



## The Bully is No Match for Ambition

On October 31, Lewis Hamilton rolled in at fifth place in the Brazilian Grand Prix and took the title of Formula 1 World Champion. He was the youngest driver ever to do so. Three days later, a humble John McCain conceded a landslide defeat in the 2008 US Presidential Election to the first successful black candidate, Barack Obama.

Quite apart from causing a great debate in how a person's colour prevents them from achieving top jobs in UK business, the personal triumphs of Hamilton and Obama have also flown in the face of destructive behaviours. In addition to the anti-black slogans of some minor activist groups in the US, Obama was subjected to constant harassment over his friendship with a "terrorist".

The growing feud between Alonso and Hamilton finally concluded with the Spaniard Alonso joining Ferrari, resulting in Hamilton and his family becoming objects of racial taunting at the Barcelona Grand Prix. As their stories demonstrate, thankfully negative behaviour and attitudes need not destroy ambitions.

**\*\*\*Special Offer!\*\*\***

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This month's newsletter focuses on bullying and harassment in the work place, and we give you some tips on how to recognise a bully, how to deal with bullying and the likely consequences should you choose to turn a blind eye.

Don't forget to take advantage of the training offer we launched last month to beat the credit crunch - book two places on one of our courses within our open programme, and receive the second place at HALF the price. Just book before June 30 th 2009! We GUARANTEE to refund your money 100% - no quibbles, no fuss - if you are not fully satisfied.

We have just added a [new training course](#) in Equality and Diversity to our wide range of programmes, which will cover all of the issues explored in this newsletter.

For more information please please [look at our website](#), call us now on 0800 907 1015 or email [contact@pds-hr.com](mailto:contact@pds-hr.com).



## Lack of management skills are at the root of organisational bullying

Bullying in the workplace is still too high and employers stand accused of failing to tackle the issue effectively. According to the "*Bullying at work: the experience of managers*" study, published by the Chartered Management Institute, poor management skills lie at the heart of the problem, which is estimated to cost the UK economy £13.75bn a year.

On a positive note however, the study also highlighted the increase in employer awareness as more begin to take a firm line against bullying behaviour. In 2005, only 55% of organisations had a formal bullying policy which has risen to 74% this year.

The report, based on the views of 867 managers and executives across the public, private and voluntary sectors, found:

- 70% of managers claimed to have witnessed instances of bullying in the past three years
- two-thirds observed bullying between peers and 30% witnessed subordinates bullying their managers
- of those who were bullied, almost four in 10 reported that their organisation took no action at all.

The most frequent answer offered to the



bullying at work was a 'lack of management skills' (70%) - up from 66% in 2005 when the survey was last carried out. Respondents also cited authoritarian management styles (48%) as a critical factor.

The CMI added: "In the current economic climate the pressure to deliver is more acute than ever, but the need to perform should not be seen as an excuse to bully."

If your company is taken to tribunal over any issue relating to bullying and harassment, you will be scrutinised for the way the issue was handled within the business. A demonstration of how your management training focussed on eliminating bullying actions would be looked upon favourably. If you would like to discuss

question of identifying the root causes of

how to improve the people management skills within your organisation, please call us at Pinnacle Development Solutions now on 0800 907 1015 or email [contact@pds-hr.com](mailto:contact@pds-hr.com)

## How to Deal with Bullying and Harassment in your Workplace

Harassment and bullying can take a variety of different forms, ranging from repeatedly ignoring a colleague or subjecting them to unwelcome attention, to intimidation, humiliation, ridicule or offence. Extreme forms of harassment & bullying may include physical threats or violence. Harassment & bullying may consist of a single incident or a series of incidents. Behaviour that may appear trivial as a single incident can constitute harassment or bullying when the behaviour is repeated or takes place within the manager/employee relationship.

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and in the perception of the recipient of the conduct, it should reasonably be considered as having that purpose or effect.

**Bullying** may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment and bullying behaviour are always unacceptable, whether intentional or not. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another.

Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems. It is good idea to spell out what is unacceptable behaviour in your organisation. ACAS suggests:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- copying memos that are critical about



- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment need not necessarily be a face to face communication; it may be written, such as by email, phone. It can often be a challenge to recognise as it may not be obvious to others that it is taking place, and may be insidious. The recipient may assume that it is normal and acceptable behaviour in your organisation. They may be anxious not to appear weak or incapable if they find the actions of others intimidating. They may be accused of 'overreacting', and worry that they won't be believed if they do report incidents. People being bullied or harassed may occasionally appear to overreact to a comment or action that seems relatively trivial but which may be the 'last straw' following a series of incidents. There is often fear of retribution if they do make a complaint. In addition, colleagues may be

someone to others who do not need to know

- ridiculing or demeaning someone - picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances - touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials

reluctant to come forward as witnesses, as they too may fear the consequences for themselves. In fact, they may be so relieved not to be the subject of the bully themselves that they collude with the bully as a way of avoiding attention.

It is essential to have a Bullying and Harassment policy in place that all employees agree to adhere to, and understand the actions that will be taken if they were to be accused of bullying behaviour, or find they are a victim of it. If you would like to discuss how to develop such a policy for your organisation, please call us at Pinnacle Development Solutions now on 0800 907 1015 or email [contact@pds-hr.com](mailto:contact@pds-hr.com).

## Why do employers need to take action on bullying and harassment?

Bullying and harassment is not only unacceptable behaviour on moral grounds but may, if allowed to continue or dealt with badly, create serious problems for an organisation, including:

- poor morale and poor employee relations
- loss of respect for managers and supervisors
- poor performance
- loss of productivity
- repeated absence through stress-related issues
- resignations
- damage to company reputation
- tribunal and other court cases and payment of unlimited compensation.

