



# FROM THE CEO'S DESK

9 December 2021 will go down as a momentous day of glory for all of us at KelpHR for what we accomplished – a new milestone, a new benchmark in building safe workplaces.

Our journey began in 2013, when we made it our mission to make India's workplaces safer, more inclusive and happier for their employees. Many success stories, countless learnings, challenges, milestones that we get to look back on, in this journey of ours always pushed us to do better & find newer ways. KelpHR PoSH Awards® 2021 was just another step in that striving.

But none of that would have been possible without the faith our clients reposed in us, without the commitment made by leaders and visionaries across industries in India's corporate landscape, to help us achieve our mission.

Having said all of the above, we would not claim that our job is done. Indeed, it is a journey without a definable end as 'safety' and 'inclusion' is a spectrum, and it is always possible to do a little bit better. As your trusted partners, it is our job to figure out how to go beyond mere compliance, how to do one better each day, and not to rest on our laurels.

It is in that same spirit, that we look back on the KelpHR PoSH Awards 2021® – Top 25 Safest Workplaces in India.

We look forward to making it bigger, better & grander with every passing year.

Looking forward to having you with us at the KelpHR PoSH Awards® 2022.

Smita Shetty Kapoor,  
CEO & Co-founder, KelpHR



# 20 BEST PRACTICES

## FROM ACROSS THE BEST ENTRIES



We evaluated the top 25 entries rewarded with the recognition of being the 'Safest Workplaces in India' at the KelpHR PoSH Awards® 2021, and we now have our own list of Top 20 Best Practices. Some of these practices were common to all the winning entries, some were absolutely unique. We noticed that it's important to get the basics right, and that the details are in the execution. Here are some of these practices:

### 1) Extensive PoSH policy (clauses such as Confidentiality, No Retaliation etc. stressed on)

It begins with a good policy. Draft a PoSH policy that is complete, clear and easily understandable. Lay out the processes involved. Provide necessary details. Review it every two years (or sooner, as needed). Most of the top entries included this point and we endorse it wholeheartedly.

### 2) Quarterly Review Meetings

The IC has a role to play in prevention and prohibition. Almost all the top entries mentioned that the IC is involved in furthering the cause of PoSH. The law requires regular sensitisation programs, capacity building and other initiatives to be taken up. Quarterly meetings can be held to discuss progress, updates and developments in law and policies.

### 3) Sexual Harassment Training as part of Onboarding

Imparting sexual harassment awareness training during onboarding is a great step towards prevention, and towards signalling what is important for the company. Many of our top entries stated that 'the organizational values and expectations of professional conduct in the organization are communicated to all the new joiners.'

### 4) Impromptu Quizzes

Remember surprise tests in school? A big part of learning is recall. Shortly after a training program is delivered on PoSH, an impromptu quiz seem to have helped people remember the subject matter. Repeatedly stressing a particular point also signals to your employees that it is important and you're serious about it.



### 5) Women Focused Sessions and Helpline

A majority of the PoSH Award-winning entries showed that PoSH best practices and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (D, E &I) initiatives go together. Some PoSH Award winners reported that, they arrange for workshops and sessions that help women on a career growth path. This fosters a culture of equity and inclusion, and increases women's confidence in the workplace.

### 6) Posters and Mailers

When you put up posters declaring that sexual harassment is prohibited and has serious consequences, it has many positive effects. One is that, the relevant information is easily accessible. Another, is that this sends a signal of zero tolerance towards harassment. Still, we know that some organisations fail to do this. However, that was not the case with the majority of KelpHR PoSH Awards® winners, who are finding innovative and aesthetic ways of ensuring compliance and access.

### 7) Skits on PoSH

Drama and theatre have extraordinary impact as teaching tools, as they encourage creativity, experiential learning and empathy. A couple of the entries reported their experiments with the theatrical medium with massive success. We too believe that with a sensitive subject like PoSH, complex situations and emotional aspects can be conveyed through theatrical intervention.

### 8) Annual evaluation of IC's Contribution

Is the IC able to adjudicate sexual harassment complaints properly? How does it fare in the year-round task of prevention, advocacy and capacity building? Does it require support or intervention?

An employer (as designated under the law) can ask these questions to help the IC in functioning effectively, according to law and policy. Like any system, this would also be strengthened by evaluation and feedback.

### 9) MD Mentions Zero Harassment Workplace during Townhalls

A 'zero tolerance' policy is a strong stance taken by any organisation, a stance to be repeated and reinforced. Right from the leadership level, if it is communicated that:

- a) the organization takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, and
- b) those found guilty will face full consequences, it is likely to have beneficial effects on the culture of speaking up in the company.

