

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix I

The task as it was presented to the participants

Age	
Gender	
Education	
Email Address	

Task 1

Your boss regularly humiliates his subordinates in front of their colleagues, undermines their work and has been known to verbally abuse them. He has been trying to impede their success by spreading rumours. You find working in such an environment unacceptable. Your boss' superiors know nothing about this.

You want to leave your job anyway, and so have decided to write an open letter to your boss' superiors and let them know what is happening. Be sure to provide enough detail (try to write approx. 300 words)

Task 2

You still want to keep your job, and so it is necessary to remain in anonymity. Because your boss may see your letter and he knows how you write, it is important that you write in such a way that the letter doesn't sound like you wrote it. (approx. 300 words).

(The situation is the same as for the previous task: Your boss regularly humiliates his subordinates in front of their colleagues, undermines their work and has been known to verbally abuse them. He has been trying to impede their success by spreading rumours. You find working in such an environment unacceptable. Your boss' superiors know nothing about this.)

8.2 Appendix II

Author A, task 1

To whom it may concern,

As an employee of this firm, I feel it is necessary for me to alert you to a situation that has arisen in the workplace, which I believe is tantamount to bullying, harassment and abuse of power. My superior, Mr. X, has, for several months, verbally abused other team members and contributed to an unprofessional and malicious office environment by spreading rumours about his colleagues in order to undermine them. Below is a list of the incidents to which I am referring. I hope this letter will be given due consideration. Please note that I am also reporting Mr. X to the Employment Ombudsman in order to ensure that his behaviour will be dealt with accordingly.

- On August 14, 2015, Mr. X called Ms. F a “bitch” when she arrived late to a meeting, despite the fact that her tardiness was due to a meeting with a client, of which she advised us in advance.
- On August 31, 2015, Mr. X told Mr. G that Ms. Y had not contributed to the team’s advertising pitch to the national board. Ms. Y, as head of the Marketing Department, had, of course, designed and distributed the advertising material for the pitch meeting.
- On September 2, 2015, Mr. X called Mr. S a “faggot” and told the Sales Team that Mr. S was a homosexual. This is a serious breach of the company’s anti-harassment code, which states that an employee’s sexuality is entirely confidential and that homophobia will not be tolerated.
- On September 13, 2015, Mr. X told Human Resources that I was pregnant and that they should be looking for a replacement to fill my role.

I am available for comment on this matter via email at janedoe@company.com or via 0400 333 666.

I look forward to seeing this matter resolved for the benefit of my colleagues and for the posterity of the company.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Author A, task 2

To whom it may concern,

Please consider this an anonymous submission to the Human Resources Department regarding the behaviour of Mr. X, Manager and Director at Inc. Company.

Mr. X has made inappropriate comments in the workplace and verbally abused his colleagues, which I believe has created an unsafe and unproductive workplace environment. Below are the details of the events to which I am referring:

- On August 14, 2015, Mr. X called Ms. F a “bitch” when she arrived late to a meeting, despite the fact that her tardiness was due to a meeting with a client, of which she advised us in advance.
- On August 31, 2015, Mr. X told Mr. G that Ms. Y had not contributed to the team’s advertising pitch to the national board. Ms. Y, as head of the Marketing Department, had, of course, designed and distributed the advertising material for the pitch meeting.
- On September 2, 2015, Mr. X called Mr. S a “faggot” and told the Sales Team that Mr. S was a homosexual. This is a serious breach of the company’s anti-harassment code, which states that an employee’s sexuality is entirely confidential and that homophobia will not be tolerated.
- On September 13, 2015, Mr. X told Human Resources that Ms.D was pregnant and that they should be looking for a replacement to fill her role.

Should Mr. X’s behaviour continue to create discomfort and lack of cohesion within Inc. Company, team members will consider filing an official complaint with the Employment Ombudsman.

Author B, task 1

Dear Frank and Laura,

I hope this finds you well. I'm deeply regretful to be writing you an email of this nature—my time at Porjarová Innovations has been something of a challenge, but I have greatly appreciated the opportunities the two of you have afforded me. It pains me to leave the company under circumstances such as these.

