

## Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2009

# Welcome

Happy New Year to our valuable Customers and Associates!

2009 promises to be one of some challenges for our customers as many experience the realities of a global economic slow down. As such, the services of The Human Resources Centre and The Resolution Centre have focussed even more than usual on bringing tangible return on investment to our customers.



Many customers are looking to right-size their organisations and this month we focus on some hints and tips for doing so with compliance and empathy so as to retain your business reputation and where able, make organisational change as pleasant as possible for all concerned.

Our recent extension of partnerships with worker's compensation authorities in Australia has prompted us to write an article to guide you through discerning an allegation of bullying or harassment from interpersonal conflict. The article provides information for HR practitioners and Line Managers dealing with informal and formal complaints within their management areas.

Internally, The Human Resources Centre has structurally changed with the inception of business units for Strategy & Projects, Operational & Outsourced HR and Managed Payroll Services. Further, The Resolution Centre brand has been encompassed into a business unit of The Human Resources Centre and continues to provide workplace relations and industrial relations support and assistance to our customers.

Finally, I am very pleased to announce that our partnership with Financial Planners Association has now been launched and a dedicated website for financial planners regarding the services of The Human Resources Centre has now been released. We are looking forward to continuing to build our relationship within the financial planning sector and also in a similar partnership with other membership bodies.

Once again, from all of us at The Human Resources Centre and The Resolution Centre, we wish you and your businesses a very happy and prosperous 2009!

## MANAGED PAYROLL SERVICES

Has it been a while since you explored the option of outsourcing your payroll services?

Ask The Human Resources Centre how you can save time and money and improve the performance of your payroll functions by outsourcing to our dedicated Managed Payroll Services area. Phone us today on **1300 136 131**.



## TRAINING



## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

### The Resolution Centre Regional Training

Over the years, The Resolution Centre has been synonymous with training and development in the area of conflict management, grievance investigation and mediation for HR practitioners.

As an extension to our cyclical training programs presented in capital cities, we are pleased to announce our program for 2009.

The program will be delivered in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide as well as the major rural centres of:

- Dubbo
- Nowra
- Wollongong
- Albury
- Newcastle
- Geelong
- Bendigo

For an information pack on all programs run by The Resolution Centre or for dates in your area please visit: [www.resolutioncentre.com.au](http://www.resolutioncentre.com.au) or call us on **1300 554 381**.

The Resolution Centre is a business unit of The Human Resources Centre and specialises in workplace and employee relations.

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this is a  
*magic*  
HR box



The Human Resources Centre has a dedicated business unit for performing operational human resources management functions as a one-off service or a fully outsourced long term program. This unit has developed a special product for business parks in the Sydney metropolitan and Melbourne metropolitan areas.

HR in-a-box is a new concept that provides accessible and easy to engage HR services to companies who either do not have a HR representative or require additional HR support.

Cost effective solutions for services such as:

1. Develop a Position Description
2. Conduct a Recruitment Process
3. Develop an Employment Agreement
4. Prepare an Induction Process
5. Write a Policy
6. Train an Individual or a Group on a Policy
7. Source Training Options and/or provide On-site Training
8. Write an Adhoc HR Communication
9. Manage a Conflict in the Workplace
10. Manage a Formal Complaint in the Workplace
11. Manage a Workers Compensation Claim
12. Perform an OHS Audit
13. Accompany a Manager to Conduct a Performance Discussion
14. Conduct 360° Performance Feedback Capture and Reporting
15. Coach a Manager in relation to Employee Matters
16. Manage the Payroll Function

*Coming Soon*

So if you are in a business park in **Sydney** or **Melbourne**, look out for the delivery of your box... there's a whole HR department in a box especially for you!

For information about HR in-a-box or to receive a box for use in your business, please contact us at: [www.humanresourcescentre.com.au](http://www.humanresourcescentre.com.au) or call our Operational & Outsourced HR Unit on **1300 136 131**.

