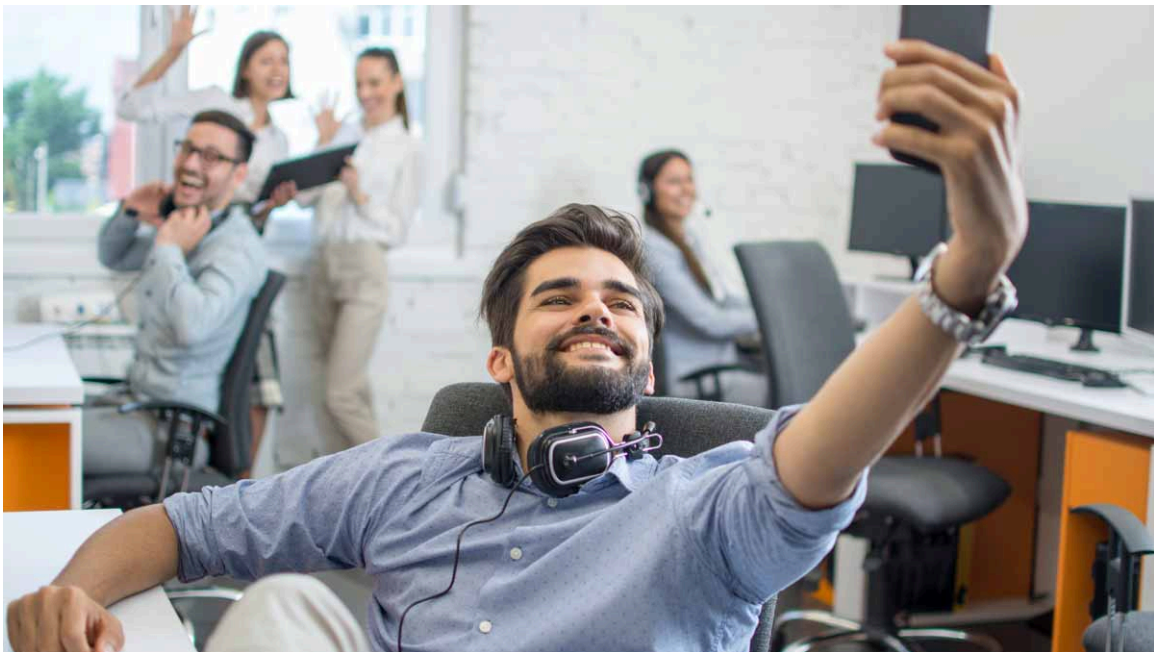


Older Worker Feels Age Harassment

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **harassment** (noun) /hə'ræs.mənt/ - Aggressive pressure or intimidation.
Example: The company has a zero-tolerance policy for harassment in the workplace.
2. **accuse** (verb) /ə'kju:z/ - To charge someone with an offense or crime.
Example: She decided to accuse her colleague of stealing her idea.
3. **disruption** (noun) /dɪs'rʌp.ʃən/ - Disturbance or problems that interrupt an event, activity, or process.
Example: The loud noise caused a major disruption to the meeting.
4. **etiquette** (noun) /'et.i.kət/ - The customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.
Example: Following proper office etiquette is important for a good working environment.
5. **generational** (adjective) /,dʒen.ə'reɪ.ʃən.əl/ - Relating to a particular generation or all generations. Example: There are often generational differences in how people use technology.
6. **escalate** (verb) /'es.kə.leɪt/ - To increase rapidly; to become more intense or serious.
Example: The argument began to escalate and required a manager's intervention.
7. **mediation** (noun) /,mi:.di'eɪ.ʃən/ - Intervention in a dispute to resolve it; arbitration.
Example: The two parties agreed to use mediation to settle their disagreement.



A senior employee has accused several younger colleagues of age harassment, claiming their loud behavior is creating a hostile work environment. The older worker, who has been with the company for over 20 years, reports that the constant talking, laughing, and loud music from the younger staff is a major disruption to his work. This issue has led to growing tension and a formal complaint filed with human resources.

The younger employees, however, claim they are simply communicating naturally and that their behavior is not malicious. They argue that the older worker's complaint is an overreaction and a sign of a generational gap in workplace etiquette. They believe their open and collaborative style is more modern and efficient, while the senior employee prefers a quiet, more traditional office setting. The disagreement has created a significant divide in the office.

Human resources has stepped in to handle the situation before it can escalate further. They have scheduled a mediation session to allow both sides to express their concerns and find a compromise. The goal is to establish new office guidelines that can accommodate different working styles and preferences. This case highlights the challenges of managing a multi-generational workforce and the need for clear communication to prevent such conflicts.

DISCUSSION

1. How can companies create a workplace that respects different working styles and generational differences?
2. What are some examples of workplace etiquette that have changed over the years?
3. If you were the human resources manager, what rules or solutions would you propose to resolve this conflict?
4. Do you think the younger employees' behavior can be considered harassment? Why or why not?
5. What are some common misunderstandings between older and younger generations in the workplace?
6. Describe a time you had a conflict with a colleague and how it was resolved.