

The AD-roit Links

NEWSLETTER

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#9

Onboarding the Right Way: Training new hires for a safe and respectful workplace

A strong onboarding process does more than welcome new hires—it sets the foundation for safety, respect, and trust. When done right, it prevents confusion, defines boundaries, and empowers employees to thrive from day one in a supportive workplace culture.

**YOUR NO. 1
GUIDE TO A
SAFER
WORKPLACE**

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From the **FOUNDER'S DESK**

Dear Readers,

The recent situation involving Tata Consultancy Services is a reminder that many organisations would prefer to treat as an exception. It isn't. It points to a gap we continue to underestimate—awareness.

As the matter unfolds, the details emerging are deeply concerning and continue to be under investigation. Allegations of harassment, coercion, and systemic lapses have raised serious questions—not just about individual misconduct, but about how such behaviour goes unaddressed for so long within structured workplaces.

Most organisations today are compliant on paper. Policies exist. Internal Committees are in place. Trainings are conducted. And yet, hesitation, silence, and delayed reporting remain common.

That tells us something important: **awareness is not landing where it matters.**

PoSH awareness cannot be reduced to a one-time session or an onboarding checklist. It needs to equip employees—especially new joiners—with clarity on boundaries, confidence to speak up, and trust in the system. Because the real test of any framework is simple—when something feels wrong, does the employee know what to do, and feel safe enough to act?

In this April edition, we explore **“Onboarding the Right Way”**—why training new hires early is critical to building safe and respectful workplaces. We also share our experience of conducting a POSH awareness session at the corporate office of Oil India Limited which reinforces a simple truth—awareness only works when it moves beyond information and begins to shape how people think and act.

At **AD-ROIT Links**, we believe awareness is not a formality. It is the foundation.

Warmly,

Leeza Dutta Singh 

**Founder & Managing Partner,
AD-roit Links**



Onboarding the Right Way

Training new hires for a safe and respectful workplace

~ By Atryee Dutta



Starting a new job is exciting, but also overwhelming.

April is often a month of new beginnings for a lot of people. It's about new roles, new workplaces, new ambitions. But beyond the offer letters and induction kits, there's one thing that quietly shapes every employee's experience: how they are onboarded.

When onboarding is reduced to paperwork and policy PDFs, something critical is lost. New hires are left to "figure things out" on their own—what's acceptable, what's not, and where boundaries lie. In that silence, confusion grows. And sometimes, so does vulnerability.

The recent TCS Nashik case has brought an uncomfortable truth into the spotlight: positions of experience and authority can be misused under the guise of mentorship. When guidance turns into control, and support crosses into discomfort, it is not mentorship, it is misconduct.

This is why onboarding needs to go beyond introductions. It should prepare employees for a safe and respectful workplace no matter the kind of industry or their position in the workplace hierarchy.

Onboarding done right, it creates a culture where employees thrive. Done wrong, it leaves gaps that can harm both individuals and organizations.

Why the First Few Weeks Matter?

The early days in an organization define everything for the new hires. They observe more than they are told. They watch how seniors behave, how managers communicate, and how concerns are handled.

If respect and inclusivity are prioritised from day one, employees feel secure. If not, hesitation and silence take over.

Organizations that recognize this are already setting the tone differently. Structured onboarding

today includes clear conversations around workplace behaviour, consent, and reporting mechanisms—not as an afterthought, but as a priority.

Mentorship vs Misuse of Power

Mentors play a vital role in shaping a new hire's journey. But mentorship comes with responsibility.

A mentor should:

✓ Guide, ✗ not pressure

✓ Support, ✗ not control

✓ Empower, ✗ not intimidate

When boundaries blur, especially with younger or less experienced employees, the impact can be long-lasting. This is why organizations must clearly define what ethical mentorship looks like and what it does not.

HR teams, too, carry equal responsibility. Policies must not just exist—they must be understood, accessible, and actionable.

Making Workplace Values Visible

Policies hidden in lengthy manuals rarely help. What works better?

- Short, interactive sessions instead of one-way lectures
- Real-life scenarios that employees will relate to
- Simple visual content like videos, stories, and even comics
- Safe spaces or forums where questions are encouraged without judgment

The goal is simple, make values easy to understand and even easier to practice for every employee, whether a fresher or an executive level hiring.

Onboarding: Done Right vs Done Wrong

Before we look at the do's and don'ts, it's important to understand one thing, onboarding sets the tone for everything that follows.

When onboarding is completed with structure and clarity, it gives new hires a sense of safety. They know what is expected, where to go for help, and how to behave at work. Otherwise, it creates confusion and silence. Employees may feel unsure about boundaries or hesitate to speak up. This gap can lead to misunderstandings or even unsafe situations, which is why getting onboarding right from the start matters so much.

