell' the results of this poll revealed that HR are not helpful when it comes to assisting employees in dealing with workplace bullying. Disturbingly, 55.5% were either singled out for 'bully retribution' (22.2%), experienced worsening bully treatment (22.2%), or were fired from their jobs (11.1%)...after having spoken with HR about the workplace bullying. And if you require further explanation of HR's ineffectiveness in addressing workplace bullying, you can find additional information on the following page.

Why is HR generally ineffective when it comes to addressing 'bullying' at work?

Question: My Human Resources department refuse to take me seriously. Instead, they are doing everything they can to support the bully whilst getting rid of me. Why is this?

Answer: From dealing with thousands of cases in which this happens - albeit a self-selecting audience which may not scale up nationally - I've identified the following reasons:

1. Human Resources (HR) people are not trained in dealing with bullying - it's not in their textbooks, not in their training, and their professional body in the UK (CIPD) has not given the issue the attention it needs.

2. The HR profession seems to attract a number of people who are not people-focused and thus not good at dealing with people problems.

3. HR is not there for employees. The role of HR is to keep the employer out of court.

4. The majority of HR people are female, and females seem particularly susceptible to charm, which is one of the bully's main weapons of deception.

5. By the time HR get to hear of the bullying they are faced with an articulate, plausible, convincing, charming "bully" and a gibbering wreck of a "target" who is traumatised and thus unconvincing, inarticulate, incoherent, obsessed, apparently paranoid, tearful, distressed and highly emotional. By this time the bully has already convinced HR that the target has a "mental health problem", is a liability to the organisation, and needs to be got rid of.

6. When it's one word against another with no witnesses, HR take the word of the senior employee (almost always the bully).

7. There's no law against bullying so there's no case to answer. (*Note: National, Anti-Bullying Laws do exist in Australia. They came into force on 01 Jan 2014. However, Know Bull! is inclined to believe these new laws will be predominantly ineffective.*)

8. The employer doesn't have an anti-bullying policy so it's not a disciplinary issue. (*Note: Having an anti-bullying policy, is a requirement in Australia*).

9. The employer does have an anti-bullying policy but it's just words on paper.

10. The bully is a tough dynamic manager who gets the job done and the high turnover of staff in the bully's department is because they're all wimps who can't meet the demanding standards of performance demanded by this exemplary manager. Yawn.

11. If HR recognise they have a bully, they're not going to admit it because to do so is tantamount to admitting liability for this - and previous - cases.

12. HR are not going to admit that they've made a mistake recruiting an incompetent individual who bullies to hide his or her inadequacies.

13. When push comes to shove, HR do what they are told to do by management, regardless of the rights and wrongs.

14. HR are sometimes an outsourced and contracterised profession with little influence.

15. The constant change, reorganisation, restructuring, downsizing, outsourcing, contracterisation etc mean that there is no continuity in treatment of staff and thus the bully is able to hide the fact that he or she has a history of conflict with employees.

16. Over the last few years employers have been burdened with numerous legislative changes (working time, data privacy, parental leave, etc) and have no desire, resources, time or energy to deal with issues for which there is no legal requirement. (*See Note at point 7.*)

17. Bullying cases are so long and complex (a situation the bully fosters) that most HR (and most people) don't have the time, energy or resources to unpick the case.

18. There are only a handful of people who are capable of providing HR with the training and insight to undertake a successful investigation.

19. Where HR want to investigate they are sometimes over-ruled.

20. HR (and management) are frightened of the serial bully too - and sometimes more frightened than the employees.

21. HR people get bullied too.

The information contained on this page can be found on the bullyonline website: <http://www.bullyonline.org/workbully/>