

Crafting Effective Discrimination and Harassment Policies

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One of the core aspects of human resources is workplace relations, especially in the context of a diverse employee environment. While discrimination is never acceptable, it has been known to happen. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported that in 2014, [88,778 charges of harassment, discrimination and retaliation](#) were claimed. An HR professional should not be surprised if he or she has to handle a complaint at some point. Still, keeping discrimination cases to a minimum overall is in the best interest of your company, yourself and your career. The most positive way of doing this is crafting policies involving discrimination and harassment that are effective in terms of both employee comprehension and enforcement. Ensuring a safe workplace is a great way of establishing yourself in HR.

Establishing a strong foundation to defend

In order to properly establish a strong anti-discrimination policy, you have to start with its intended purpose. That means creating a statement that defines the rules that dictate what is considered unacceptable behavior in the business. Tech firm I-Sight says [the ideal statement](#) should be:

- Easy to understand by any employee
- Clear in the desire to be an inclusive organization
- Adamant that discrimination will not be tolerated, especially those prohibited by law

From there Entrepreneur Magazine recommends that an HR professional should rely on the EEOC's Guidelines as [a starting point for the policy itself](#). What it should include is a concise yet clear listing of what conduct is prohibited. This should be followed with guarantees that anyone who makes a complaint about discrimination is protected against any form of retaliation, which is a common form of harassment. The complaint process should be laid out in detail so that mistakes aren't made in the process that can harm the victim in question. Confidentiality must be assured, as is the ability of the company to conduct an investigation of the case in a way that is comprehensive and impartial, so that the accused is innocent until proven otherwise. In the event that there is proof that harassment or discrimination has occurred, the policy should dictate an immediate and appropriate judgment.

You should craft discrimination policies that are effective for both understanding and enforcement.

Protecting the vulnerable

It may seem extensive, but an HR professional that is capable of developing an effective policy that also aligns with the company values - such as creating additional guidelines that go above the minimum requirements by law - demonstrates a great potential and skill for their company.

However, there is more to an anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy than just creating it. It also means [strengthening and enforcing it](#), as noted in another article by I-Sight. The reporting process, for example, should be able to state who and where to report a complaint, with specific people being identified to make sure someone actually receives. Similarly, the investigation process should be explained in some detail to ensure impartiality between contesting parties. There should also be effective measures put in place to not only prevent but to heavily punish against retaliation.

Most important of all, though, an HR professional who creates and enforces this policy should have a hand in employee training on the matter. The importance of this training will help greatly mitigate the possibility of harassment and discrimination affecting the staff.

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