

Case study on sexual harassment at work assignment



Madhusudan was surprised how could Neeta did not come to office back for reporting the progress of visits and called him on phone whole the day, instead this email. Madhusudan believes that in small organization entrepreneur should build the business on cordial relationship with employees with informal work environment and this philosophy has brought him business fruits too. After going through the email he felt shattered. He left for home and started recollecting small fabrics of incident happened in the morning hour.

Madhusudan was watching that Neeta was not in the best of the mood for a few days and was not able to concentrate on her assignment. The moment he came to office, Madhusudan asked her about the same and Neeta replied that it was not related to office. Madhusudan also reminded her that she was not writing thought of day every morning in the office board from last few days which was her part of duty. Neeta did not respond and kept quiet on her seat which was near to the office board.

Madhusudan stood up went near to the board and started writing ' thought of the day with his back towards Neeta and he didn't realize that he was standing close to her in such fashion that his butts were close to her face. After Neeta brought to his notice, just to cheer Neeta up, Madhusudan cracked the famous dialogue of the movie " 3 Idiots" saying " Tohfa Kubool Karo", not by enacting but simply saying words. Other employees sitting in the office had a laugh. Though Neeta also laughed at but said she didn't like the joke.

Madhusudan felt that instead of cheering up Neeta and making the office environment a little light, it acted reverse. Madhusudan immediately corrected himself and apologised to Neeta. Madhusudan knew that being an entrepreneur he should have drawn some lines between female employees and him before cracking any jokes. Madhu thought the matter ended. Everything became normal. Employees worked well whole the day. No signs of discontentment were observed on the face of other female employees. Then why such an email from Neeta?

Madhu was very much mentally disturbed. He was reviewing his style of functioning in the office whole the night to find out whether it was wrong to be friendly with the employees, having one-to-one meeting in the office every day on every small issues and creating an atmosphere of comfort, trust and openness? If Neeta had some thing brewing up in her mind, why didnt she speak to him on such ssues when she used to discuss all other business matters with him everyday and even some times personal too.

Neeta wrote the following mail to Madhusudan : “ I would like to get it to your notice that am very much angry, annoyed and mentally disturbed due to the cheap joke that you cracked this morning. This was the reason why I could not stay put in the office, and went along with. I take this as an insult. You saying sorry cannot get me my respect back. Don't try to say that you were innocent because you were not. You said it with an intention, a dirty one. But this is not the first time this has happened. Here is the list of your actions with wrong intentions. 1 .

You have cracked non veg jokes with me several times. 2. Talking about Osho, after telling you again and again don't like. You tried to show me one of his videos called sex and life from Osho on our journey from Mumbai to Pune. 3. Holding hand for more than the time required. 4. Staring constantly after telling you not to do so. 5. Watching us when you go to the washroom and coming back, when we go to the washroom. 6. Asking time and again what we are thinking. 7. Whenever we enter office you look at us from top to bottom. This is called sexual harassment in legal terms.

This is completely not acceptable to me. Consider this to be my last warning to you. Next time I will not warn, but will act on it. Be ready for it. "

Madhusudan thought proper to reply the mail on each point to remove all misunderstandings and sent the reply as follows: " I never thought that cracking a dialogue of the latest Hindi Movie " 3 Idiots" will be taken in such a fashion. This was an instance of a movie. I keep giving examples of movies even in my training programs because I feel that we in India relate with movies easily. Hence to make the atmosphere a little non serious, I cracked the joke.

While I realized that the thought of the day was not changed for quite some time, I thought of writing it myself (Which I had done earlier as well). At that point of time, I was not hinting something else. After you told me about the distance and should have asked to move aside, I thought of just kidding. I guess it all depends on how we take jokes on ourselves and react. Rather than blowing the matters out of proportions, we should have been sportive towards such things. After being told that you oesn't like such jokes, had apologized then and there and thought the matter was over.

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There are many comments that even I may feel offensive like Sakshi (other female employee) emails to me and the language written. But have always forgotten them once the context to the same was over. was just trying to be funny and thought of easing out the office atmosphere (especially after being told that we need a friendly office environment). WOULD say that some of my jokes may be a little naughty but for sure were not indecent, vulgar and had explicitly mentioning non veg elements. By no way, these were obscene, vulgar or degrading women.

I have just spoken about a movie's dialogue " 3 Idiots" in a very general manner which was blown out of proportion. Had this been in bad taste, I would have always kept myself repeating such ones. As I had explained earlier, during our visit to a client, I thought that you showed some interest in intellectual debate involving philosophy and spirituality. thought this might interest you. By the way, this video was shown after Shashi Tharoor and Steve Jobs video. These are the videos which have motivational talks and were classic examples of good presentations.

When you mentioned that you were not interested, I thought that you were not able to hear and hence played the second video. By the way, Osho video, by no means has any sexually explicit comments or content. It's just his views which have been approved and have also been put in his books and discourses. I have been spiritually attracted to him and have faith in him. The title of the Video is " Sex and Death, the two taboos". I had also played Swami Vivekanand's audio as well, which very clearly seems to be forgotten (may be a matter of convenience). These are very videos that show n my various presentations.

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By the way, while being with all of you, I have always spoken on variety of topics such as movies, food, holidays, restaurants, education, politics, current affairs and spirituality. I thought of keeping my talks with varied topics only with the intention of keeping the office atmosphere alive, friendly and easy. Please give me instance, date, time and venue when I had holded your hand more than the time required. As long as my memory goes, handshake is very common in offices, though don't remember having it for more than twice in your tenure with the company.