



ALASKA SHRM STATE COUNCIL



2021 ALASKA STATE HR CONFERENCE SNEAK PEEK THE TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT – HOW HR CAN DETOX IT!

PRESENTED BY
EDDIE CAMPOAMOR

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ALASKA STATE HR CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2021

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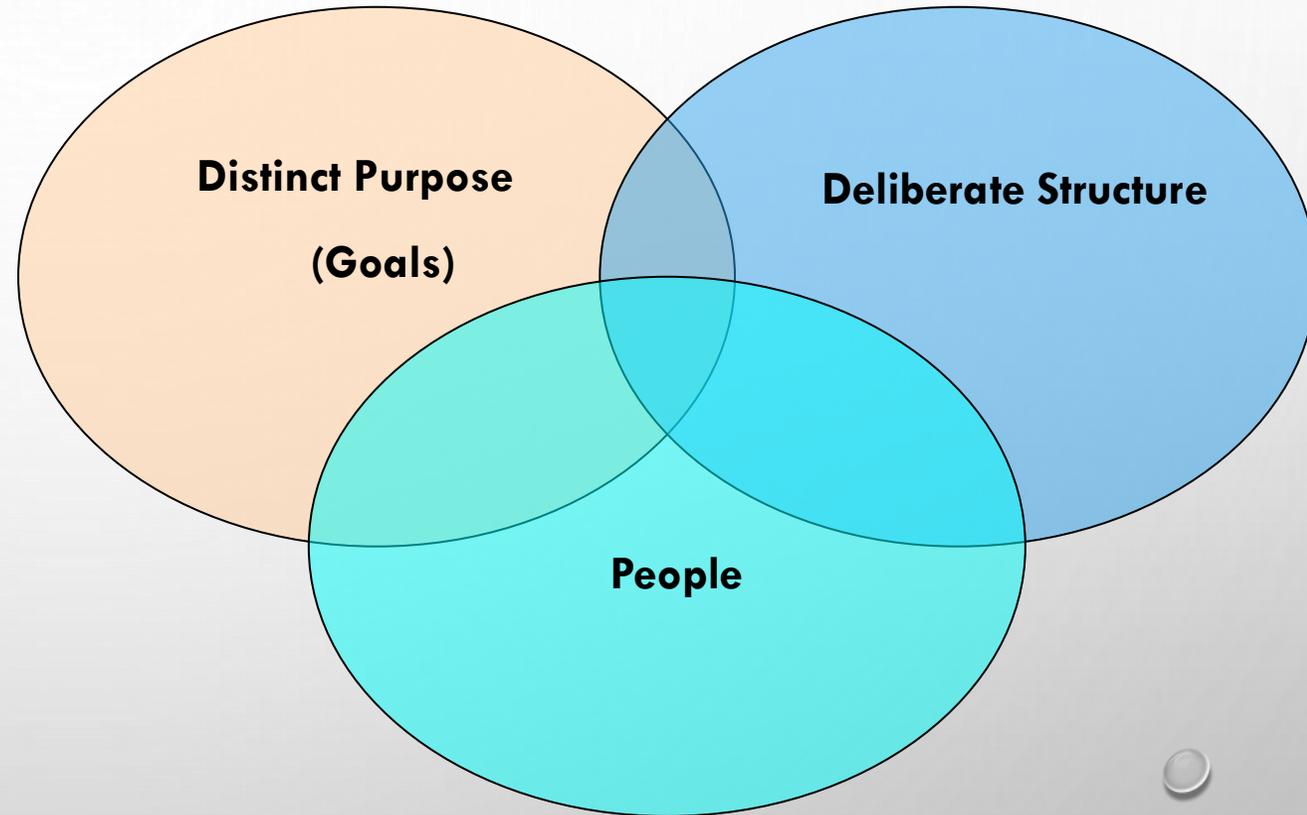
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Hello
my name is

