

# Investigation Management

## 10 Steps to Success

A group of five diverse professionals (three men and two women) are seated around a dark conference table in a modern office setting. They are engaged in a meeting, with some looking at laptops and others at each other. The room has large windows in the background, and the lighting is warm and orange-toned. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

# A Framework for Better Investigations

Workplace investigations are like snowflakes – no two are exactly alike. That's why having an investigation management system in place is essential. With a process for managing investigations, you guarantee consistency and a fair conclusion. In addition, knowing how you'll approach an investigation before you begin reduces stress and duplication of effort while increasing compliance and efficiency.

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## 1

# Be Adaptable

Investigations don't always follow a straight path. You might think you know what the outcome of the investigation will be or how the process will go, but good investigators know to expect the unexpected.

A new piece of evidence or witness may appear. An external contractor may fall behind, causing you to adjust your timeline. Managing an investigation well means having backup plans and being able to adapt when things change.

## 2

# Have an Investigation Plan

Never jump straight into an investigation without making a plan first.

While unexpected changes are inevitable, being prepared with goals in mind keeps you and your team on track. Before you start investigating, list tasks you'll need to complete, a timeline for finishing them and each team member's assignments.

# Manage Your Time Well

Managing your time is essential no matter what industry you work in or how big the investigation is. Duplication of effort and inefficiencies can mean missed deadlines, information that slips through the cracks and burnt-out team members.

A good investigation management strategy is to prioritize tasks and put them into the investigation timeline. This ensures you take your time doing the most important tasks and avoid wasting time on less important ones.

# 4

# Set Realistic Goals

When setting goals for your investigation, recognize the strengths and weaknesses of your team and your organization. Most investigators don't work with unlimited time and money, so you need to plan your investigation accordingly.

Set reasonable deadlines and expectations to reduce stress as well as your risk of failure. You need to investigate thoroughly, but you also don't want to lose credibility as an investigative team.

# 5 Focus on Uncovering the Truth

An investigator's job is to uncover facts and analyze them to get to the truth of a situation. An important part of investigation management is ensuring this analysis stays objective, well-documented and reasonable.

Gather as much evidence as you can in the form of interviews, documents and media. Keep an open mind; avoid assumptions. Don't try to change the investigation to match your theories. Follow the flow of the evidence.

# 6

# Do Your Research

Knowledge of your organization's policies and procedures can help guide you on how to manage the investigation. This will help you determine whether rules were broken and to what degree.

Additionally, know the company's operational history. How has it handled similar incidents in the past? What were the consequences? This information can help you create your investigation plan.



# Be Proactive

Investigation management means taking control of the people and tasks involved in an investigation. You can't sit around and wait for evidence to fall into your lap or an interview subject to tell every detail they know.

If you hit a wall in the investigation, find alternate ways to approach it. Re-read documents. Double-check witness lists. In short, go out of your way to ensure you're being as thorough as you can.

# Put Safety First

While uncovering the truth and reaching a conclusion are the main goals of an investigation, never risk your personal or professional safety.

Take precautions such as:

- Including a second investigator in interviews
- Enlisting the help of security guards
- Holding interviews in a safe location

# Learn From Your Investigations

Learning from past investigations is a key part of successful investigation management. Ask yourself:

- What went wrong?
- What went right?
- How could this investigation have been more efficient?
- Were each team member's talents utilized well?
- What is your reputation within your organization? Do people understand your role and do they value it?

# Promote Strong Teamwork

Teamwork is a key aspect of investigation management. However, it can be difficult to collaborate across multi-location teams and when you're dealing with sensitive data.

Case management software stores all investigation information in one central location. Those assigned to the case can share notes and documents right in the case file. A case management solution is more secure and organized than collaborating through email or other platforms, and facilitates efficient teamwork.



# Better Case Management Software, Better Investigations

With a focus on investigative case management solutions and over 20 years of successful implementations, Case IQ is the global leader in configurable case management software for investigations.

Improve your investigation skills and your career.

As thought leaders in the investigations space, Case IQ publishes helpful eBooks, guides, cheat sheets and templates and offers free monthly webinars on topics related to investigations, ethics and compliance, corporate security and more.

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