I'm writing in regards to Jeremy, whose behavior in recent months has been deeply upsetting to my colleagues and to me. I'd like you to know a little bit about the environment that he has created within our team at PI. While my experience in glass manufacturing is limited, I have never worked in an office in which belittlement and abuse are such a deeply ingrained facet of the workplace.

There is no doubt in my mind that Jeremy is under enormous pressure, and certainly the demands placed on our team by the Okkerville clients in the past several month have mounted the stress and tension among our team members immensely. But it's enormously disheartening to have the real concerns of my colleagues met with ire and mockery, nearly each day we come to the office. Jeremy's behavior has taken me very much by surprise; his argumentative nature has grown provocative and deeply personal, and his unwillingness to listen to and collaborate with his own employees creates a stalemate in the office, ultimately acting against the interests of PI.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you in person and hope that you won't hesitate to get in touch. You all and PI have been very good to me, and I'm deeply saddened to be leaving the company at a moment of so much internal unrest. If it will be of any help to the colleagues I'm leaving behind, I'd very much like to continue this conversation with you in person.

Thank you very much for your support these past two years.

Regards,

[Name]

[telephone]

Author B, task 2

Dear Frank and Laura,

Recent events in our workplace have raised the level of fear, discord, and distrust within our team, and I believe they should come to your attention. I am particularly concerned about the behavior of Jeremy Blackman, our team leader.

Following the loss of the Okkerville client, all members of our team faced enormous disappointment. However, Jeremy's verbal abuse towards many of our team members—and two in particular, who were responsible for liaising directly with the client—came as a surprise to me and to the group as a whole.

Furthermore, Jeremy has been responsible for spreading personal information about the individuals on our team throughout the office that is in no way related to our work. Much of this information is untrue and deeply hurtful. My colleagues and I have found this to be deeply destructive, as many members of our team approach group meetings reluctantly and in an guarded manner.

This behavior is not only unprofessional: it is also distracting. I truly believe that a serious discussion with Jeremy would be in the best interests of PI as a company, as our productivity has faltered with our morale.

I hope you will reach out to the members of our team to speak more directly—and in a private setting—about the events of the past two months.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Author C, task 1

To whom it may concern,

I applied for the job because as advertised, I was promised a workplace that encourages ALL colleagues to respect one another, including management. I was also promised a workplace that allows colleagues to learn from their mistakes. To fulfil my duties as a current member of this company, I feel it is my responsibility to inform you of the behaviour that is being carried out by our boss John Smith.

Although I have not yet been on the receiving end of John's verbal abuse, I do not appreciate his attitude towards my colleagues. It makes me extremely uncomfortable as I feel it is unjust. John always comments that their work is of poor sort. I can see how hard they work to impress him and when he disregards their work, I see their confidence suffers which then effects the quality of their work.

I also believe in decency. There are times when staff members should be pulled aside by management to discuss their behaviour or work ethic which should take place in a private area and spoken in a constructive manor. I don't believe in publicly humiliating staff in front of their colleagues because as I previously said, their confidence suffers. On a daily basis John is continuing to humiliate staff when he is wanting to discipline them.

I ask of you to review *Boss* his behaviour as it is not only affecting the company but also having a negative impact on all staff. I will accept all responsibility, including termination of my employment, if you feel I am being dishonest. It is in your best interest to witness my above concerns.

Kind regards, [Name].

Author C, task 2

To whom it may concern,

For the sake of my employment I wish to stay anonymous but the following information I have provided beneath is true.

I applied for the job because as advertised, I was promised a workplace that encourages ALL colleagues to respect one another, including management. I was also promised a workplace that allows colleagues to learn from their mistakes. To fulfil my duties as a current member of this company, I feel it is my responsibility to inform you of the behaviour that is being carried out by our boss John Smith.

Although I have not yet been on the receiving end of John's verbal abuse, I do not appreciate his attitude towards my colleagues. It makes me extremely uncomfortable as I feel it is unjust. John always comments that their work is of poor sort. I can see how hard they work to impress him and when he disregards their work, I see their confidence suffers which then effects the quality of their work.

I also believe in decency. There are times when staff members should be pulled aside by management to discuss their behaviour or work ethic which should take place in a private area and spoken in a constructive manor. I don't believe in publicly humiliating staff in front of their colleagues because as I previously said, their confidence suffers. On a daily basis John is continuing to humiliate staff when he is wanting to discipline them.