**TOXIC
WORK
ENVIRONMENT**

HR'S ROLE IN TODAY'S ANATOMY OF AN ORGANIZATION

- FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO BE SUCCESSFUL TODAY THEY MUST OUTGROW THE IDEA THAT EMPLOYEES ARE JUST WORKERS AND **ACKNOWLEDGE THEM AS RESOURCES.**
- WITHOUT PROPER RESOURCES, **INCLUDING HUMAN RESOURCES**, BUSINESS STRATEGIES AND GOALS CAN'T BE ACHIEVED.
- HR **IS RESPONSIBLE** FOR SHAPING THE COMPANY CULTURE AND LEADING EMPLOYEES TOWARDS ATTAINING THE COMPANY'S OBJECTIVES.
- HR **IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE** FOR DEALING WITH VARIOUS OBSTACLES THAT LEAD TO REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY AND THE GENERAL GROWTH OF AN ORGANIZATION, SUCH AS TODAY'S TOPIC – "TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT".
- **TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, HR MUST HAVE A 'SEAT' AT THE "EXECUTIVE STRATEGIC TABLE" AND BE RECOGNIZED AS "BUSINESS ASSOCIATES" RATHER THAN EMPLOYEES!** (A TOPIC FOR ANOTHER DAY!)



- “TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT” IS A MULTIFACETED AND NUANCED ISSUE, AND WHILE ALL EMPLOYEES CAN EXPERIENCE IT, THAT EXPERIENCE WILL BE UNIQUE TO EACH INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE.
- SELDOM IS THERE A “SILVER BULLET” SOLUTION TO A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT, WHICH IS WHY IT IS SUCH A CHALLENGE TO DETOX.
- THE ONLY **SURE WAY** TO DETOX A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT IS TO NOT ALLOW ONE TO EVER EXIST!
 - NOW COME ON HR PROFESSIONAL, HOW HARD CAN THAT BE; AFTER ALL, IS NOT LIKE YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO!
 - OR DO YOU?

- **PAYROLL SYSTEM/ADMINISTRATION**

- **COMPANYWIDE STAFFING PLAN**

- **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

- **PAY STRUCTURE**

- **BENEFIT PLANS**

- **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

- **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

- **TRAINING**

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- **HIRING PROCEDURES**



- **PERSONNEL FILES**

- **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS**

- **RECRUITING**

- **REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAMS**

- **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PLANNING**

- **BUILDING HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND MAINTAINING THEM**

- **EMPLOYEE SUPPORT**

- **IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

- **LEAVE AND VACATION SCHEDULING**

- **DISCIPLINE**

- **UNION ISSUES**

- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

- **MEDICAL ISSUES AND REQUIREMENTS**

- **AND THE LIST GOES ON AND ON AND ON!**

DEFINING A “TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT”

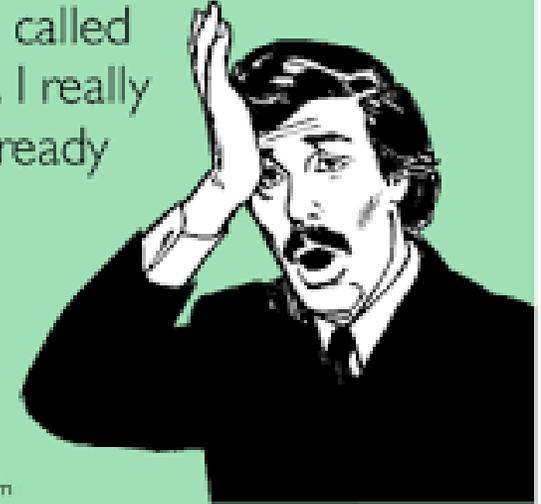
“TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT” IS A WORKPLACE WHERE DYSFUNCTION AND DRAMA REIGN TO THE POINT THAT EMPLOYEES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, FEEL UNVALUED, DISSATISFIED, UNALIGNED, UNHEARD, WORTHLESS, UNACCEPTED, ET CETERA.

BASICALLY, A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT “LEAVES YOU FEELING LIKE DIRT,” SAYS ROBERT SUTTON, A STANFORD UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR WHO STUDIES ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR.

