

SPEAKER'S NOTES

Bullying in the Workplace
Powerpoint Presentation

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SLIDE 1 – Title Slide...

Bullying in the Workplace:
Recognizing and Dealing with it

**A Presentation prepared for
Know Bull! Day – 03 June 2009**

Speaker: Bullying in the workplace is on the increase...is largely
'unaddressed'...and is wreaking 'havoc' on staff, and organisational productivity.

SLIDE 2

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Speaker: In fact — recent groundbreaking research in the US by The Workplace Bullying Institute — a Washington State-based non-profit group serving the U.S. and Canada —revealed some disturbing data about the prevalence of workplace bullying and its effects.

One of the major findings of the *2007 U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey* — the largest scientific survey of bullying in the US — was that “Bullying is 4 (four) times more prevalent than illegal, discriminatory harassment,” which includes such things as discrimination due to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or age.

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Speaker: The Workplace Bullying Institute also stated that around “37 percent of U.S. workers have reported being bullied on the job, while 49 percent say they have witnessed a bully in action”. This represents a staggering 86% of the workforce, or 71.5 million Americans being affected by bullying in the workplace.

Further to this the UK's largest commercial insurer, Royal & Sun Alliance, says that bullying at work costs UK businesses around 18 billion pounds every year...while in 2005, WorkCover estimated the dollar 'cost' of workplace bullying in Australia at somewhere between 6 and 13 billion dollars a year.

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Speaker: Bullying in the workplace affects both workplace bully 'targets' and 'non-targets' alike.

Even as far back as 2001, Drake Personnel, one of Australia's leading employment agencies said in an interview that, “the antics of one serial bully in the workplace had the potential to reduce the performance of their victims by half, and that of other employees by up to 33%.” Interestingly, research by the Crisis Prevention Institute in the USA clearly demonstrated that when targets believe someone at work has treated them disrespectfully, half will lose work time worrying about future interactions with the instigator, and half will

contemplate changing jobs to avoid a recurrence. Most will tell friends, family and colleagues about how badly they have been treated, and some targets of bullying will leave the company.

The reality is that people do *not* contribute their best when they fear harassment, bullying or abuse.

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Speaker: Far from the stereotype...the bully 'target' is rarely the spectacled, nerdy wimp'. Rather, they tend to be ethical, well-liked, highly personable, intelligent and self-assured people. Which begs the question – why do they become the targets of workplace bullies?

Increasingly, the literature suggests that workplace bullies 'select' their targets for no other reason than they pose a perceived 'threat' to the bully. The threat can actually be the target's productivity, skills, talent, and popularity with peers and superiors. The bully's primary aims are to reduce the Target's performance and self-esteem while simultaneously increasing the Workplace Bully's own view of her/his own self-importance.

Now we'll turn our attention to what bullying is...and what isn't.

SLIDE 3

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Speaker: Workplace bullying is not someone simply being critical of your work. Nor, is it someone who simply doesn't like you. After all – not all of us will be liked in our workplaces.

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Speaker: Workplace bullying is not a form of 'tough management', 'employee motivation', or 'productivity improvement' – far from it. These are the signs of an incompetent, dysfunctional manager or supervisor who believes they must resort to crude threats or intimidation to encourage their staff, or who rationalises their behaviour in these ways.

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Speaker: Workplace bullying occurs when the words or actions of a person or people are designed to – demean, humiliate, intimidate, devalue and generally – harm you professionally.

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Speaker: And for certain behaviours to be classified as 'workplace bullying' – certain elements need to be present.

SLIDE 4

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Speaker: There's a strong possibility someone is a 'workplace bully' when their behaviour is...

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Speaker: Planned mistreatment in the form of verbal abuse, conduct that is threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; or sabotage that interferes with work.

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Speaker: Also, a bully's behaviour will have any combination of 5 'aims'.

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Speaker: The behaviour needs to be 'repeated' and 'persistent' and is generally not usually a 'one-off' occurrence. However, there have been rare instances when the behaviour that's been exhibited is so extreme – that there can be no doubt it is essentially 'bullying' behaviour.