I ask of you to review John Smiths's behaviour as it is not only affecting the company but also having a negative impact on all staff.

Kind regards.

Author D, task 1

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to discuss with you the behaviour of my superior which I believe to be inappropriate, demeaning and abusive. On several occasions, he has undermined my work in front of colleagues during a meeting, in a manner that was neither constructive nor conducive to a healthy workplace environment. He yells and screams, throws papers back in my face and verbally accosts me almost to the point of tears.

On one occasion, my colleague was verbally abused via an email sent to the whole office, outlining how incompetent they were at the task presented to them and a warning was issued via that same email that indicated if we were to make the same mistakes, we could 'kiss our jobs goodbye.'

He has also spread illicit and potentially career ending rumours about several of my other female colleagues, suggesting that the only way they could possibly afford the clothes they wear, or the car they drive, is through prostitution or 'sleeping' their way to the top. These rumours have resulted in two of them being demoted and one missing out on a promotion, which he later received.

As my time with this company is finishing, I would like to state openly how appalling it is, that in this day in age a man is continually allowed to behave in such an unprofessional and bullying manner and still not only be a leader, but be employed at all. If this letter is ignored, I will be taking this further. I have several written samples of evidence, emails and witnesses who would be happy to verify my complaint.

While it is my understanding that you may not have any indications of his behaviour, I am hoping that you will see us as victims who are finally brave enough to step forward and be honest about our work conditions. I hope that you can resolve this matter quickly and harshly and provide the support a company of this magnitude should. I hope you will also put parameters in place where your future supervisors are concerned, so that this never happens again.

If you wish to see any forms of the evidence I have aforementioned, please email me.

Regards,

Author D, task 2

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to discuss with you the behaviour of my superior which I believe to be inappropriate, demeaning and abusive. On several occasions, I have witnessed him undermine the work of a colleague in front of me during meetings, in a manner that was neither constructive nor conducive to a healthy workplace environment. He yells and screams, throws papers back in peoples faces and verbally accosted my colleague almost to the point of tears.

On one occasion, another colleague was verbally abused via an email sent to the whole office, outlining how incompetent they were at the task presented to them and a warning was issued via that same email that indicated if we were to make the same mistakes, we could 'kiss our jobs goodbye.'

He has also spread illicit and potentially career ending rumours about several of my other female colleagues, suggesting that the only way they could possibly afford the clothes they wear, or the car they drive, is through prostitution or 'sleeping' their way to the top. These rumours have resulted in two of them being demoted and one missing out on a promotion, which he later received.

As I am still employed here, and do enjoy my position despite the toxic environment in which I am forced to work in, I would like to remain anonymous. I would also like to state openly how appalling it is that in this day in age a man is continually allowed to behave in such an unprofessional and bullying manner and still not only be a leader, but be employed at all.

While it is my understanding that you may not have any indications of his behaviour, I am hoping that you will see us as victims who are finally brave enough to step forward and be honest about our work conditions. I hope that you can resolve this matter quickly and harshly and provide the support a company of this magnitude should. I hope you will also put parameters in place where your future supervisors are concerned, so that this never happens again. I am certain that if you can protect our identities, we can gather and provide several written samples of evidence, emails and witnesses who would be happy to verify this complaint and lodge many others.

I cannot suggest a way in which you could address this situation, but perhaps it would be best to employ a contact officer or someone who we can lodge these complains with anonymously. I hope something is done about this or I fear that we as a group will take this further. How it is handled, is not up to you.

Regards,

Anonymous.

Author E, task 1

Hello Mr. X___,

I wanted to write you to make you aware of some serious problems that I and my coworkers are having with my manager A___ B___. A___'s actions have made our workplace an uncomfortable place to work, and we are now completely fed up with his behaviour. He has verbally abused the people working under him and humiliates them in front of others. He has called people "stupid" or "an idiot" on many occasions. He also becomes angry at berates us about our work. Recently, he called a woman working on our team a "lazy cow."

I also believe that he has been spreading stories about our personal lives that are meant to embarrass us. I find his behaviour unprofessional and very counterproductive.