## ARTICLE

### Top 5 Reasons Employees Leave

The national unemployment percentage forecasts that most companies are looking to stabilise or reduce numbers of employees however it is still important for businesses to remain diligent in retaining talent and knowledge.

Often there is a misconception that employees leave for increased salary and employers may become complacent knowing that the job market is not as buoyant as it has been in recent times.

While salary is an important aspect of the employment relationship, often this is not the most common factor in employees leaving their last position. A recent survey conducted by Seek, Australia's leading job search engine provides the following information:

The top 5 reasons employees left their last job were:

1. New Challenge
2. Bad Management
3. Did not feel appreciated
4. Better package and benefits
5. Boredom

SOURCE: 2008 Survey of Employment Satisfaction and Motivation In Australia, Seek Limited, 2008

The above list demonstrates the importance of maintaining good working relationships, sound performance management and challenging roles in the engagement and retention of employees.

Organisations seeking to improve their performance management processes, their management capabilities or their retention and engagement of their valued employees, can ask us how to practically achieve this. Visit us at [www.humanresourcescentre.com.au](http://www.humanresourcescentre.com.au)



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### FEATURE

## What is the difference between Interpersonal Conflict and Bullying or Harassment?

At THRC and TRC, we often see cases where an employee has reported experiences of bullying and/or harassment yet after investigation, the root cause of such allegations has been an interpersonal conflict and by definition, bullying and/or harassment has not occurred.

The definition of interpersonal conflict is quite broad and can encompass many possible and varied causes. In contrast, the definitions for bullying and harassment are very succinct (although they do vary slightly from State to State).

The terms 'bullying and harassment' are well known but often poorly understood. When an employee is experiencing stress (and without being able to clearly articulate why they are feeling stressed) it is easy or convenient to 'fall back' on the familiar terms which, for the employee, may seem to encompass all that is not right for them in the workplace. It is also common for employees feeling stress to use these terms when they have a misunderstanding or are not familiar with what is considered to be a proper and fair performance management process.

Having said this, it is very unwise to dismiss an allegation of bullying and/or harassment without due diligence being given to investigating the complaint - interviewing the complainant, the respondent and other witnesses and carefully considering the evidence at hand against company policies and legislation.

In an effort to help clarify this terminology please refer to these examples:

**Interpersonal Conflict** occurs when a person believes that their needs are not being met or their values are being challenged or compromised due to interference from or the actions of another person or group of people. Differences in opinion are not necessarily causes for conflict unless a person's behaviour causes another to believe that their needs, rights or values are being unaddressed or undermined. Usually such conflict is unintentional and manifests because of one's lack of thoughtfulness

for the other person, an incorrect interpretation of the situation (including making inaccurate assumptions about the other person's feelings or thoughts) and/or poor communication skills.

**Bullying** is repeated, unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour that is intimidating, insulting, offensive, demeaning or abusive to others. Such behaviours may occur at the place of work or in other locations used in the course of employment. Usually, to label such a person's behaviour as bullying, there must be evidence of repeated and persistent actions that a 'reasonable person' would interpret as bullying.

**Harassment** usually refers to any behaviour (physical, verbal or non-verbal) which a reasonable person would perceive as being unwelcome, offensive, humiliating or belittling. Such behaviour may range from subtle innuendo to more obvious and public actions and need only occur once for it to be considered harassment.

Our Senior HR specialists would be pleased to answer any questions or queries you may have around trying to define and understand these terms and how they relate to situations you may be experiencing or witnessing at work. We offer a range of resolution services for instances of interpersonal conflict and informal complaints as well as performing best practice grievance investigations when formal complaints have been raised.

