

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| <i>Dedication</i> | iii |
| <i>About the Authors</i> | v |
| <i>Foreword</i> | vii |
| <i>Foreword to the First Edition</i> | ix |
| <i>Preface</i> | xiii |
| 1 WHAT IS A WORKPLACE INVESTIGATION AND WHY CONDUCT ONE? | 1 |
| What is an Investigation?..... | 2 |
| Why are Investigations Useful and Important?..... | 4 |
| When Should an Investigation be Done?..... | 14 |
| Evaluating the Threshold Question | 17 |
| 1. Misconduct and Just Cause — Key Concepts..... | 17 |
| 2. Human Rights — Key Concepts | 19 |
| (a) Discrimination | 20 |
| (b) Harassment | 23 |
| (c) Sexual Harassment | 26 |
| 3. Non-Human-Rights-Related Misconduct — Key Concepts | 29 |
| 4. Workplace Violence | 41 |
| 5. Poisoned Work Environment..... | 43 |
| What is the Workplace? | 44 |
| “Hot Potatoes” | 45 |
| The Foundation of a Solid Investigation — The “Four Pillars” | 47 |
| 1. Fairness..... | 48 |
| 2. Thoroughness | 48 |
| 3. Timeliness | 49 |
| 4. Confidentiality..... | 49 |
| The Role of the Investigator..... | 50 |
| The Investigation Standard..... | 51 |
| 2 CHOOSING YOUR PROCESS | 55 |
| The Traditional Workplace Investigation Model..... | 56 |

HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE TO WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Establish the Mandate..... | 56 |
| 2. Select the Investigator..... | 57 |
| 3. Advise the Parties about the Process | 57 |
| 4. Interview the Complainant..... | 58 |
| 5. Share the Allegations with the Respondent..... | 59 |
| 6. Interview the Respondent..... | 60 |
| 7. Interview the Witnesses, if Any | 61 |
| 8. Review with the Parties any Contradictory Evidence Collected..... | 61 |
| 9. Analyze the Evidence, Make Decisions and Prepare a Report..... | 61 |
| 10. Share Findings with the Parties | 62 |
| Ways in Which an Investigation Can Deviate from the Traditional Model..... | 63 |
| 1. The Anonymous Complaint (i.e., when the identity of one or both of the parties is unknown)..... | 63 |
| 2. The Counter-Complaint | 65 |
| 3. Multi-Party Complaints..... | 67 |
| (a) Multiple Respondents | 68 |
| (b) Multiple Complainants | 69 |
| 4. Parties and Witnesses Outside of the Organization | 71 |
| (a) Parties Outside of the Organization..... | 71 |
| (b) Witnesses Outside of the Organization..... | 74 |
| Processes to Consider when a Traditional Workplace Investigation Might Not be Appropriate..... | 74 |
| 1. Informal Processes | 74 |
| (a) Complainant's Personality | 78 |
| (b) Respondent's Personality..... | 78 |
| (c) Basic Agreement on the Facts..... | 78 |
| (d) One or Two Incidents..... | 79 |
| (e) Mitigating Circumstances | 80 |
| (f) Positive Pre-existing Relationship between the Parties | 80 |
| (g) Only Two Parties..... | 80 |
| 2. Where an Informal Approach May Not be Appropriate | 81 |
| (a) Serious Allegations..... | 81 |
| (b) Allegations Involving Abuse of Power | 81 |
| (c) The Inarticulate Complainant | 82 |
| (d) Individuals with "High Process Needs" | 82 |
| (e) A Nonchalant Respondent | 82 |
| (f) Problematic Dynamic between the Parties | 83 |
| (g) A Recurring Problem..... | 84 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| (h) Allegations Against Very Senior Members of the Organization or Individuals with High Public Profiles | 84 |
| 3. A Strong Caution on the Use of an Informal Process | 85 |
| 4. Mediation | 88 |
| 5. Assessments / Reviews..... | 89 |
| 3 INVESTIGATION “TRIAGE” | 95 |
| Choosing the Investigator: Internal vs. External..... | 96 |
| 1. Making the Decision..... | 98 |
| (a) Serious Allegations..... | 98 |
| (b) Obvious Complexities to the Process..... | 98 |
| (c) The “Eeww” Factor | 99 |
| (d) High Profile Person..... | 100 |
| (e) Too Close for Comfort..... | 100 |
| (f) Inexperienced and Untrained Investigators..... | 100 |
| (g) High Likelihood of Legal Challenge | 102 |
| (h) Other Demands on the Internal Investigator’s Time..... | 102 |
| 2. Hiring an External Investigator — Questions to be Asked | 103 |
| (a) How many and what types of cases have you worked on in the past? | 104 |
| (b) How do you charge for your work on an investigation? | 105 |
| (c) Can you describe your process for me?..... | 106 |
| (d) Do you have any specialized training and if so what is it?..... | 107 |
| (e) How do you make decisions when you have two competing sides of the story?..... | 107 |
| (f) Have you ever been unable to make a decision in an investigation?..... | 108 |
| (g) Can you provide a sample report so we can have a sense of what the deliverable will be at the end of the process?..... | 108 |
| (h) Can you provide references?..... | 109 |
| Interim Measures | 110 |
| Timing Issues..... | 113 |
| Communication Issues..... | 116 |
| 1. Communication with People who “Need to Know”.. | 116 |
| 2. Communication with the Parties | 118 |
| 3. Specific Communication with the Respondent..... | 123 |

HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE TO WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

| | |
|--|------------|
| Public Relations / Media Strategy..... | 128 |
| Specialized Support..... | 128 |
| Health and Safety | 130 |
| How Much Will the Investigation Cost?..... | 132 |
| Employee Support..... | 133 |
| Checklist | 136 |
| 4 SETTING UP THE PROCESS..... | 145 |
| W5-H | 145 |
| “Why” are We Proceeding?..... | 146 |
| “What” is the Investigator Going to be Doing? (Determination of Mandate)..... | 146 |
| 1. Findings of Fact..... | 150 |
| 2. Findings of Fact plus Drawing Conclusions About the Facts | 151 |
| (a) Determination of Breach of a Policy | 151 |
| (b) Determination of Breach of a Statute | 152 |
| (c) Other Legal Problems or Issues | 153 |
| 3. Recommendations..... | 154 |
| 4. Legal Opinion..... | 156 |
| “Who” Will be Involved in the Investigation? | 156 |
| 1. Who Will Conduct the Investigation?..... | 158 |
| (a) Fees..... | 159 |
| (b) Mandate | 159 |
| (c) Privilege..... | 160 |
| (d) Logistics | 163 |
| (e) Form of Reporting..... | 163 |
| 2. Who Will the Investigator Interview? | 164 |
| (a) The Complainant is No Longer Employed | 167 |
| (b) The Respondent is No Longer Employed..... | 169 |
| (c) The Respondent has been Charged with a Crime..... | 171 |
| (d) A Witness is No Longer Employed or is Not an Employee | 172 |
| 3. Who Will be Present at the Interviews?..... | 174 |
| (a) Legal Counsel..... | 175 |
| (b) Union Representative..... | 179 |
| (c) Friend, Family Member or Other Support Person..... | 181 |
| 4. Who Will Inform the Respondent of the Allegations? | 183 |
| “When” Should the Investigation be Conducted?..... | 185 |
| 1. Finding a Suitable External Investigator | 186 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2. A Party Wishes to Retain Counsel.....187
- 3. The Complainant is on a Leave of Absence.....188
- “Where” Should the Investigation be Conducted?.....189
- “How” Will the Interviews be Conducted?.....191
- 1. Methods of Collecting Evidence from Individuals
in an Investigation191
 - (a) In-Person Interview192
 - (b) Video Interviews (such as “Skype” or
“Facetime”)192
 - (c) Telephone Interviews192
 - (d) Written Questions or E-mail Interviews193
- 2. Setting Up In-Person Interviews.....193
- 3. Method of Collection of Verbal Evidence from
an Interviewee195
 - (a) Taking Notes, Either Handwritten or
on a Computer/Laptop/Tablet or Similar
Device.....196
 - (b) Recording Device199
 - (c) Transcription201
- 4. Use of Signed Statements.....202
- Checklist206
- 5 COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE221**
- Party Interviews222
- 1. Tone of the Interviews — “Warmly Neutral”224
- 2. Structure of the Interview227
 - (a) Preamble228
 - (i) Explanation of Role of the Investigator228
 - (ii) Explanation of Mandate228
 - (iii) Confidentiality Caution229
 - (iv) Discussion of Reprisal Protection234
 - (v) Discussion of Support235
 - (vi) Attendance of a Representative236
 - (vii) Preamble237
 - (b) Fact-Gathering239
 - (i) The Open-Ended Question Opener239
 - (ii) The Drill-Down.....242
 - (iii) Other Information to be Gathered244
 - (A) Relevant Witness Information244
 - (B) Other Physical or Documentary
Evidence.....246
 - (C) Reason for Bringing the Complaint247
 - (c) Conclusion/Wrap-up248

HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE TO WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

