

EMPLOYMENT TIMES

Sunday October 10, 2010

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

Aggression at work

Recent research by Wayne Hochwarter, a professor of management at Florida State University, and associate Samantha Engelhardt investigated differences in employees' responses to abusive supervisors. Their study included more than 180 employees from a range of professions and built on 2006 research that assessed the effects of abusive bosses on employees' health and job performance.

Wayne Hochwarter explained:

"Our goal was to isolate those who reported daily abuse from those who did not."

The researchers found significant differences between the two groups. Of those who reported abuse:

- ▶ 30 per cent slowed down or purposely made errors (compared with 6 per cent of those not reporting abuse)
- ▶ 27 per cent purposely hid from the boss (compared with 4 per cent)
- ▶ 33 per cent confessed to not putting in maximum effort (compared with 9 per cent)
- ▶ 29 per cent took sick time off even when not ill (compared with 4 per cent)
- ▶ 25 per cent took more or longer breaks (compared with 7 per cent)

They also found that participants not reporting abuse were three times more likely to be proactive in solving problems they experienced in the workplace, including perceived abuse.

Wayne Hochwarter commented:

"The data do not allow us to definitively state if abuse leads to these reactions, or if managers are just responding to their subordinates' less-than-stellar behaviour. However, it is clear that employee-employer relations are at one of the lowest points in history."



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