REFERENCES:  
**WORKSAFE VICTORIA:** Workplace violence and bullying, June 2005, [http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/resources/file/ebce57435dee769/vwa\\_violence\\_bull.pdf](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/resources/file/ebce57435dee769/vwa_violence_bull.pdf)  
**NSW Anti-discrimination Act 1977**  
[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol\\_act/aa1977204/index.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/aa1977204/index.html)  
**Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission**  
[www.humanrightscscommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrightscscommission.vic.gov.au)



Some examples of bullying and harassment are:

### Bullying

- Unreasonable, excessive or harsh criticising
- Yelling, screaming, angry outbursts, name-calling or abusive comments
- Throwing objects or banging a fist on the table
- Isolating employees from normal work interactions or ignoring a person
- Non-delegation of tasks
- Withholding information or resources an employee needs to perform their job
- Removing responsibilities
- Imposing menial or unrelated tasks
- Deliberately changing rosters to inconvenience or disadvantage
- Unexplained job changes or threats to do so or threats of job loss
- Setting impossible deadlines, unreasonable work demands or pressures
- Malicious teasing or being made the brunt of pranks or practical jokes
- Unwanted physical contact, threatening or intimidating non-verbal behavior

### Harassment

- Spreading rumours, gossip and innuendo
- Imitating someone's accent or behaviours
- Displaying or circulating sexually suggestive, offensive or degrading material
- Sexual or offensive jokes or comments
- Unwelcomed practical jokes
- Unsolicited physical contact including non-aggressive behaviours
- Unwelcome personal questions
- Name calling, wolf whistling, suggestive looks
- Unsolicited communications eg. phone calls, letters, emails or SMS
- Nicknames or jokes referring to gender, ethnic group, sexual preference, religion or other discriminatory terms

NOTE: Relevant State Legislation must be referred to for a more accurate understanding of which behaviours do (or do not) constitute bullying and harassment.

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rightsized  
TODAY

### BEST PRACTICE

#### Right Sizing Your Avenue to Long Term Organisational Success

In today's uncertain economic climate it has become necessary for business leaders and people managers to closely examine their workforce strategy. While many organisations approach this time with caution and trepidation, it is important to remember that this time also presents an exciting opportunity to review and make changes to organisational structures, workflows and expectations with a view to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of your organisation.

In order to achieve long term organisational success, The Human Resources Centre has recently partnered with many organisations to develop and implement best practice right sizing initiatives.

Right sizing is the process whereby organisations perform an analysis of their business objectives to determine if their current workforce is achieving the most effective outcomes. Right sizing strategy initiatives take into consideration the core work and overall goals of an organisation; the specifics of the workforce (including headcount, skills and output/productivity levels) and cost/other economic conditions/restraints to determine if the business is running effectively and efficiently as possible.

Questions such as "what activities are being conducted that do not support our core work or business objectives?", "is it financially viable to continue to perform this function in-house?" and "could this process be refined to be more effective?" are analysed. This analysis can often lead to actions such as;

- Restructuring of business units to remove unnecessary positions through redundancies and redeployment;
- Refining workflows and processes to remove double handling and unnecessary/ineffective tasks;
- Re-training and cross training of staff; and
- The introduction of performance management systems and programs for staff to ensure the organisation's expectations are clearly set and the workforce is satisfying these requirements.

Through the following actions organisations have the potential to effectively reduce their labour bill and increase productivity and output levels with a view to ensuring their economic viability and market competitiveness.



For further information around best practice right sizing initiatives that may be appropriate for your organisation, please contact The Human Resources Centre's **Strategy and Projects** Unit.

### WORKPLACE POLICIES

Ask The Human Resources Centre how you can ensure you have meaningful and useful workplace policies.

The Human Resources Centre has a range of 'off the shelf' and tailored packages from a single policy to a full employee handbook.



### RANGE OF SERVICES

The Human Resources Centre and The Resolution Centre offer a wide range of services including:

MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

WORKPLACE TRAINING

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC HR CONSULTANCY

OPERATIONAL HR SERVICES

OUTSOURCED HR SERVICES

MANAGED PAYROLL SERVICES

### Underperforming Employee?

Ask our Senior HR practitioners for a confidential conversation on how to improve performance, manage under performance or to ensure compliant exit programs.