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Speaker: Finally, behaviour that is considered as bullying behaviour will have 'health harming' effects – either physically, emotionally, or both.

SLIDE 5

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Speaker: Of course the types of behaviour and tactics that bullies use to 'bully'...is as varied as the bullies themselves. However, the following will give you an idea of some of the more popular tactics.

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Speaker: Other tactics include such things as being excluded from emails and/or meetings, theft of 'credit' i.e. where the bully takes credit for the work of another – generally the target, but can be other staff...and 'Mobbing', where others are coerced into a bullying 'gang up' on a target.

This list is certainly not exhaustive – but it provides an idea just how varied bully tactics can be.

SLIDE 6

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Speaker: Setting aside the 'human' cost for a moment – workplace bullying is having a devastating impact around the globe.

In the UK 18.9 million working days are lost, while 71.5 million workers are affected the USA at a cost of \$74 billion annually. And workplace bullying in Australia is said to cost around \$20,000 per employee in the Australian workforce.

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Speaker: Bullying in the workplace can ruin morale, lower productivity, devastate a company's culture, and contribute to employee absenteeism. Further, it results in lost experience, lost productivity, turnover costs, legal fees and damaged organisational reputation.

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Speaker: The UK's largest commercial insurer, Royal & Sun Alliance, says that workplace bullying costs "individual companies 8-10% of their annual profits; plus, it leaves them open to "the threat of expensive litigation".

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Speaker: From the Australian legal perspective – if bullying is occurring in a work environment, it is up to the employer to change the culture of the workplace — or face the consequences. And if an employee is too scared to talk to their boss, or their boss' boss about a bullying incident, the employer may be liable. Further, as indicated by an article in *Lawyer's Weekly Online*, "The courts do not look favourably upon any organisation, regardless of size, that has an incident of bullying, but has no policy or procedure in place informing its employees how to deal with and report incidents of bullying or harassment. Similarly, employers must ensure such policies are very clearly understood, and enforced."

Smart companies soon realise that workplace bullies are not only too expensive to keep, but not dealing with them is a risk that organisations can no longer afford to take.

SLIDE 7

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Speaker: Having identified some of the more popular bully tactics, and established that workplace bullies are too expensive to keep, we'll now focus on how to actually deal with bullying in the workplace.

Stop workplace bullying on the spot by speaking up. If you're professional and cordial in the workplace...there's no reason why you shouldn't expect to be treated the same. When confronted with behaviour that's humiliating, and professionally harmful – nip it in the bud immediately.

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Speaker: If a workplace bully is in full-on 'tirade mode' —excuse yourself and walk away. No one should have to tolerate a workplace screamer. You don't have to make a 'scene' use any reason to leave the room i.e. going for a toilet break/drink of water/urgent phone call that needs attending – just leave.

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Speaker: Confront the bully — calmly. Providing you can maintain your composure... let the bully know there are certain incidents/events that need to stop. Then address each item one-by-one.

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Speaker: Document *all* bullying behaviour. When you consider reporting a bully's behaviour, you'll require facts and details about events that occurred – accusations alone are not sufficient. A bully's behaviour will often be dismissed as a 'personality clash' by upper management and human resources staff. A workplace bully may even suggest that he/she is the one being bullied by you – and then allude to your emotional 'instability'. Armed with witnesses' names, details about events, dates and other pertinent information adds credibility to your claim, and facts are generally more difficult to refute.

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Speaker: Lastly— if you are a witness to bullying in the workplace — speak up — make a report— draw it to the attention of a more senior manager. *Don't* let your colleagues suffer in silence.

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Speaker: Just in case you'd like more information or resources for dealing with bullying in the workplace, or you'd like to find out more about Know Bull! Day—just access the following website...www.know-bull.com

Other items on the site include a couple of free A4 posters for yourself, friends, and colleagues—some interesting bullying facts and stats—and there's a survey you can participate in if you like...anonymously from the privacy of your home if you like.

And finally, if you know of someone—like a friend, colleague, partner, or spouse that is currently experiencing workplace bullying—do him or her a favour and refer them to the Know Bull! Day section of the website address I gave you a moment ago—and suggest they access the information available for 'individuals'.