- 3. Key Differences with Respondent Interviews249
 - (a) Ensuring the Respondent has Received Notice of all of the Allegations249
 - (b) Ensuring the Respondent has Provided a Response to Each of the Allegations.....250
 - (c) When the Respondent Admits the Allegations251
 - (d) Other Information Offered Up by the Respondent252
- 4. Avoiding Use of Leading Questions.....254
- Witness Interviews256
 - 1. Structure of the Interviews.....259
 - (a) Preamble259
 - (i) Explanation of Role of the Investigator259
 - (ii) Confidentiality Caution260
 - (iii) Discussion of Reprisal Protection261
 - (iv) Attendance of a Representative262
 - (v) Reporting.....262
 - (b) Fact-Gathering262
 - (i) Standard Opener263
 - (ii) Bull’s-Eye Questioning.....264
 - (c) Conclusion/Wrap-Up270
- Follow-Up Interviews273
 - 1. Follow-Up with the Parties.....273
 - 2. Follow-Up with a Witness276
- Other Evidence277
- Checklist279
- 6 FACT-FINDING AND ANALYSIS297**
 - Fact-Finding298
 - 1. The Hierarchy of Evidence298
 - (a) Admissions298
 - (b) Partial Admissions and Quasi-Admissions.....299
 - (c) Corroborative Evidence300
 - (i) Evidence of “Eye-Witnesses” and “Ear-Witnesses”300
 - (ii) Documentary Evidence.....302
 - (iii) Physical Evidence.....303
 - (iv) Other Witnesses.....304
 - (v) Can you make a finding of fact absent corroboration?.....307
 - (d) Denials — Making Credibility Assessments308

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- (i) Consider Each Party’s Story as a Whole.....313
- (ii) Pay Particular Attention to How Each Party Answered (or Did not) the Questions Asked317
- (iii) Body Language and Demeanour319
- (iv) Unconscious Bias321
- (e) Other Types of Evidence322
 - (i) Hearsay322
 - (ii) Similar-Fact Evidence.....323
- 2. Standard of Proof in Workplace Investigations326
- 3. What if the Investigator Cannot Figure It Out?327
 - (a) Are You Just Uncomfortable Making the Decision?327
 - (b) Can More Information be Obtained?.....328
 - (c) Should a Second Opinion be Obtained?.....328
 - (d) Do You Need Some More Time?329
 - (e) If You Still Cannot Decide330
- Getting Organized.....331
- Analysis.....332
- Checklist337
- 7 REPORTING, AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INVESTIGATION349**
 - Before You get Started — Planning your Report.....349
 - 1. Will the Report be Verbal or Written?350
 - 2. Is There to be One Final Report or is an Interim One Needed?.....352
 - 3. When Should the Report be Written?.....353
 - 4. To Whom is the Report being Written?354
 - 5. Is the Report Intended to be Privileged?354
 - 6. Do the Parties get a Copy of the Report?356
 - 7. How Will the Report be Disseminated?.....356
 - Anatomy of a Report358
 - 1. Introduction or Background358
 - 2. Mandate.....359
 - 3. The Parties.....359
 - 4. The Process.....361
 - 5. Applicable Policy / Policies / Legal Provisions364
 - 6. The Evidence and Findings of Fact365
 - 7. Policy / Legal Analysis369
 - 8. Recommendations.....372
 - 9. “Other”373

HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE TO WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

