

# Too Close for Comfort

## SUMMARY

As a Professional Employer Organization, Employer Flexible provides a variety of services to businesses of all sizes. From payroll to human resources, the experts at Employer Flexible are experienced in many facets of owning and running a business in order to properly serve their clients.

When a sexual harassment allegation surfaced in 2017 with a Technology Firm, Employer Flexible took the lead in investigating and resolving the situation. As soon as allegations of this nature are reported from any client, strict measures are taken to ensure a fair investigation and a proper resolution.

In this particular event, an employee reported an invasion of her personal space by her manager.

## THE SITUATION

Employer Flexible has a wide range of clients, and every workplace allegation is taken seriously and investigated thoroughly regardless of how severe they may be. An employee at the Technology Firm reported to the executive team that her manager made her uncomfortable by invading her personal space.

As an IT consultant for the Tech Firm, the employee had many responsibilities for her clients that could only be dealt with at her computer. On several instances, her manager would help her by trying to find a solution himself on her computer.

In her report, the employee explained his actions were too close for comfort, as he leaned in close and touched her. Though she felt trapped, she later told investigators that she did not directly vocalize her discomfort to the manager in the moment.

Immediately after the situation occurred, the employee took action and reported the manager to his Supervisor in upper management.

EVERY DAY AT  
EMPLOYER FLEXIBLE,  
WE WORK WITH  
ORGANIZATIONS  
TO HELP THEM  
STREAMLINE THEIR  
HR PROCESSES –  
SO THEY CAN  
FOCUS ON WHAT  
MATTERS MOST.

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## SOLUTION

Once upper management was made aware of the situation, they knew something had to be done quickly in order to resolve the situation. However, this particular company did not have the capacity, HR personnel in-house didn't have the experience to handle an investigation, nor did they have time to devote the necessary attention to the situation, so they contacted their personal HR Consultant at Employer Flexible to begin the investigation immediately.

The first step in the process was to fully understand the situation from all sides. The Employer Flexible HR consultant began a deep dive into this investigation via a phone conversation with the accuser to get her complete story and any prior history between the two parties that may be relevant.

After receiving details of the issue at hand, other employees were brought in for interviews regarding the manager's actions and general behavioral habits to see if his actions were systemic.

In those interviews, the investigator learned that the manager's habit of leaning in wasn't out of the ordinary, but other employees had not seen the manager as a threat in the workplace. To ensure accuracy, the HR consultant looked in the manager's HR files and previous records. No other accounts of similar issues occurred in the past, and at that point, the accused manager was brought in for questioning.

When confronted, the manager wasn't aware of any wrongdoing, but did not deny the allegations as they were perceived, and he apologized to those affected by his actions. Though embarrassed, he was appreciative that someone spoke up to acknowledge his actions were inappropriate so he could learn from his mistakes. Throughout the meeting, Employer Flexible facilitated coaching tips for the manager in order to better respect his peers' personal space in the workplace moving forward.

## RESULTS

Once the investigation was complete, the HR consultant presented her findings to upper management, as the fate of the manager ultimately rested in their hands. After reviewing the evidence, management concluded this was a mistake and with coaching and training, should not happen again. He was required by management to take online sexual harassment courses, which Employer Flexible provided, and the manager kept his job with a new and deeper understanding of personal boundaries in the workplace.

In harassment cases like this, Employer Flexible ensures both parties are treated with dignity throughout the process, that there is a thorough understanding of the outcome, clear and concise documentation and that improvement procedures were put in place.

Thanks to the personal connection of Employer Flexible consultants to their clients, business owners, management teams and all employees can rest assured knowing Employer Flexible is there for you.

**For more information on our HR Solutions, [click here](#). Or to contact a representative directly, please call 866-501-4942.**