Commercial Insurance Profile
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Preventing Workplace Bullying

According to a survey by finance company SME Loans, almost 1 in 4 (23%) UK workers have been bullied at work. Although this figure is already a cause for concern, the full extent of bullying prevalence could be far worse, as some employees may find it difficult to raise bullying concerns with management.

Bullying can significantly impact victims' physical and mental well-being, negatively impacting work performance. Specifically, bullying can erode victims' confidence, leaving them distracted and withdrawn, less productive and more likely to suffer from absenteeism. Additionally, bullying has significant ramifications for employers, such as:

- **A high employee turnover—**Workplace bullying may cause a decline in morale for the victims and those around them due to the associated hostile work environment. Consequently, organisations may suffer from an increased employee turnover and incur substantial costs to recruit and retain replacement workers.

- **Reputational damage—**Even if an employee doesn't report workplace bullying to their employer, they may tell family and friends about the behaviours occurring in their workplace, potentially affecting an organisation's public image with both consumers and potential hires.

Overall, mitigating workplace bullying risks is critical to maintaining productivity, lessening absences and creating a safe workplace for everyone. Organisations can prevent bullying using the following tactics:

- **Raise awareness**. Organisations could conduct anonymous staff surveys to capture the direct employee experience, utilising this insight to implement targeted measures to combat any issues raised.

- **Lead by example.** As some bullying comes from managers themselves, organisations must ensure that all managers know how to respond positively to employee concerns and remain fair and constructive.

- **Implement a zero-tolerance policy.** Organisations must enforce a robust and well-communicated anti-bullying policy that clearly defines bullying behaviour, the protocol for raising a complaint and the potential consequences of breaching the policy.

- **Build an inclusive environment.** Organisations should establish a workplace climate of acceptance and inclusion to help prevent bullying in the first place.

Contact us today for additional workplace resources and risk-mitigation guidance.

Business Email Compromise Explained

Cyber-criminals continue to become more sophisticated, leveraging a wide range of tactics to attack their victims. One tactic that has increased in frequency, complexity and resulting losses over the past few years is the use of business email compromise (BEC) scams. Essentially, BEC scams involve cyber-criminals sending email messages that appear to be from a known source for malicious gains.

There are several different types of BEC scams, including:

- **False invoice scheme**—A cyber-criminal impersonates an organisational supplier to trick their target into paying fraudulent invoices or transferring funds to a phony account.

- **CEO fraud**—A cyber-criminal impersonates a senior-level employee or executive and requests that their victim conduct a bank transfer to a fake account.

- **Data theft**—A cyber-criminal impersonates an HR professional to trick their target into sharing personal information about employees or executives.

Any employee can become the target of a BEC scam, putting the security and financial stability of an entire organisation at risk. Organisations can implement the following cyber-security measures to help avoid BEC scams:

- **Educate employees.** Minimising losses from BEC scams starts with training employees to detect and prevent such instances. This includes refraining from sharing personal or work-related information on social media, avoiding opening or responding to unknown individuals or organisations, and being wary of emails that request sensitive details or use threatening language.

- **Implement effective payment protocols.** Having safe and secure payment procedures within an organisation can help stop BEC scams before any money is lost. Instruct employees who handle the organisation's financial operations to carefully analyse invoices and fund transfer requests to ensure their validity.

- **Restrict access to sensitive data.** Only provide employees access to sensitive organisational data if they are trusted and require such information to conduct their work tasks. Protect this data with access controls and multifactor authentication measures.

Finally, ensure all organisational devices possess adequate security features to help deter BEC scams—including access to a virtual private network, antivirus and malware prevention programs, email spam filters, data encryption capabilities and a firewall. Bolster cyber-resilience by updating these security features regularly.

Workplace bullying includes mistreatment by other employees, targeted jokes or mocking, unrealistic expectations by employers, employees talking negatively of colleagues and cyber-bullying. Left unaddressed, bullying can erode workforce morale, lessen productivity and damage organisational reputation.