It is in every employer's interests to promote a safe, healthy and fair environment in which people can work.

It is not possible for employees to make a direct complaint to an employment tribunal about bullying, but they might be able to bring complaints under laws covering discrimination and harassment. For example:

- **Sex:** the Sex Discrimination Act gives protection against discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of sex, marriage or because someone intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment

amended the Act (Race Regulations 2003) also give a stand alone right to protection from harassment on the grounds of race and ethnic or national origin.

- **Disability:** the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 gives protection against discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of disability, which can be a mental or physical impairment. This can cover a range of conditions that would not normally be considered a disability, such as some forms of dyslexia.
- **Sexual orientation:** the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 give protection against discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation (orientation is defined as 'same sex' - lesbian/gay - 'opposite sex' - heterosexual - and 'both sexes' - bisexual)
- **Religion or belief:** the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 give protection against discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief.
- **Age:** the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 give protection against discrimination and harassment on the grounds of age.

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- **Race:** the Race Relations Act 1976 gives protection against discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of colour or nationality. The regulations that

policy in place that all employees agree to adhere to, and understand the actions that will be taken if they were to be accused of bullying behaviour, or find they are a victim of it. If you would like to discuss how to develop such a policy for your organisation, please call us at Pinnacle Development Solutions now on 0800 907 1015 or email [contact@pds-hr.com](mailto:contact@pds-hr.com).

## Your questions answered

*“I run a business of 28 employees and I suspect that one of my supervisors is bullying certain members of the team. I have had three resignations in as many months and I don’t know how to tackle the issue without sufficient evidence.”*

For SMEs, it is not always easy to spot a bully within your team, especially if there is fear from other team members that prevent the bully from being exposed. A good manager demonstrates certain skills that a bully would tend to struggle with, and since a worker’s behaviour tends to have been learned from their own experiences of being managed, retraining can often address the development of skills and turn a bully into a good manager. Most office bullies are not aware of how their behaviour is affecting their colleagues. Leaving it unchecked lets the whole



team believe that the behaviour is acceptable, and your organisation will be affected in so many adverse ways.

The table below gives a clearer picture of how good managers will differ in their behaviour from a bully.

Manager	Bully
Leader	Bully, coward
Decisive	Random, impulsive
Has a good appreciation of short, medium and long term needs, goals and strategy	Rigidly short term, often no more than 24 hours
Accepts responsibility	Abdicates responsibility
Shares credit	Plagiarises, takes all the credit

Acknowledges failings	Denies failings, always blames others
Consistent	Inconsistent, random, impulsive
Fair, treats all equally	Inconsistent, always critical, singles people out, shows favouritism
Seeks and retains people more knowledgeable and experienced than self	Favours weaker employees, recruits henchmen and toadying types
Values others	Unable to value, constantly devalues others
Includes everyone	Includes and excludes people selectively
Leads by example	Dominates, sets a poor example
Truthful	Economical, uses distortion and fabrication
Confident	Insecure, arrogant
Good interpersonal skills	Poor interpersonal skills
Balanced objectivity	Exclusive self-interest
Cares about staff, the business, etc	Cares only about self
Respects clients	Is contemptuous of clients
Gets on well with people at all levels and from all backgrounds	Identifies only with clones of himself or herself
Assertive	Aggressive
Delegates	Dumps
Builds team spirit	Divisive, uses manipulation and threat

Uses influencing skills	Alienates, divides, creates fear and uncertainty
Motivates	Demotivates
Listens, guides, instructs	Tells
Has high expectations (that staff will do well)	Has low expectations of everybody
Shares fairly	Controls and subjugates
Shares information freely	Withholds information, releases selectively, uses information as a weapon
Always strives for clarity	Revels in confusion, divide and rule etc
Allows and trusts people to get on with the job	Constantly interfering, dictating and controlling
Only addresses genuine performance issues and then focuses on performance and behaviour	Makes false claims about alleged underperformance and focuses on the person, not behaviour or performance
Respected	Loathed
Has honesty and integrity	Exhibits hypocrisy and duplicity

To check whether you have a bully in your midst, there are a few actions you can take:

- Develop, publish and circulate your company bullying and harassment policy so all staff members are clear about the Company's position
- Give exit interviews to people who have resigned to find out what they enjoyed and disliked about working within the organisation
- Ensure regular appraisals are taking place within senior management. 360 degree appraisals for managers are extremely thorough and revealing as they ask all people within the organisation who come

any aspects of the business, and demonstrate humility and confidentiality whilst doing so

- Listen, watch, and avoid being too quick to judge a situation
- Act decisively and in accordance with your company policy if there is evidence of bullying and show the rest of the staff that it will not be tolerated.

If your company is taken to tribunal over any issue relating to bullying and harassment, you will be scrutinised for the way the issue was handled within the business. A demonstration of how your management training focussed on

into contact with them for their opinions on certain aspects of their performance

- Have an open-door policy and encourage all members of staff to talk to you about

eliminating bullying actions would be looked upon favourably. If you would like to discuss how to improve the people management skills within your organisation, please call us at Pinnacle Development Solutions now on 0800 907 1015 or email [contact@pds-hr.com](mailto:contact@pds-hr.com)

## Further assistance

If you would like further information on any issues raised by this bulletin, or require advice or assistance with any other human resources matters, please call us today on 0800 907 1015 or [send us an email](#).

And if you'd like complete protection against anything the growing volumes of employment law can find to throw at you, don't forget our [HR Toolkit](#) - the must-have business accessory for 2008!



The information in this newsletter is of a general nature and is not intended to replace professional advice. We recommend you to ask for specific professional advice before taking any action.

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