



Weathering the Storm:

An Illustration of Thorough Preparation Preventing Major Difficulties

Into every life some rain must fall, says the poet. Similarly, into every workplace hurricanes must occasionally cause minor devastation.

In employment environments, these disturbances can take many forms. Declining productivity, harassment complaints, workplace accidents, and other compliance concerns threaten the security and success regularly.

A good umbrella is worth its weight in gold. For a company, this protection is built far in advance of the storm by defining and documenting plans, processes, and policies to be used in these difficult situations. This allows us to weather any storm by being prepared for any contingency.

Grief and misery are prevented by planning in advance. Every layer of protection is designed to:

- Limit company liability.
- Set clear expectations.
- Enhance productivity.
- Ensure employee safety.
- Increase employee engagement and retention.

A Conscientious Employer

ABC Great Beginnings is a Utah employer that provides high quality childcare for working parents and a safe after-school environment for students. As an employer, ABC conscientiously strives to provide a rewarding and fulfilling work environment for employees. When evaluating alternatives and making difficult decisions, a common practice is to identify the right thing to do for the employee.

ABC Great Beginnings, in consultation with Blue Ivy Professional Services, has developed a robust set of policies and processes that codify compliance and provide a framework for handling high-stakes situations. Each of these processes creates a predictable, effective, and consistent employee experience.



The Employee

Iggy (not his real name) worked at ABC Great Beginnings. He had worked there for several months, performing satisfactorily. Even though he did not work around children, he still played a pivotal role in the Company, maintaining facilities and tending the grounds. His manager knew him well, and there were no complaints about his work for many months.

The Shine Begins to Wear Off

Several months into Iggy's employment, however, there began to be some indications that his performance was beginning to decline. A project took significantly longer than necessary, which triggered some additional scrutiny. Subsequent conversations with Iggy and a site supervisor revealed some very concerning circumstances, including sleeping on the job, an unwitnessed workplace accident, a sexual harassment complaint, and a seemingly arbitrary and inconsistent accommodation request.

All of this in its tangled totality could have negatively impacted productivity and the company's reputation, not to mention the potential liability involved. True to form, though, management handled each situation effectively and compliantly, following their carefully prepared processes and policies for each aspect of Iggy's employment relationship:

- Corrective action processes provided the framework to address the performance and conduct deficits.
- Accident reporting processes facilitated the information to address the performance and conduct deficits.
- Accident reporting processes facilitated the information collection and response to the workplace accident.
- A harassment prevention policy described the steps to take as the Company investigated and addresses the harassment allegation.
- A workplace accommodation policy outlined the federally prescribed interactive process to explore any reasonable adjustments that might be made to Iggy's workplace.

Each one of these processes was pre-planned, with training delivered in advance, so that all responsible parties were prepared with an appropriate response and course of action. What could have been a very risky situation was handled in full compliance with tact and grace.



Epilogue

Suffice it to say that many, many hours were required to extricate the company from all of these various entanglements. The entire situation resulted in a very messy termination, a company vehicle that was only recovered with great difficulty, and police involvement. (Yes, the police knew Iggy by name.)

It was not as bad as it might have been: because of their thorough preparation, ABC Great Beginnings was able to maintain orderly operations with no negative impacts to any of its clients. ABC continues to grow and expand their capacity to provide development activities and learning opportunities with award-winning curriculum to children across the state.

Blue Ivy Professional Services is grateful to have partnered with ABC Great Beginnings in both process development and issue resolution. Blue Ivy is a full-service human capital management consulting firm offering organizational support to companies seeking a better way to ensure regulatory compliance while increasing employee alignment by engaging with their workforce.



Reach out today to talk about new ways to tackle your human capital challenges.