I'm writing you to let you know that this is going on, and to ask you to please do something to address his behaviour. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this issue in person.

Author E, task 2

Hello Mr. X___,

I am writing you this letter anonymously to make you aware that many people in the financial department have issues with A___ B___, a manager in charge of financial statements who reports directly to you.

A___ B___'s behaviour is unprofessional and inappropriate for an office environment. He regularly humiliates his employees. Some of the phrases that he is reported to have said are "stupid," "idiot," and "lazy cow." Many people in the department have issues with his management style.

Please do something about A___'s behaviour.

Author F, task 1

Dear [boss's superiors],

I am going to be leaving soon, and I wanted to bring to your attention one of the main reasons for my departure: [boss's name]. Working under him has become unacceptable, and while I have made my decision, it is important to me that I at least try and make the work environment better for my remaining coworkers.

Almost every single day, sitting at my desk, I suddenly hear screaming from a desk nearby. [Boss] is standing over a coworker's chair, yelling at them publicly, for minor or nonexistent infractions. Today he called Alice "a stupid bitch" for watering the plants with cold water instead of lukewarm water, and yesterday, he asked Rajiv, "How fucking stupid can you be, you Paki fuck?" for taking a long time to find a certain file. He's an abusive sexist and racist and we all have to devote so much mental energy towards futile efforts to avoid his wrath that our work is suffering. It is difficult not to take personally, and makes it very difficult to function over the course of a day.

When he does talk to us in private, it is to spread rumors, which he often does subtly and insidiously. Last week I overheard Alice telling Jean that I had supposedly said mean things about Roberto. I was horrified, I would never do something like that! On the other hand, the dirty looks I had been getting in the coffee room suddenly made sense. While we have all been the victims of these rumors that mysteriously pop up, and have all heard them straight from the boss's mouth, they still manage to spread. I get the sense that he is gaslighting us to keep us from trusting our shared instincts about how horrible a boss he is, and keeping us scared that we would face retaliation for reporting him. Since I am no longer worried about that, I must do what I can to help my coworkers.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this.

Author F, task 2

Dear [boss's superiors],

I am writing to tell you about a problem we have, [boss's name]. It's gotten to the point that he's impossible to work for, and I have to say something about it.

Every single day sitting at my desk you can hear screaming from somewhere nearby. It's [Boss] yelling at someone for no reason at all, in front of everybody else. Today: Alice is "a stupid bitch" for watering the plants with cold water. Yesterday: he asked Rajiv "How fucking stupid can you be, you Paki fuck?" He was taking a long time to find a file on his computer. I hear all this sexist and racist and abusive stuff, and our work is suffering because we have to focus so much on not getting him to yell at us. It's hard not to take personally and makes it really hard to function.

He also spreads rumors. I don't know how he does it, everyone knows they're coming from him, but he does. Last week I heard someone tell someone else about mean things I had said to a third person. I would never do something like that! But now I understood all the dirty looks I'd been getting in the coffee room. We've all heard him spread these rumors, but they keep spreading. He's making us feel like we can't trust ourselves about how horrible he is and scaring us into not complaining about it. I just hope this doesn't get traced back to me, or else I'd get retaliation.

Thank you for reading, I hope you'll do something to fix this awful problem.

Author G, task 1

Alex, I want to give you feedback on Sean's interactions with the team, as his actions have convinced me to resign. He often calls each of us out in front of the team about the work we do. Disguising his dissatisfaction behind jokes only makes it more uncomfortable for us.

He also refuses to let us talk to any other managers, particularly those above him like yourself, hence this letter. I suspect he has been taking credit for the work we do. I heard one comment in the kitchen last week suggesting Kathy was lucky to have Sean's mentorship, without which she would never have finished the project on time. The truth is quite the opposite, that Sean's input delayed the project timeline, and caused much stress to all of us. I believe Kathy could have done far better and quicker work had Sean not been involved.

I'm hoping you can step in and fix this situation. Removing Sean from the team would give the team a much needed boost.

Thank you for your consideration,

[Name].

Author G, task 2

To the Management Team,

Sean has pushed his team too far. He jokes about weaknesses in front of others. He has taken credit for some of their work. He makes the team uncomfortable and says abusive things.