IN ADDITION TO HARMING EMPLOYEE MORALE, RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT CAN ALSO BE DAMAGING TO EMPLOYEE HEALTH.

A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT KEEPS EMPLOYEES IN A FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT MINDSET, WHICH GENERATES PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL STRESS.

I'm sorry I hurt your feelings when I called you stupid I really thought you already knew.



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It's gotten to the point where I am working here to pay for the prescriptions I now require to cope with working here.



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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A “TOXIC” WORK ENVIRONMENT AND A “HOSTILE” WORK ENVIRONMENT

WHILE A “TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT” CAN, AN OFTEN DOES, LEAD TO A “HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT”, A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT IS NOT ILLEGAL; WHERE AS, A “HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT” IS.

TO CONSTITUTE A “HOSTILE” WORK ENVIRONMENT, THE BEHAVIOR MUST DISCRIMINATE AGAINST A PROTECTED GROUP OF PEOPLE. THAT INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, GENDER, PREGNANCY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, DISABILITY, GENETIC INFORMATION, ETC.

A “TOXIC” WORK ENVIRONMENT BECOMES A “HOSTILE” WORK ENVIRONMENT WHEN ENDURING THE CONDUCT BECOMES A CONDITION OF CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT, OR WHEN THE CONDUCT IS SEVERE AND PERVASIVE ENOUGH TO CREATE A SITUATION THAT WOULD SEEM INTIMIDATING, HOSTILE, OR ABUSIVE TO REASONABLE PEOPLE.

TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF A “HOSTILE” WORK ENVIRONMENT, THE BEHAVIOR MUST BE:

- PERVASIVE, SEVERE, AND PERSISTENT
- DISRUPTIVE TO THE VICTIM’S WORK
- SOMETHING THE EMPLOYER KNEW ABOUT, OR SHOULD HAVE, AND DID NOT ADDRESS ADEQUATELY ENOUGH TO MAKE IT STOP
- THE HARASSER IS A SUPERVISOR

THE COST OF A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

IN SEPTEMBER OF 2019 SHRM RELEASED A REPORT STATING THE FOLLOWING:

- 20% OF AMERICANS HAVE LEFT A JOB IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS DUE TO A “TOXIC WORKPLACE CULTURE”;
58% OF THEM LEFT THE JOB BECAUSE OF THEIR MANAGER
- THIS “TURNOVER” COSTING EMPLOYERS \$223 BILLION
- 49% OF AMERICAN WORKERS HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING THEIR CURRENT ORGANIZATION DUE TO A “TOXIC WORKPLACE CULTURE – (REMEMBER POINT #1 ABOVE)
- 76% OF AMERICAN WORKERS SAID THEIR MANAGER SETS THE CULTURE, YET 36% SAID THEIR MANAGER DID NOT KNOW HOW TO LEAD A TEAM
- 26% OF AMERICAN WORKERS SAID THEY DREADED GOING TO WORK
- SHRM’S REPORT INDICATED THAT EMPLOYEES WORKING IN A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT “DON’T FEEL THEY CAN BE HONEST WITH THEIR MANAGERS” AND THAT THEY HOLD THEIR MANAGERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING THE TOXICITY.
- SHRM’S PRESIDENT AND CEO, JOHNNY C. TAYLOR, JR. MADE THIS STATEMENT: “BILLIONS OF WASTED DOLLARS. MILLIONS OF MISERABLE PEOPLE. IT’S NOT A WARZONE – IT’S THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE.”

AS HR PROFESSIONALS, IT IS YOUR DUTY TO GET OUT OF YOUR OFFICE, “WALK ABOUT” AND “LOOK FOR” THE **SIGNS** OF A “TOXIC” WORK ENVIRONMENT.