A strong onboarding process should:

- ✓ Introduce **workplace conduct** and safety early on
- ✓ Clearly explain **reporting channels**
- ✓ Encourage **open conversations**
- ✓ Provide **mentors or buddies** with defined roles
- ✓ Reinforce respectable behaviour through **real examples**

And just as importantly, it should avoid:

- ✗ Treating onboarding as a **one-day formality**
- ✗ Ignoring or **delaying complaints**
- ✗ Overloading new hires **without orientation**
- ✗ **Assuming** employees will "figure it out"
- ✗ Keeping policies buried in **complex documents**



The Cost of Ignoring the Basics

When organizations overlook PoSH awareness during onboarding, the consequences go far beyond internal discomfort.



Reputational damage that impacts business growth



Decline in investor confidence



Employee dissatisfaction and attrition



Legal complications and financial penalties

A Simple PoSH Awareness Checklist for Every New Hire

- Know what constitutes inappropriate behaviour
- Understand how to report concerns confidentially
- Respect personal and professional boundaries
- Be mindful of digital conduct
- Recognize that mentorship should always feel safe
- Use HR and support systems when in doubt

A respectful workplace is not created by policies alone; it is built through everyday actions. It is not just the responsibility of the HR, but of every employee from the junior employees to the CEO.

What begins as a small oversight can quickly escalate into a crisis.

The Takeaways

Onboarding is not just about welcoming new employees; it is also about keeping them safe. It should never leave space for confusion, silence, or harm.

As companies grow, from hiring their first employee to becoming a large organization, one thing always stays the same, the culture that starts from day one. A strong culture keeps everyone on the same page, builds respect for their coworkers and the organisation, and helps employees stay longer, sometimes even choosing it over better offers elsewhere. Investing in culture is one of the smartest decisions a company can make.

Let's make the first day truly matter.

SafeStories: April Edition

Follow us on LinkedIn to see every new Safestory and join the conversation about building safer workplaces.

The SafeStories Comic Strip series is a creative initiative by AD-roit Links to spark meaningful conversations around workplace safety, dignity, and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH). Every month, we bring you a relatable, thought-provoking comic to help spread awareness in a memorable and engaging way.

Mentorship or Misuse?



Ask the Legal Expert!

Your legal queries, addressed with expert insight.

Q What should I do if my mentor's behaviour makes me uncomfortable, but I'm not sure if it "counts" as misconduct?

If something feels off, it's worth addressing. You don't need to label it immediately. Start by documenting the interaction and speaking to HR or a trusted reporting channel. Discomfort is valid, don't ignore it just because it seems "unclear."

Q I'm new and still on probation. Will reporting an issue affect my job security?

No organization should penalize you for raising a genuine concern. In fact, strong workplaces treat reporting as a sign of awareness and integrity. If you fear retaliation, use confidential reporting options or escalate through formal HR channels.

Q What if inappropriate behaviour happens in informal settings like team outings or afterwork chats?

Workplace conduct standards apply everywhere from office, virtual meetings, and social gatherings linked to work. If boundaries are crossed in these settings, it is still valid to report and address the issue.

Q My manager often messages me late at night for nonurgent work. Is that a boundary issue?

It can be. Occasional urgency is understandable, but repeated late night communication without necessity may indicate poor boundary management. You can respectfully set expectations or discuss this with your manager or HR if it becomes uncomfortable.

Q I witnessed something inappropriate happening to a colleague. Should I step in or report it?

If it's safe to do so, you can support your colleague in the moment. Even if you don't intervene directly, you should report what you observed. Bystander awareness is an important part of maintaining a safe workplace.

Q How can I tell the difference between friendly behaviour and something inappropriate at work?

It is about your consent and comfort. Friendly behaviour respects personal space, tone, and boundaries. If something feels intrusive, persistent, or one sided, even if framed as "joking" it may cross into inappropriate territory.

Q What if I accidentally say or do something that makes someone else uncomfortable?

Acknowledge it immediately, apologize sincerely, and correct your behaviour. Being open to feedback and willing to learn is far more important than being perfect.

Q I didn't understand all the policies shared during onboarding. Where can I revisit them later?

You should be able to access policies through your company's internal portal, HR team, or onboarding resources. If anything is unclear, reach out. Policies are meant to guide you, not confuse you.

Highlights in Frames

Some snapshots of the moments that shaped our month.



Our Services



PoSH Compliance Training & Advisory

Building safer workplaces, one session at a time.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Creating cultures where everyone feels a sense of belonging.



Ethics and Code of Business Conduct

Empowering decisions with ethics and integrity.



Simplifying Labour Law Compliance

Turning complex laws into crystal clear solutions.



POCSO Awareness & Support

Protecting children through awareness and action.



Policy Drafting & Review

Policies that work — for people and compliance.



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