The team performs better than you've been told. They would do well under different leadership. Under actual leadership.

Kind Regards,

Anon.

Author H, task 1

To whom it may concern,

As an employee of XXX for the last X years, I have had the chance to work with and for many great people. In the previous months however, the behaviour of Mr. Smith has become intolerable, and has poisoned what was once a great working environment. I feel compelled to write this letter, because his actions around you (his superiors) starkly contrast those when you are out of earshot.

It is detrimental not only to the mental health of his subordinates when he regularly humiliates them in front of their team members, but also to the health of our company, as employee retention suffers too. Unfortunately the public berations are limited not just to humiliations, but also in numerous cases, to verbal abuse.

It may be that he feels his position is threatened by promising junior employees. I have come to this conclusion personally, as I recently observed him spreading false rumours about his subordinates, as if he wishes to impede their progress. I have not spoken about this with my colleagues, but I find his behaviour repugnant.

The working environment in our department is unacceptable. This letter marks my official resignation, and I wish to terminate my employment with the company effective July 31st. For the sake of my colleages, I implore you to take remedial action swiftly and effectively. Doing so may mean the department will not lose other key employees.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Author H, task 2

A fairytale

There was once a wonderful company called XXX where all the little men and women were happy. Then a ugly storm cloud came and ruined mood of the company. The storm, let's call it Mr. Smith, is unusual because it has two fronts. On one side, viewed from above, it is a nice fluffy white cloud. But viewed from below it is an ugly storm cloud indeed. It strikes those below with bolts of verbal-abuse-lightning, and rains down humiliation on all those below.

The nice people living below are struggling. Many of them talk of leaving, some are already actively looking for places with better weather. Some of them are not able to bear the rain and lightning. It never stops.

The irony is, the storm cloud is not evil. Just stupid. It thinks that by raining on the people below, by striking them down with lightning, and by starting rumour-tornados, he will stay safely high up in the sky, and the little people will stay on the ground. But people want to fly too.

Hopefully the cheerful sun, who only sees the nice side of the storm cloud, might see the true face of this storm cloud. The cheerful sun can cause wind that will blow away the bad storm cloud. Hopefully the sun will do this, otherwise the once cheerful people of XXX might look for another place where they are treated nicely by those floating in the sky.

Author I, task 1

To whom it may concern,

My name is Maria Tonato and I work for Jeremy as the Marketing Officer. I have decided to leave Forewards Inc due to another opportunity that has been offered to me recently which will allow me greater scope to pursue other areas of interest to me in my career. I also feel that is time for me to move on, despite many happy years at Forewards.

I feel that it is necessary to inform you of several instances of unprofessional conduct asserted by Jeremy which I have noticed as a common occurrence during my time here. I do not wish to cause trouble for Jeremy, but I believe that it is my responsibility to let you know of his conduct, as it has affected me at times, as well as causing low morale in the team. Once a week, Jeremy finds a reason to verbally abuse myself or one of my colleagues. On one occasion, he called Jenny a 'fat bitch' and suggested that she ate too much and that this was affecting her her ability to type quick enough for her to complete tasks on time. On another occasion I heard him speaking to Sam about Sarah's correspondence with him via email and suggested that she was not cc'ing him into emails so that she could try and take his position by receiving more information from another team about particular matters and purposefully not sharing this information with him. Jeremy has also called me a 'lazy bitch' a few weeks ago because I did not give him information I promised him by a deadline that he himself had set and I was not aware of. He did not say this in jest and even if he did, I do not accept anyone calling me that in the workplace. Jeremy has called me names quite often in the last 5 years I have worked with him. I have not spoken out as I was afraid to cause conflict and did not believe that he would be able to modify his behaviour.

As I said, I do not wish to badmouth Jeremy or say things that are untrue. I understand that these are quite serious claims and I think you will find that if you interview each team member individually, you will find that other situations have occurred in the last 5 years of a similar nature. Jenny and Sam are happy to continue working here and may not wish to speak badly of Jeremy, though I have told them that I am writing this letter and detailing the two occurrences I have just described.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and please feel free to get in touch should you require more information.