THE MOST VALUABLE INDICATOR OF WHETHER YOUR WORKSPACE IS TOXIC OR NOT IS BY **OBSERVING AND ACTIVELY LISTENING TO THE EMPLOYEES**! THREE CLEAR SIGNS OF TOXICITY ARE:

- **PHYSICAL/MENTAL DISCOMFORT** – EMPLOYEE BURNOUT IS A SERIOUS RESULT OF THE STRESS YOUR BODY EXPERIENCES AFTER EXTENDED MENTAL AND PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE. LOOK AT EMPLOYEES' PRODUCTIVITY, ASKING THEM THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, AND MONITORING THE NUMBER OF SICK DAYS THEY HAVE TAKEN.
- **LACK OF ENTHUSIASM & POOR COMMUNICATION** - HOW EMPLOYEES INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER IS AN ACCURATE INSIGHT INTO HOW HEALTHY IS THE WORK ENVIRONMENT. AS YOU OBSERVE YOUR EMPLOYEES, NOTICE THEIR EXPRESSIONS AND PAY ATTENTION TO THE TONE OF THEIR VOICE. A LACK OF COMMUNICATION AMONG EMPLOYEES WORKING ALONG SIDE EACH OTHER, OR IN TEAMS, CAN BE A SIGN OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT TAKING PLACE.
- **POWER STRUGGLE** – IF YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS ARE ‘BULLDOZING’ OVER THEIR EMPLOYEES/TEAMS, IT’S TIME TO STEP IN. GOOD LEADERSHIP DOESN’T INVOLVE A FORCE OF POWER OR OPPRESSION OVER EMPLOYEES AND TEAMS. WHEN MANAGEMENT, FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE LOWEST LEVEL, APPEAR TO BE ABUSING THEIR POWER, IT IS TIME FOR HR TO STEP IN WITH A RESPECTFUL PROCESS TO ALLOW ALL SIDES TO BE AWARE OF WHAT THE OTHER SIDE IS EXPERIENCING OR PERCEIVING.

HR HAS A RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL EMPLOYEES, REGARDLESS OF POSITION OR TITLE. YOUR “RESPONSIBILITY” MUST BE DISPLAYED AS A ‘VERB**’ AND NOT A ‘NOUN’!**

EFFECTS OF A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

WE HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED SOME OF THE “COSTS OF A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT”. LET ME LIST SOME OTHER NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT:

- WORKPLACE DIVISION – EMPLOYEES WORKING AGAINST EACH OTHER TO SATISFY THEIR OWN INTERESTS
- WORKPLACE BULLYING – CO-WORKERS DON'T HAVE TO BE THE BEST OF FRIENDS, BUT THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY AND CONTRIBUTE COLLABORATIVELY TOWARD REACHING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS
- DECREASED PRODUCTIVITY – EMPLOYEES FEELING THEY ARE IN THE “HAMSTER WHEEL” OF CONSTANT GO, GO, GO LEADS TO OVERLOAD, OVERWHELMED, AND QUICKLY TO BURNOUT. SUCH AN EMPLOYEE IS OFTEN LESS PRODUCTIVE AND PRONE TO HAVING A SHORTER FUSE (I.E., PATIENCE RUNS THIN AND ANGER IS TRIGGERED EASIER)
- LACK OF CONFIDENCE – EMPLOYEES WORKING IN A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT OFTEN LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITY TO “GET THE JOB DONE” AND IN THEMSELVES.
- REDUCED PERFORMANCE AND CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIORS – TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENTS DESTROY IMPORTANT ‘BONDS’ BETWEEN EMPLOYEES/TEAM MEMBERS, RESULTING IN LESS SUPPORT AND HELP AMONG THEM
- TOXIC WORKPLACES CAN LEAD TO MEDICAL, MENTAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH PROBLEMS
- TOXIC WORKPLACES ALSO HARM THE LIVES OF EMPLOYEES BEYOND THE WORK ENVIRONMENT – EMPLOYEES REPORT FEELING EMOTIONALLY DRAINED, EXPERIENCE LOWER WELL-BEING, AND EVEN INCREASED CONFLICT AT HOME (I.E., WORK-RELATED CONFLICT AT HOME)
- **THE LIST GOES ON, AND ON, AND ON! A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT IS NOT INVISIBLE – SO LOOK FOR IT, AND WHEN YOU FIND IT, DETOXYFIFY IT IMMEDIATELY, THERE IS NO ‘TOMORROW’!**

