

IMPROPER INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

This scenario depicts a poorly managed interview. The Complainant is withholding information; and, is not specific about her complaint. She is also not telling the truth about what is really happening. The real issue is her performance as opposed to an issue of discrimination.

In addition, the Interviewer is not asking the open-ended questions that will gather the most information. She has left out a major segment of the interview process, both in opening and in closing.

THE CAST

Tracy The employee filing the complaint. In her late 20's. Caucasian. She is frequently late to work and remiss in her duties. Many times, she must be reminded of her duties by her supervisor.

Kevin Tracy's supervisor, unseen by camera.

Paula People Services Rep. 30-40. She conducts the interview with Tracy.

Announcer Male or female. Sets the stage and reinforces key points.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC UP.

Fade up from black into montage of United employees performing various duties at work. SUPER Headline: United Airlines
Harassment & Discrimination Policy

Announcer

In keeping with our corporate commitment to equal employment opportunity, it is company policy to forbid harassment and discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation. The company believes that each employee should be treated with respect and dignity, in accordance with our corporate values.

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Harassment and discrimination -- whether verbal, physical or visual -- violate both company policy and the law. Our commitment to our employees is one of “zero tolerance” for harassment and discrimination based upon race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation.

Dissolve to WS/MS angles of Paula greeting Tracy. Tracy appears to be nervous and a little on her guard.

Paula

Hi Tracy. I'm Paula Scott. I'm investigating your complaint from last month.

Tracy nods uneasily as she looks around to see who might be listening in. Paula then leads Tracy through the corridors of United headquarters. Sound fades down and under the Announcer as he/she sets the stage. Paula and Tracy continue to ad lib chit-chat dialogue as they walk.

Announcer

When a complaint is filed, you should always handle the investigative process in a thorough, neutral way that's consistent with United Airlines' corporate policy against harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

That means...you should make sure that the person making the complaint receives a fair and impartial investigation of their complaint.

As you watch this interview take place, see if you can identify any errors or problems in the way Paula handles this investigative meeting with Tracy.

Sound fades back up into dialogue between Paula, Alex and Tracy. They are rounding a corner in the hallway as they approach their meeting room.

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Paula
(to Tracy)

Can you tell me what's wrong?

Tracy

You won't tell...

Paula
(to passerby in hallway)

Hi, John. How's it going?

Tracy is a little confused by the interruption. Paula is unfazed as they enter the meeting room and she moves around the table to a position that allows her to see out the door. The door to the room has been left open.

Paula

Have a seat, Tracy. Now, what were you saying?

Tracy uneasily sinks into a seat close to the open door. She nervously checks over her shoulder as she speaks.

Tracy

You won't tell anyone I talked with you, will you?

Paula glances out the door as another passer by waves in to her. She waves back, then turns her attention back to Tracy as she moves to a seat around the table.

Paula

No. We'll keep this confidential. Now, can you tell me what's wrong?

Tracy
(nervously fidgeting)

Well, like...it just seems like my supervisor doesn't treat me

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right.

Paula

Can you be specific?

Tracy

(shrugging her shoulders)

You know...he harasses me.

Paula glances out the door, then back to Tracy, appearing concerned but somewhat disconnected to the conversation. Almost as an afterthought...she jots down a note, then continues her line of questioning.

Paula

Harasses you...how?

Tracy

(seemingly confused)

Well, I don't know. Things just don't seem fair.

Paula

What do you mean by fair?

Frustrated, Tracy scrunches her face in disgust...and then, plops back in her chair, crossing her arms in front of her. Once again, she checks over her shoulder to see if anyone is listening in from the hallway.

Tracy

Like, he makes me do all the grunt work.

Paula

You mean, you don't like the work assignments he gives you?

Tracy

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Right!

Paula

Are these assignments like sweeping, working the gates, working the pits...those kind of things?

Tracy

Yeah.

Paula

Do you think you get these assignments just because you're a woman?

Tracy leans forward, and taps the table with her fist, loudly whispering as if what she has to say is a secret.

Tracy

(emphatically)

I know I do.

Paula

(suspiciously probing deeper)

Do men ever get these assignments?

Tracy

No. As a matter of fact, they don't.

Paula takes a note that seems to take a long time to write, making Tracy even more uncomfortable.

Paula

Okay. Can you give me an example of when the harassment occurred?

Tracy

(with disgust)

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It happens all the time. I mean, just yesterday, Kevin asked me to put away supplies after our briefing.

Paula

In your estimation, how long has the harassment been going on?

Tracy

A while. I'm not sure.

Paula

Would you say 2 months...6 months...or longer?

Tracy

(losing interest)

You know, let's just drop it. Things have really changed. I've got a lot going on in my life right now...and, I don't really need this hassle.

Paula raises her eyebrows, confused by Tracy's reaction.

Tracy

Tell me, will my name be used?

Paula

(nonchalantly)

We'll keep this confidential.

Tracy starts to collect her things.

Tracy

Good.

Paula leans in over the table and looks directly at Tracy.

Paula

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You know, Tracy...you're obligated by company policy to cooperate in this investigation.

Tracy

I don't like being pressured.

Paula

I don't mean to pressure you...but, if you're not going to help us, then we can't pursue this complaint.

Tracy stands up and pushes the chair back under the table.

Tracy

That's fine with me. I'd rather forget about it anyway.

Paula

Are you sure?

Tracy

Yeah, I'm sure.

Tracy heads to the door.

Paula

(slightly exasperated)

Well, as long as you don't go to an outside agency...

Tracy looks back over her shoulder at Paula as if she just had a good idea...then exits with a "you never know" smile on her face. Paula stands up and calls out after her as she closes her file folder.

Paula

Let me know if you change your mind!

Dip to black, then back up into recapping montage of clips representing

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mistakes made by Paula during the interview process (i.e. interviewing in the hallway, leaving the door open to the interview room, asking leading questions, etc.)

Announcer

In the scene that you just viewed, Paula demonstrated many inappropriate techniques for conducting a confidential, investigative interview with a person making a complaint.

She could have prevented the mistakes she made by following a few simple guidelines, designed to ensure that each and every complaint is handled in an appropriate, professional manner.

DISSOLVE TO GRAPHIC summation of key points to remember.

BUILD SUPER with bulleted key points.

Headline: Successful Investigation Techniques

Announcer

Here are some tips you should remember when investigating a complaint:

- After receiving a complaint, conduct the interview promptly.
- Before you begin an interview, make sure you're in an isolated area where you can talk privately.
- If at all possible, conduct the interview with two people present; one to ask questions, the other to take notes.
- Set a comfortable tone for sharing information.
- Give the interviewee your undivided attention and sincere interest.
- Ask open-ended questions, rather than leading questions.
- Be aware of your legal obligation to investigate claims of illegal harassment and discrimination.
- Obtain a written statement from the person making the

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complaint.

and

- Leave an open invitation for follow-up communication.

MUSIC UP.

Fade to black.