| | |
|---|------------|
| 10. Appendices | 374 |
| 11. Do I Have to Write it This Way?..... | 374 |
| Top 10 Tips for Report-Writing..... | 375 |
| 1. Always Assume that the Report is Being Written for a Third Party..... | 375 |
| 2. Organize the Report for the Benefit of the Reader..... | 376 |
| 3. Remember that Information about the Process is as Important as the Facts, the Findings and the Analysis..... | 377 |
| 4. Double-Check that the Correct Process was Followed | 378 |
| 5. Think Symmetrically..... | 379 |
| 6. Clearly Tie the Finding of Fact to the Evidence..... | 380 |
| 7. Use of Definitive Language | 380 |
| 8. Use the Language of the Policy or the Law | 380 |
| 9. Proofread, Proofread, and Proofread Again — and Then Ask a Colleague to Proofread | 381 |
| 10. Give Yourself Sufficient Time and Space to Write the Report..... | 382 |
| The Report is Written — Now What?..... | 383 |
| 1. The “Heart-to-Heart” | 383 |
| 2. Coaching or Training | 384 |
| 3. Apology | 384 |
| 4. Workplace Conference..... | 385 |
| 5. Mediation | 385 |
| 6. Change of Position | 386 |
| 7. Disciplinary Responses | 387 |
| (a) Warnings | 387 |
| (b) Suspensions..... | 388 |
| (c) Termination of Employment | 389 |
| (i) <i>Re Toronto Transit Commission and ATU, Local 113 (M. (E.))</i> | 390 |
| (ii) <i>Canada Post Corp. v. C.U.P.W.</i> | 391 |
| (iii) <i>Doucet v. Oromocto Auto Sales Ltd.</i> | 391 |
| Taking Steps as a Result of Unsubstantiated Complaints | 391 |
| Checklist | 393 |
| 8 OVERCOMING COGNITIVE BIASES..... | 401 |
| Confirmation Bias..... | 401 |
| Primacy Effect | 403 |
| Defensive Attribution Bias..... | 403 |
| Courtesy Bias | 405 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| Affinity / Likeability Bias..... | 406 |
| Empathy Gap..... | 407 |
| The Illusory Truth Effect..... | 408 |
| Information Bias..... | 408 |
| Minimizing the Impact of Biases..... | 410 |
| 9 15 WORKPLACE INVESTIGATION CASES YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT..... | 411 |
| Appropriate Response..... | 412 |
| 1. <i>Boucher v. Wal-Mart Canada Corp.</i> | 413 |
| 2. <i>Re Calgary (City) and CUPE, Local 38 (P. (M.))</i> | 414 |
| 3. <i>Re Hinton Pulp & Hinton Wood Products and Unifor, Local 855 (Thompson)</i> | 416 |
| 4. <i>Pierro v. Hospital for Sick Children</i> | 418 |
| Neutrality..... | 420 |
| 5. <i>Pate v. Galway-Cavendish & Harvey (Township)</i> | 421 |
| 6. <i>Greater Toronto Airports Authority v. P.S.A.C., Local 0004</i> | 423 |
| 7. <i>Disotell v. Kraft Canada Inc.</i> | 425 |
| 8. <i>Elgert v. Home Hardware Stores Ltd.</i> | 427 |
| 9. <i>Shoan v. Canada (Attorney General)</i> | 428 |
| Fairness — Notice to the Respondent of the Allegations Against Him or Her..... | 430 |
| 10. <i>Marchand v. Regional Occupational Centre Society</i> | 431 |
| 11. <i>Stone v. SDS Kerr Beavers Dental</i> | 433 |
| 12. <i>Re Brampton (City) and Brampton Professional Firefighters Assn. (IAFF, Local 1068) (Hamilton)</i> | 434 |
| Standard of Review..... | 435 |
| 13. <i>Chualo v. Toronto Police Services Board</i> | 436 |
| 14. <i>Morgan v. University of Waterloo</i> | 438 |
| Uncovering Issues in Workplace Culture..... | 440 |
| 15. The External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces..... | 441 |
| 10 SELF-CARE FOR WORKPLACE INVESTIGATORS..... | 445 |
| Work in a Team..... | 446 |
| Talk it Through — Work it Out..... | 447 |
| Sleep on It..... | 447 |
| Increase Your Skill Set..... | 448 |
| Other Diversions..... | 448 |
| Do Not Work on the Weekends..... | 449 |

HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE TO WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

| | |
|---|------------|
| Take Breaks in Between Investigations..... | 449 |
| Say No When You are at Your Limit | 449 |
| 11 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS..... | 451 |
| Abusive Workplaces Lead to Suffering..... | 452 |
| Most Bad Behaviour Goes Underground..... | 453 |
| Not Everyone Knows How, or is Willing, to Behave Properly in the Workplace | 457 |
| Respectful and Civil Workplaces Do Not Just Happen..... | 459 |
| Accountability | 461 |
| Looking Back and Moving Forward | 463 |
| APPENDICES | |
| Appendix A — Workplace Investigation: Traditional Model..... | 467 |
| Appendix B — Determining When an Informal Process May be Appropriate | 471 |
| Appendix C — Complainant Investigation Letter | 473 |
| Appendix D — Respondent Investigation Letter..... | 477 |
| Appendix E — Witness Investigation Letter | 481 |
| Appendix F — Confidentiality Agreement..... | 483 |
| Appendix G — Complainant Reporting Letter Where Allegations are Substantiated..... | 485 |
| Appendix H — Complainant Reporting Letter Where Allegations are not Substantiated..... | 487 |
| Appendix I — Respondent Reporting Letter Where Allegations are Substantiated..... | 489 |
| Appendix J — Respondent Reporting Letter Where Allegations are not Substantiated..... | 491 |
| <i>Index</i> | 493 |