DETOXIFYING A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

- HR MUST BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S GOALS, STRATEGIES, VISION, VALUES, MISSION, AND ETHICS STATEMENTS AND MODEL THEM IN THEIR WORK PRACTICES
- HR MUST REMIND MANAGEMENT AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL THROUGH THE LOWEST LEVEL THAT **THEY MUST LEAD FROM THE FRONT** THE VISION, VALUES, MISSION, AND ETHICAL STATEMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION – **THEIR FAILURE TO DO SO WILL BREED TOXICITY IN THE WORKPLACE**
- HR MUST REPORT, CONFRONT, AND BE INVOLVED IN BOTH THE PLANNING AND MONITORING OF DETOXIFYING A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT – **HR CANNOT RELEGATE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AWAY**
- HR MUST EITHER CLEARLY COMMUNICATE ORGANIZATIONAL VISION, VALUES, MISSION AND ETHIC STATEMENTS TO THE WORKFORCE OR SPEAK TO LEADERSHIP ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN CREATING THEM
- HR MUST SCREEN POTENTIAL JOB CANDIDATES TO ENSURE THEY'RE ALIGNED WITH ORGANIZATIONAL VISION, VALUES, MISSION, AND ETHICAL STATEMENTS – **HIRE THE 'RIGHT' PERSON FOR THE 'RIGHT' JOB THE 'FIRST' TIME!**
- HR MUST COMMUNICATE, AND WHEN APPROPRIATE EMPOWER, EMPLOYEES TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO CREATE CHANGE WITHIN EACH LEVEL OF THE ORGANIZATION TO IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE QUALITY
- HR MUST OFFER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FOR ALL MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND EMPLOYEES WISHING TO IMPROVE THEIR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES IN “SOFT SKILLS” (I.E., ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, PROBLEM SOLVING, TIME MANAGEMENT, CRITICAL THINKING, COMMUNICATION/ACTIVE LISTENING, TEAMWORK, EMPATHY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, DECISION MAKING, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, DELEGATION, NEGOTIATION, WORK ETHICS, ETC.)

IN SUMMARY, AND PERHAPS A LITTLE 'SHAMEFULLY', I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS TEASER

CREATING AN ETHICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT CAN HELP PREVENT OR OVERHAUL A TOXIC CULTURE, ACCORDING TO SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY (SDSU) RESEARCH.

SDSU RESEARCH CONCLUDED THAT “MANAGERS WHO DEMONSTRATE **ETHICAL** LEADERSHIP CAN PREVENT EMPLOYEES FROM BELITTLING, CRITICIZING AND OTHERWISE MISTREATING THEIR FELLOW WORKERS”.

“WE DEFINE ‘ETHICAL LEADERSHIP’ AS [...] THOSE WHO ENGAGE EMPLOYEES BY DISCUSSING THEIR WORK-RELATED WORRIES AND EMOTIONS,” SDSU RESEARCHER BABI EISSA STATED. “ETHICAL LEADERS WANT TO HELP EMPLOYEES RESPOND POSITIVELY TO NEGATIVE SITUATIONS AND THEY TRY TO OFFER RESOURCES TO HELP EMPLOYEES WHO MAY FIND THEMSELVES HITTING A ROUGH PATCH.”

I WILL BE PRESENTING “**BUSINESS ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE – THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM**” AT ALASKA SHRM STATE COUNCIL’S “**REFLECT, RESTORE, RENEW 2021 CONFERENCE AT THE HILTON HOTEL SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2021**”. I ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE, AND I HOPE TO SEE EACH OF YOU AT THE PRESENTATION.

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS





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THE TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT – HOW HR CAN DETOX IT!

PRESENTED BY
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