

Humiliated on the Job But I Stood Up for Myself

Jose F. Marquez

BEFORE YOU READ: What is the “chain of command” (or hierarchy) at your workplace? Do you have a direct supervisor (or boss) and then someone who is higher ranking than them? What do you do if you get conflicting directions?

A Lack of Communication

One day in my first week at work, I was involved in an incident with my supervisor. The director of the company gave me a specific job to do. He told me he wanted to see it done by the next morning. However, he did not tell my supervisor that he asked me to do this job. This lack of communication is what caused the incident.



What is the hierarchy at your workplace? Make a diagram that explains it. Use this diagram as a model.

What Can You Do If You Have a Complaint Against Your Employer?

When Jose experiences embarrassment and humiliation on the job, he says he will file a complaint with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The TWC represents the interests of workers. For example, workers can contact the TWC if they did not receive wages or if they experienced harrasment or discrimination on the job.

Does your state have a government office that represents workers? Conduct research to find out. Share the information in an email that could be sent to other students in your program.

When I started doing what the director told me to do, my supervisor came to me and asked me to stop. I said, “But I am doing what the company director told me to do.”

My supervisor said, “I don’t care. I’m your supervisor, and you should do as I say.”

I responded to him that I was going to get in trouble with the director. He answered, “No, you’re not. I’ll deal with him.”

I decided to follow my supervisor’s orders.

The next day, the director came to me. I could see he was angry; his face turned red as he approached. As he got closer, he shouted at me in front of everyone. He yelled, “Why didn’t you do what I told you to do? Why isn’t the job done?”

Embarrassed and Humiliated

I tried to explain what happened, but he continued screaming at me without giving me a chance to say a word. I felt embarrassed and humiliated. I told him to stop yelling at me, that he had no right to treat me like that. I told him I



Describe what you see in this cartoon image. Be detailed and specific. Image from Pixabay.

could take the complaint to the Texas Workforce Commission. In my defense, I told him, “If you are angry at me about something, then we must go to your office to talk about the incident.”

After that, he calmed down, and we went to his office. I felt embarrassed walking toward his office while all my co-workers stared at us.

We Found a Better Way

He called my supervisor into the office too. I explained that I got one order from the director and then a different order from my boss. I told them that I didn’t feel comfortable. I said they should decide who was going to give me orders so that we could avoid similar confusions. At the end of the confrontation, they both apologized for their actions.

Finally, my co-workers were happy to

see that the managers changed to a better way of giving orders, not just to me but to all the employees.

AFTER YOU READ:

- 1.** How did Jose show leadership at work?
- 2.** Study the punctuation. Note the use of a semi-colon in the 6th paragraph. What are the rules/guidelines for using semi-colons? Note the use of quotation marks. What rules can you identify?
- 3.** Share a time you had to handle a difficult situation at work. What did you do?

Jose F. Marquez is a student at the Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. He came from Mexico to the U.S. looking for better opportunities. He loves running. His goal is to get his GED, go to college, and obtain a degree in computer programming to open his own business.