

Morgan Lewis

Workplace Culture Consulting

Employers today realize the profound importance of preventing and remedying instances of harassment in the workplace. The advent of the #MeToo movement has caused allegations of harassment to be particularly devastating to companies' and organizations' reputations, and the current climate has made some employees more willing to go public about conduct they may have tolerated or kept within an organization in the past. Beyond the obvious legal and reputational risks, serious attention is finally being paid to research demonstrating that harassment reduces employee productivity and contributes to job turnover.

Because employers best address workplace culture issues such as harassment with proactive consultation, we work alongside our clients to assess their cultures, identify risks, and develop concrete solutions that promote a positive, inclusive workplace, mitigate the possibility of litigation, and preserve brand and image.

Creating Safe, Respectful, and Inclusive Workplaces

Our approach to harassment prevention goes beyond stopping sexual harassment to cover harassment based on any legally protected basis, including race, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Moreover, we have found that helping employers cultivate an overall culture of safety, respect, and inclusion—regardless of any protected characteristic—is the most effective means of heading off illegal harassing behavior.

Our driving purpose is to help employers create workplace cultures where individuals feel safe from harassing behavior, respected regardless of who they are, and truly included in the workplace. Our services are designed to create and maintain healthy workplace cultures that reduce the likelihood of illegal behavior—minimizing legal risks while maximizing the employer's bottom line.

Areas of Service

Review of Policies, Procedures, Training, and Accountability Mechanisms

Almost every large employer has policies in place that prohibit harassment, procedures through which claims of harassment can be reported, investigated, and responded to, and anti-harassment training. Even if employers have already invested significantly in such measures, they usually can be enhanced through the application of evidence-based research.

We review employers' existing policies, procedures, training, and accountability mechanisms to help inform the questions we will ask in the workplace culture assessment and to provide useful information for the development of a customized strategic plan, as described further below. In doing this review, we partner closely with legal and human resources departments, as well as any compliance or diversity and inclusion departments the client has in place.

Workplace Culture Assessments

To create a healthy workplace environment, an employer needs information about its current workplace culture. Our workplace culture assessments use established evidence-based practices to collect this information, including having conversations with randomly selected employees through group and individual interviews, inviting volunteer interviews from employees who have information or thoughts they want to share, establishing mechanisms to send in employee feedback anonymously, and using app-based surveys with short, targeted questions.

Customized Strategic Plans

Based on the data collected from the workplace culture assessment and our review of policies, procedures, training, and accountability mechanisms, we develop a strategic plan customized for the client that takes into account the different workplace settings within the company or organization, and any factors unique to that employer. The strategic plan includes recommendations for policies and procedures; mechanisms to ensure accountability; actions that can convey and demonstrate a top-down commitment to a healthy workplace culture; steps to improve diversity and inclusion; and training that will meet the specific needs of the workforce, including respectful workplaces training and bystander intervention training.

Plan Implementation

Effective plan implementation requires sustained effort and depends on the interrelated actions of various components of the company or organization. We work closely with the client's relevant offices to help implement the recommendations of the strategic plan. For example, we engage in an interactive process with human resources and legal departments to develop the best policies and procedures, including a blueprint for corrective actions. Similarly, where training is recommended, we can conduct the suggested training ourselves or be fully available for feedback on any internal training the employer chooses to offer. Finally, we work with leadership to appropriately communicate the findings of the workplace culture assessment and the steps it intends to take in response.

All employers can benefit from having a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace. We help our clients achieve that goal, in a manner customized to their needs.