

Empowered People Leaders have a dynamic responsibility in creating thriving workplaces of the future. One of the top accountabilities for People Leaders is to create a physically and psychologically safe work environment for employees that are harassment, discrimination and bully-free.

To assume this transformational role, one must be determined to act and behave in ways that demonstrate respect toward others in the organization. People leaders in high-performance companies have a dual responsibility to ensure the health and safety of employees while delivering key business results, especially during peak volumes. Compromising business results over the health and safety of employees ultimately reduces the organization's strategic performance and return on share holder value.

Why it Matters?

Adhering to the 'golden rule' standard of conduct can reap both tangible and intangible rewards. It becomes a foundation of safety for employees when they know what to expect from one another and sets the tone in which customers, vendors and shareholders will be treated. As this relational need is met by management, employees will find countless ways to contribute extraordinary effort and results.

Employers who fail to administer or adhere to respectful workplace practices may be facing potential lawsuits when inappropriate behavior crosses the line and employees become targets of workplace bullying and mobbing, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#).

The article points to new research highlighting the prevalence and dangers associated with workplace bullying, including a 2007 survey sponsored by the Employment Law Alliance, where 44% of respondents said they worked for a boss they considered abusive.

Additionally, the [Workplace Bullying Institute](#) and Zogby conducted the 2007 U.S. National Study which found that approximately 37% of the U.S. workforce (an estimated 54 million Americans) report being bullied at work; an additional 12% witness it. To learn more about the impact on employers, [click here](#).

At present, workplace bullying is legal in the United States. The Healthy Workplace Bill has been introduced into 18 states and would allow targets who have been psychologically and/or physically abused in the workplace, the ability to sue their employer. Proposed legislation in New York State expands it even further and



would allow targets to sue the bully and bystanders who failed to take appropriate action in addressing it.

Empowered people leaders can pro-actively address management practices. Balancing the employees' needs with high-performance and bottom-line results can be achieved with great leadership, smart people policies, transparency, conflict resolution practices and taking prompt action if issues arise.

What you can do?

Start today in creating a thriving work environment. Open communication channels with senior management, human resources and other key stakeholders to adopt and model values-based leadership practices. Additionally, consider the following tips to cultivate a safe and bully-free work environment:

- Identify the organizational consequences of bullying and disrespectful behavior on employees, customers, vendors and share holders.
- Identify the benefits of workplace prevention strategies including emergency preparedness.
- Create an anti-bullying policy that prohibits intimidation and harassment, emphasizes cooperation and respect and outlines respective complaint procedures.
- Publicize a clearly outlined internal complaint process to the organization, customers and vendors.
- Educate people leaders on workplace bullying, mobbing and harassment and reinforce organizational accountability. Provide training for people leaders on observation skills and effectively addressing any reported incidences.
- Conduct coaching for employees on respectful & cooperative behaviors.
- Address any incidences immediately and hold offenders accountable. Act on zero-tolerance.
- Implement leading solutions that address the health harming implications on your workforce.

Empowered people management leaders can make all the difference in creating the thriving new workplaces of the future.