

Case Study: HR Consultancy



This case study provides an overview of the mediation service provided by Spectra HR and the positive impact it had on the working relationship between our client and their employee.

This case study concerns a small business and a dispute that flared up between the owner and one of her employees over certain aspects of the employee's job description. Relations had become strained over a period of several months after the employee had been promoted to Team Leader. As part of the Team Leader role she was expected to check other team members work and that their working areas were clean and tidy and that all equipment had been switched off at the end of the day.

A couple of months earlier the Team Leader had been taken through a disciplinary process and issued with a verbal warning for the way she had spoken to the owner. Around the same time, she had also asked to step down and had returned to her previous duties. At this point, the owner could not afford to recruit another Team Leader and so some of the duties were shared amongst the team members, including taking part in a rota to check work areas at the end of the working day.

The employee in question felt that this was unfair and that she was being taken advantage of. One particular evening as she was about to leave work the owner asked her to carry out the checks and this led to a heated exchange and the employee walked out without carrying out the checks. The next day when the owner attempted to address the issue, voices were raised and at this point the business owner contacted Spectra HR for advice and support in taking the employee through a second disciplinary process.

Spectra HR Services

We attended the client's premises to meet with both parties, in order to investigate what had led up to the point where the employee was raising her voice to her Manager and not carrying out reasonable management instructions. During the meeting with the employee, she became extremely tearful and explained that that she was being treated for anxiety. At this point, the employee also disclosed that she had covertly recorded the discussion and the owner could clearly be heard raising her voice and talking over the employee whilst all the time the employee was trying to speak.

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On feeding back to the owner she was understandably unhappy that she had been recorded in this way but was also concerned about the employee as she was unaware that she was so upset and being treated for anxiety.

Benefits to our client

We recommended mediation and both parties agreed to participate in order to address the breakdown in their relationship. We supported both parties, without judging or taking sides. Both parties agreed to meet, with Spectra facilitating a discussion to reach an informal agreement about working together in the future. Both agreed that they definitely wanted to continue to work together and were able to draw a line under the recent events. The employee accepted that the owner was not being unreasonable in terms of the requirements of the role and the job description and also agreed to delete the recording. The owner accepted that the employee was struggling with anxiety and they agreed to keep an open dialogue and for the employee to be able to let the owner know if she was struggling with workload at any point.