

10 QUESTIONS TO BUILD A BETTER WORKPLACE AFTER AN INVESTIGATION



A Forward-Looking Accountability Guide

Investigations shouldn't just close a case, they should open up opportunities for **insight, repair, and prevention**. No matter the remedial measure you implement to hold people accountable, use these 10 questions to **move beyond blame and start building a healthier, drama-free workplace**.

1. WHAT GAPS IN PERCEPTION DID THIS CASE REVEAL?

Is there a disconnect about professional and appropriate workplace behavior? If so, how can you address it systemically?

2. DID THE ENVIRONMENT ENABLE OR ESCALATE THE CONFLICT?

Was the "temperature" already high due to stress, poor communication, or lack of leadership presence?

3. WERE EARLY WARNING SIGNS MISSED?

Did anyone notice small problems but choose not to act? How can we better respond to low-level conflict before it escalates?

4. DID THE COMPLAINANT EXPERIENCE PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM?

Even in unsubstantiated cases, emotional impact can be real. What might be needed to restore trust or psychological safety?

5. IS THERE A CLEAR PATH FOR PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP?

Was the issue reported early, or only after things got worse? If reporting felt risky or confusing, how can you improve the process?

6. DID BYSTANDERS FEEL EMPOWERED TO INTERVENE?

Do employees know how to be active upstanders, not passive bystanders? Do they feel empowered or silenced by the current culture?

7. WERE HR OR LEADERSHIP ISSUES UNCOVERED?

Was the complaint mismanaged at an early stage? Are new expectations or training needed for those in authority?

8. DID THIS CASE SURFACE PATTERNS OR TRENDS?

Are multiple claims coming from the same region, leader, or demographic group? What deeper issues might need attention?

9. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE STRUCTURALLY OR CULTURALLY?

Can you address policies, team norms, workload issues, or power imbalances to reduce risk?

10. HOW DO YOU TRACK THE LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED?

Who needs to know what you've learned—and how will you follow up?



By Patti Perez, from the "Mastering Workplace Investigations" course
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