

**ROADMAP
FORWARD**

**Accused of Sexual
Harassment**

**PREVIEW DOWNLOAD
VERSION**

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The details of the writer's (and other contributors') experience with sexual harassment have been modified along with names of people to protect the anonymity of individuals and the confidentiality of their previous employer.

Foreword

If it can happen to me, it can happen to anyone.

I could not believe it when it was happening. Even now, looking back twelve months later, I find it hard to believe I was actually accused of sexual harassment.

I am not a sexual harasser! I'm a father of three, happily married, and a successful, highly paid marketing executive at a large multinational corporation! My mind was spinning with concerns and questions.

How could this happen to me? What will my wife say? What do I say to colleagues? Will this destroy my career? Could I have inadvertently done something my employee felt was inappropriate? How can I defend myself when it appears I've already been found guilty?

The first thing I did was call an employment attorney followed by a search for any insight on the internet. I found stories, online support groups, and legal advice for victims of sexual harassment but nothing for those accused of it. It struck me then that this is obviously a taboo topic for the 30,000 people accused and fired every year. People are too embarrassed to talk about it – I certainly was.

My attorney has been invaluable. However, this is a social challenge as much as it is a legal one with potentially serious ramifications for your career.

My goal for this guidebook is to help you manage your way through a sexual harassment accusation by giving you a framework for addressing topics such as how to help your spouse and / or family through the process, how to get control of any communicated message, and how to forcefully deal with your employer.

This guidebook should be helpful to you whether you actually made a mistake in judgment or were wrongfully accused of sexual harassment. Either way, you have more than likely already been terminated by your employer, will be soon, or you're about to face serious disciplinary action. Given today's ambiguous employment law regarding this subject, employers have found it much safer to side with an accuser than the accused.

The material provided is primarily based on my own experience and the experiences of several other individuals brave enough to share their own stories with you. Over time I intend to further enhance the information with additional valuable input from readers.

If you would like to anonymously contribute your own experience to this guidebook, or if you have any comments on how I can improve it, please email me at contact@Roadmap Forward.com. I hope to have an online forum also available on the website in the coming months.

If you haven't already noticed, I have not shared my name in the materials online or in this guidebook for reasons you probably (and unfortunately) understand very well. When I was brainstorming on where to take my career I asked the classic "What do you want to be famous for?" question. Sexual harassment didn't make the short list.

As you've already read, my professional background is in marketing. Whatever your profession, we are all faced with the same core challenges when facing a situation like this. Hopefully, my marketing experience will help you with one of the most difficult components to the problem – what to say to others including friends, family, colleagues, and prospective employers.

The anger, embarrassment, and disbelief that hit me the week I was accused still feel as raw today. However, the fear and concern I felt immediately about the potential ripple effect of such an accusation have since subsided as a result of how I managed the situation and the incredible support I received from my spouse and others.

After many months, I was ultimately successful in negotiating an acceptable separation package with my former employer. While this didn't make up for the overall negative experience of being terminated for sexual harassment, it did provide some vindication, and more importantly cash to help pay the bills while I looked for my next job.

With the help of a first-rate employment attorney, I was able to obtain:

- Severance of six months salary
- Pro-rated payout of my annual bonus
- Removal of any official language from my employee file about sexual harassment
- An agreement to prevent my previous employer from discussing the allegations with anyone including other employees and prospective employers

The guidebook is organized into three primary sections:

- 1. My Story:** The first part of the guidebook will share more background on my own experience with a sexual harassment accusation. Your situation will be different than mine, so it's important to understand the context behind my viewpoint.
- 2. Response Management:** If this is a recent occurrence there are immediate actions you need to take including finding a strong employment attorney. This section of the guidebook will give you tools you can use to quickly get in control of the situation as best you can.
- 3. Moving Forward:** Once you have a tactical plan in place for responding to the immediate challenges and you've taken care of the urgent issues, then you can begin to look forward. This section will help you think more deeply about what happened and turn an ugly situation into a positive event in your life.

I wish you a successful journey in crafting your own immediate response, the support you'll need for coping, and the courageous energy you'll need in order to rise up from this adversity and create your own roadmap forward...