

# HIGH PRESSURE CULTURES AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

New findings reveal that employees who work in high pressure environments are more likely to observe sexual harassment and to experience retaliation for reporting harassment.

## THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

EMPLOYEES WHO SAY THEIR SUPERVISOR CARES ONLY ABOUT ACHIEVING TARGETS ARE:

**2.8X**

MORE LIKELY TO OBSERVE SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
(23% vs. 6%)

AND

**2.3X**

MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE RETALIATION FOR REPORTING  
(53% vs. 16%)

## BENDING RULES TO GET AHEAD

EMPLOYEES WHO WORK IN COMPANIES WHERE THEIR COLLEAGUES BEND THE RULES TO SECURE BONUSES/REWARDS/ AWARDS ARE:

**2.7X**

MORE LIKELY TO OBSERVE SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
(22% vs. 6%)

AND

**5.7X**

MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE RETALIATION FOR REPORTING  
(54% vs. 8%)

In addition to sexual harassment, ECI's research shows that high pressure environments generally lead to observations of other types of misconduct. For example, high pressure environments are also linked to higher rates of:

- abusive and/or intimidating behavior.
- discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or similar categories.

Similarly, those who work in high pressure environments and report abusive behavior or discrimination are more likely to experience retaliation when compared to those who do not work in high pressure environments.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT REPORTING = INCREASED RETALIATION WHEN SENIOR LEADERS ARE INVOLVED

Those who report sexual harassment by senior leaders are **3X more** likely to perceive retaliation than those who report sexual harassment by non-management employees  
(69% vs. 17%)

## 3 EVIDENCE-BASED TIPS



**Instill** a speak-up culture creating an environment where employees are empowered and rewarded for raising concerns. Ensure that no "waivers" exist for misconduct and that all employees, including senior leaders and high performers, are held accountable.



**Make** ethical behavior front and center in performance evaluations so that employees understand that it affects compensation and advancement opportunities of all employees.



**Provide** focused training on the behaviors that may be perceived as retaliation and on the specifics of the organizational retaliation policy. When employees know that the organization is zeroing in on retaliation they are more comfortable reporting it.

### LEARN MORE

Ethics and Compliance Initiative (2018) Global Business Ethics Survey™ (GBES). Arlington, VA.

Ethics and Compliance Initiative (2016) Principles and Practices of High Quality Ethics and Compliance Programs (HQP). Arlington, VA.

About the GBES: Since 1994, the Ethics & Compliance Initiative (ECI) has conducted a longitudinal, cross-sectional study of workplace conduct, from the employee's perspective. Now in its eleventh iteration, the data from the GBES provides the global benchmark on the state of ethics & compliance in business.