

One-in-Four Workers Have Felt Bullied in the Workplace, CareerBuilder Study Finds

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CHICAGO, April 20, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- A new study from CareerBuilder shows the playground isn't the only place one will encounter bullies. Twenty-seven percent of workers reported they have felt bullied in the workplace with the majority neither confronting nor reporting the bully. Comparing genders and age groups, the segments that were more likely than others to report feeling bullied were women, workers age 55 or older, and workers age 24 or younger. The study was conducted from February 21 to March 10, 2011 and included more than 5,600 full-time workers nationwide.

Women reported a higher incidence of being treated unfairly at the office. One-third (34 percent) of women said they have felt bullied in the workplace compared to 22 percent of men.

Looking at age, 29 percent of workers age 55 or older and 29 percent of workers age 24 or younger reported they had been bullied on the job, the highest among age groups. Workers age 35 to 44 were the least likely to report feeling bullied at 25 percent.

The most common culprit is typically the boss, according to the survey. Fourteen percent of workers felt bullied by their immediate supervisor while 11 percent felt bullied by a co-worker. Seven percent said the bully was not their boss, but someone else higher up in the organization while another 7 percent said the bully was their customer.

Bullying can come in a variety of forms. When asked to describe how they were bullied, workers pointed to the following examples:

- My comments were dismissed or not acknowledged – 43 percent
- I was falsely accused of mistakes I didn't make – 40 percent
- I was harshly criticized – 38 percent
- I was forced into doing work that really wasn't my job – 38 percent
- Different standards and policies were used for me than other workers – 37 percent
- I was given mean looks – 31 percent
- Others gossiped about me – 27 percent
- My boss yelled at me in front of other co-workers – 24 percent
- Belittling comments were made about my work during meetings – 23 percent
- Someone else stole credit for my work – 21 percent

"Bullying is a serious offense that can disrupt the work environment, impact morale and lower productivity," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources. "If you are feeling bullied, keep track of what was said or done and who was present. The more specifics you can provide, the stronger the case you can make for yourself when confronting the bully head on or reporting the bully to a company authority."

Confronting and Reporting the Bully

Although bullies can be intimidating, nearly half of workers (47 percent) said they confronted the bully about his/her actions. Of these workers, 43 percent said the bullying stopped, 13 percent reported the bullying became worse while 44 percent said the bullying stayed the same.

Nearly three-in-ten workers (28 percent) took their concerns to a higher authority and reported the bully to their Human Resources department. While 38 percent of these workers stated that measures were taken to investigate and resolve the situation, the majority of workers (62 percent) said no action was taken. Of those who didn't report the bully, one-in-five (21 percent) said it was because they feared the bullying would escalate.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder among 5,671 U.S. workers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government); ages 18 and over between February 21 and March 10, 2011 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. Employees, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 5,671, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.30 percentage points. Sampling error for data

from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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