

Langlinais



Sample Allegation

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To whom it may concern:

I have recently run across some activity in my department that is causing me to lose sleep.

Some of the staff attended a happy hour the other night, and the total bill for drinks came out to about \$300. I reached for my wallet, and one of my coworkers grabbed my arm and told me not to worry about it, that the company would pick it up. I didn't think anything about it because it was mostly people from our company, except for a couple of spouses, so it didn't seem to be a big deal. But then my coworker turned to his wife and suggested she put it on her card. She pulled a card out of her purse, and I saw that it was our company credit card, and it had her name on it. She doesn't work for our company.

I didn't think any more about it until a couple of days later, when the executive assistant over our department asked me how the happy hour was. She told me that because our department has such a large budget, we can have a lot of fun—she handles the credit cards and codes the expenses. Then she tells me, "In fact, if you want, I can get you a card. It'll have a small limit, probably \$5000 so you don't go too crazy, but I won't ask what you spend on it, and you don't have to tell. All you have to do is let me order one thing a month from Macy's online, and use your card number for it."

It shocked me so much to hear her say that, I just hesitated, and told her I'd have to think about it. "Not too long," she told me. Then, one morning about a week later, I walked into my cubicle, and sitting there on my desk is a blank envelope. Inside is a company credit card.

More than anything, I want it to be known that I didn't ask for this card, and I don't believe I received it under legitimate circumstances. I don't want to get caught up in something bad. However, because this person is the assistant to my boss's boss, I'm very concerned about upsetting the wrong person, and I'm very concerned about ruining my career here.

Sincerely,

Joseph Norman

Discussion:

Try not to make this theoretical – apply the situation to your own environment the best you are able.

1. Does Joseph have a legitimate concern about his career? In your environment, would you advise him to remain anonymous?

2. Are your policies clear about where Joseph should report the allegation? Is the reporting mechanism easy for Joseph to locate?

3. Is it clear which department in your organization should follow up on this matter?

4. Though impossible to guarantee, is Joseph protected by your organization's leadership and policies against retaliation? Even if Joseph wished to remain anonymous, is it likely the perpetrator(s) will identify who reported them?

5. Is it clear what your next steps should be?

If the answer to any of the above is some version of "I don't know," then the next step is to figure out whether you don't know because you've never considered such a problem, or you don't know because the organization is completely unprepared to respond to such an allegation.