Kind Regards,

[Name]

Author I, task 2

To whom it may concern,

Jeremy is my boss. He is a horror to work with. He verbally abuses our team frequently. He finds a reason to do this to each of us at least once a week. He once called Jenny a 'fat bitch' and suggested that her 'large size' affected her ability to type. He once called Maria a 'lazy bitch' because she didn't email him some information in time for a deadline that he himself had set. Sarah was the victim of his gossip when he went and told Sam that she was trying to sabotage him by purposefully not cc'ing him in emails to another team.

I can't work with Jeremy anymore. He creates an environment where everyone is scared to communicate with him and one another for fear that he will hear what we are saying and somehow use this against each other.

This kind of high school gossip, verbal abuse and sabotage happens often. I feel it is my responsibility to let you know so that things will change.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I am not sending this to be malicious or to cause trouble in our team. I am being 100% honest and want things to improve in my workplace.

Author J, task 1

To Whom It May Concern,

For the past several years I have been in the employ of ThisCompany, Inc. working at the Townsvilleshire location, where at present Mr. Token Manboss holds the position of general manager. While the conditions of working under Mr. Manboss have grown unbearable to the degree that I have elected to leave this job, I feel I cannot in good conscience pack it in without communicating some of my concerns up the chain of command. Given the values, vision, and character embodied in this company at the corporate level, I imagine that those in leadership would want to be aware when these same are being directly contradicted by a member of middle management.

Mr. Manboss's managerial style (as I have witnessed and experienced it firsthand) is not only abusive, but highly unproductive. He actively seeks to undermine his employees' work, impeding the success of the individuals under his supervision and thereby hindering the growth and vitality of ThisCompany, Inc. as a whole. If the cliché of chains and weak links is brought to bear, Mr. Manboss's strategy capitalizes on the weakening of other links so that his may appear stronger by comparison -- an approach that hardly serves the interests of the larger organism. Even disregarding the possible legal ramifications his conduct might bring about for ThisCompany, Inc. (several employees would be well-justified in filing formal charges of verbal assault), I think there is due cause for concern.

I have submitted my two weeks notice, and am looking forward to working in a healthier environment in the future -- a place where managers lead by example, not by denigration, and where success is conceived of in positive-sum terms (as opposed to zero-sum). However, I have enclosed my contact information below in the event that you may wish to contact me further about any of this. I am grateful for all that ThisCompany, Inc. represents, and for the opportunity to contribute to the pursuit of its vision and mission.

Respectfully,

[Name]

Author J, task 2

To Whom It May Concern,

For the past several years I have been an employee of ThisCompany, Inc. working at the Townsvilleshire location, where at present Token Manboss holds the position of general manager. The conditions of working under Mr. Manboss have grown unbearable, and many would pack it in and leave without a moment's hesitation; but as I believe that the values, vision, and character of this company are worth fighting for, I feel that those higher up the chain of command should be aware that these same are being directly contradicted by a member of middle management.

Mr. Manboss's managerial style (as I have witnessed and experienced it firsthand) is not only abusive, but highly unproductive. He actively seeks to undermine his employees' work, impeding the success of the individuals under his supervision and thereby hindering the growth and vitality of ThisCompany, Inc. as a whole. If the cliché of chains and weak links is brought to bear, Mr. Manboss's strategy capitalizes on the weakening of other links so that his may appear stronger by comparison -- an approach that hardly serves the interests of the larger organism. Even disregarding the possible legal ramifications his conduct might bring about for ThisCompany, Inc. (several employees would be well-justified in filing formal charges of verbal assault), I think there is due cause for concern.

I love my job, and believe that the Townsvilleshire location can be a healthier environment in the future -- a place where managers lead by example, not by denigration; where success is conceived of in positive-sum terms (as opposed to zero-sum); in short, a place where the tone of the office matches the tenor and tradition set forth at the corporate level. It is this hope which motivates my writing, and which further advises me to remain anonymous: should Mr. Manboss read this letter, I fear I would not be around long enough to see the aforementioned changes brought about. I am grateful for all that ThisCompany, Inc. represents, and for the opportunity to contribute to the pursuit of its vision and mission thus far.

Respectfully,

[Name] (Anonymous)