

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK (PNB): AT THE FOREFRONT OF ADDRESSING WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

PBCWE Member since: 2019



8,880



34%



66%

Challenge

Surveys suggest that sexual harassment is prevalent in the workplace but underreported due to fears of reprisal. In 2019, the Philippines passed new legislation known as the Safe Spaces Act that outlined additional responsibilities for employers to prevent and penalize sexual harassment in the workplace. This prompted many companies, including PNB, to revisit policies on anti-sexual harassment (ASH).

Strategy

PNB recognizes that a zero-tolerance stand against sexual harassment can help preserve its corporate image and manage reputational risk arising from cases that can become highly publicized. PNB has proactively set up policies and systems to provide its employees with a safe and respectful working environment, avoid any incidence of sexual harassment, and respond quickly and fairly should these occur.

Actions

In updating its ASH policy, PNB established clear parameters as to what acts constitute sexual harassment and how to report and investigate it. The bank has established whistleblower reporting channels such as a hotline and an email through which persons can report sexual harassment and other policy violations confidentially. PNB continues to build awareness on the issue by incorporating the ASH policy into new employee orientations, sending email advisories, posting signages around offices and branches, and even

providing training on ASH. Employees are also given access to an online portal with more information on the policy. As required by law, PNB has formed a Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CoDI) to exclusively investigate and address cases of sexual harassment. Other company policies such as the whistleblower policy and mental health policy are also in place to reinforce and complement the ASH policy and promote a culture of integrity and respect.

Outcomes

Surveys suggest that sexual harassment is prevalent in the workplace but underreported due to fears of reprisal. In 2019, the Philippines passed new legislation known as the Safe Spaces Act that outlined additional responsibilities for employers to prevent and penalize sexual harassment in the workplace. This prompted many companies, including PNB, to revisit policies on anti-sexual harassment (ASH).

Employee Experience

What place does an ASH policy have in a profit-oriented business? "A company can become the talk of the town because of sexual harassment cases. What we are doing helps to address reputational risk," explained one Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CoDI) representative. "It can also ensure commitment and productivity among employees knowing that a sense of security and confidence in the knowledge that the company looks after the welfare of employees by ensuring a safe and working environment." It is these types of situations that PNB seeks to prevent and address through its ASH policy.