### 10) Managers check for Harassment during one-on-one reviews

Sometimes harassment goes unreported. Those who face it do not feel encouraged enough to report it. Some of the winning entries mentioned that managers are trained to have sensitive conversations during one-on-ones. Managers could observe their team members, get an idea of their health and happiness quotient, and encourage them to report any harassment they may have faced.

### 11) An Anonymous Helpline to Report Issues

Some companies found using an external helpline was useful in getting employees to open up. When an employee feels unable to come forward with an allegation, to speak up, a tip hotline may seem like the only way to get the story out to the Committee. No one can be compelled to file a complaint.

However, we would like to emphasise that this cannot lead to a PoSH inquiry, and may not lead to a satisfactory resolution. An anonymous tip will have to be handled by the HR under the Code of Conduct.

### 12) Safety as a Parameter in the Annual Employee Engagement Survey

Successful measures come about only when you listen carefully to what's not working. One of the winning organisations shared that: 'every employee is encouraged to participate in their annual employee engagement survey, to share their perception of safety in the organization, and provide feedback and inputs across parameters.'



### **13) Awareness through Gamification**

Games are a proven way of improving uptake and engagement with a subject matter. One of the PoSH Awards winners said that: ‘having occasional challenges, leader board and giving appropriate feedback helps employees learn and have some fun at the same time.’

### **14) Unconscious Bias, Gender Sensitisation sessions to encourage Respectful Workplace**

Harassment is only one manifestation of the problem. People also deal with biases, discrimination, disrespect and bad behaviour from their colleagues in the workplace. Some of our top entries said, and we agree - a balanced approach towards eradicating harassment in the workplace, should also incorporate trainings on unconscious bias and gender sensitisation.

### **15) Special focus on First Line Managers – They are the Strongest and Weakest link**

Managers are uniquely positioned to reassure their team members, validate their concerns and on the other hand, to get the best work out of their team. Managers should undergo training and sensitisation in identifying possible harassment, counselling their team member and providing support without interference. A safe and happy work environment creates optimal conditions for productivity.

### **16) Addressing the Specific Ecosystem**

If one house is on fire, we don’t douse all the houses in the neighbourhood with water. Focused, driven action is necessary sometimes. With teams where issues have arisen, special workshops, sensitisation sessions and trust building activities may be conducted to address the specific ecosystems adequately.

### **17) Taking Awareness to the next level**

Repetition and reinforcement are simple, great tools in driving a message to the workforce. This was echoed by our winning entries as well. You can design the visual aesthetic to be in line with your brand. Announce a PoSH themed day, conduct quizzes and competitions, facilitate group discussions with case studies, put out posters and creatives, make flags, stickers, screensavers.

### **18) Short films and Videos**

The kind of information and emotion that can be conveyed through a video clip is unparalleled. Some of the winning entries mentioned that on a regular basis, teams are shown short films to help employees recognize sexual harassment and call it out. The films are effective vehicles of information and emotion.

### **19) Extending Mental Health / Counselling Support to Sexual Harassment Victims**

Coming forward with a sexual harassment complaint, and seeing it through to completion, requires great courage and mental strength. Victims of sexual harassment may benefit greatly from mental health support and counselling services offered by the organisation.

### **20) We are All Family**

“We are a family first organisation. Nobody wants to see a family member in pain. Each of our behaviours should reflect the right intent. Anything else is against our values”, said one winning organisation. This makes sense from an economics perspective as well - making their employees feel like they belong to a family creates incentives for respectful behaviour.



# THE PoSH AWARDS 2021 JOURNEY

A successful first edition of the KelpHR PoSH Awards® held in January 2020 sent us back to the drawing board with learnings and an opportunity to make it even better this time around. KelpHR PoSH Awards® are a one of its kind event in the world which are about recognising and celebrating organizations doing important and commendable work in the space of sexual harassment prevention and redressal.

## Second Edition

The pandemic was in its second year, we were at the point of reinvention. After many brainstorming sessions, we decided that best practices defied categories. We simplified the format - we did away with the categories to apply for, and gave everyone beyond size and shape a shot at the big win. And that's how we constituted the KelpHR PoSH Awards 2021® – 25 Top Safest Workplaces in India

## Technology Partner

Another big learning from the previous year was that the submission and evaluation process had to be smoother, smarter, lend itself to proper version control, and be less prone to error. After evaluating multiple global tech platforms, we chose the one that appeared intuitive and had a technological solution for our needs. In fact, the platform enabled us to make our questionnaire clearer. One of our team members who would not call herself tech savvy, was successfully able to provide a demo of the tech platform for our jury members as well as the applicants.

