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Internal Marketing Implications of Workplace Bullying: The Integration of Multiple Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This special session will highlight marketing, behavioral, leadership, and legal perspectives of workplace bullying behavior and how such behavior can negatively affect an individual's well-being and adversely impact an organization's welfare. The discussion will be couched within an internal marketing framework with special emphasis on strategic implications. Behavioral aspects of those who bully and the impact that their behavior can have on their targets will be given special consideration. Also, various leadership issues that arise in workplace environments with respect to workplace bullying will be explored. Further, an overview of the legal ramifications of workplace bullying will be integrated into the discussion. Additionally, theory advancement and applied research development will be discussed as a means to stimulate additional study of the bullying phenomena.

It was during the 1970s that the internal marketing concept emerged. Over time various firms gradually acknowledged the value of internal marketing programs. This adoption of internal marketing initiatives was possible because many firms recognized that internal marketing strategies were a complementary prerequisite for many external marketing efforts. The application of the IM philosophy embraced the marketing concept as it applied to employees within an organization. Under this philosophy, firms sought to recruit and retain talented people who would aspire to build and sustain relationships with customers. Although well-planned visions, missions, products, processes, and procedures were critical to such initiatives, these managerial tools have not necessarily sufficient in assuring an IM-driven environment. The panel members submit that it is also imperative to consider the impact that specific types of personal and organizational behaviors can have on internal marketing outcomes. In so doing, there is a need to recognize and acknowledge negative behaviors that can hamper, or worse yet, sabotage potential individual and group accomplishments that are in keeping with marketing goals.

Many times organizations have explicitly stated the adoption of the internal marketing philosophy, The reality is, however, that workplace bullying is one form of negative behavior that may simultaneously exist even in light of noble mission statements, employee appreciation proclamations, and IM programs that declare the adherence to civil actions in a supportive work

environment. In the extreme, the disconnections between explicit messages of communications and implicit messages of actions can be flagrant. The severing of organizational communications from organizational actions may manifest itself as transparent duplicity, inherent dishonesty, and disruptive affronts. In severe cases, malfeasance may thrive.

The panel members will encourage audience discussion for the purposes of identifying theoretical and applied research issues and for suggesting potential research directions. Further, the SMA audience will be specifically invited to share their insights relative to IM leadership issues and bullying in the workplace. Also, panelists will encourage discussions of workplace bullying within academic settings with an emphasis on structural solutions. Questions and perceptions concerning behavioral issues will be welcomed.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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