## The Questionnaire

The purpose behind the questionnaire was to get a snapshot of an organization's workings. The sections were broadly based on PoSH legal compliance, best practices, active interest in the cause of workplace safety, and broader indices that reflect the culture of the organization. We tweaked our questionnaire to suit the platform, make it easier to understand, apply & score. Quantifying qualitative data was the most fun part.

## Jury Selection

The biggest concern in our minds when we debated over the jury was that we needed people the participants would trust, respect and recognize. Fortunately, we were able to rope in a star-studded jury who brought with them years of experience and expertise in the domain.

We tried to keep our selection diverse, so that each person came with their particular sensibilities and brought a healthy balance to the process. They included HR professionals, a start-up founder, a state women's commission member, lawyers and a social worker.

## The Evaluation Process

If we allocated randomized entries to specific judges, would two companies with similar PoSH practices fare differently because of a strict and a lenient judge? How many entries should each jury member get to judge? We had to ensure that the same standards are applied to everyone, and devised relevant guidance for the jury members to decide how to score an entry over the maximum allocable marks.

Whichever way we sliced it though, we had to admit the evaluation would have been burdensome if we only had one round through which to sift all the entries. That's when we created the two level evaluation system, where round one (with jury comprising our trainers and SMEs) would eliminate the weakest entries, and only the ones that made it through would be eligible for the final title.

The next question was how to ensure a fair and equitable ranking system. There are many paths one can take to the common destination. Even on the same path, a young, lean start-up may be at a different point than an old multinational corporation. Revisiting our core intention, we saw that our desire to set better benchmarks of PoSH best practices would be best achieved without individual ranks, and instead by



certifying the organizations that surpassed a threshold score, with the title of 'Top 25 Safest Workplaces in India'.

In fact, none of us including the jury members knew who were top 25 till they closed their evaluating process & the tech platform sorted all the entries to give us the final report. That too just a day prior to inscribing the names in the trophies & announcing to all winners.

### The Entries

But would it have been possible without our participants opening up their policies and practices to us, for scrutiny and analysis? More than half of our participants were neither existing / past clients of KelpHR nor had any kind of associations with KelpHR. This gives us the assurance that KelpHR is well-regarded in the space not just as a valuable service provider, but as a custodian of the right kind of values – which persuaded our participants to place their trust in our systems and processes.

### Live or Virtual?

When we set out in May of 2021, we were without a clear idea of when live, physically attended events would become possible again. Through internal discussions, against our aspirations we decided to conduct a virtual awards ceremony. It seemed apt at the backdrop of a never ending pandemic. Guests from varied geographies could attend the program, a great way to bring that award night experience into people's homes.

### Run up to the Finale

9 December, 2021 was selected as the day for award ceremony in a fitting tribute to the day the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplaces Act had become a law way back in 2013. To ensure that the glam quotient did not go away with a virtual ceremony; our entire theme and stage design was created keeping in mind simple grandeur.

Our events team and backend worked tirelessly to ensure that the winners were delivered their certificates and trophies prior to the live ceremony to be able to hold the award while being conferred upon in the virtual ceremony.

### Gifts to the Jury

At KelpHR, we believe that empowering women, promoting their sense of self-worth and their right to influence social change for themselves and others is the key to achieving a more peaceful, prosperous world. In line with this, the gifts to the Jury who did the job of judging completely honorary were delivered customised Eri silk shawls straight from women weavers facilitated by the Maati community, Assam.

Eri is a woolly white silk often referred to as the fabric of peace when it is processed without killing the silkworm. This process results in a silk called Ahimsa silk.

## “Awards Night”

The theme was reminiscent of the Oscars in the gold and black colour scheme. The evening kicked off with a speech from our CEO & Co Founder welcoming everyone to the awards. The award acceptances were interspersed with the entertainment which included handpicked songs by singer & songwriter Vasuda Sharma on women empowerment. Our three keynote speakers - feminist lawyer & social activist Ms. Flavia Agnes, LGBTQ advocate Mr. Harish Iyer and noted journalist & space designer Aparna Piramal Rajee, were chosen for their immense contribution in their respective fields as torchbearers of inclusion, empowerment and in creating safe and inclusive workplaces.

It was a grand finale watched by around 500+ people over the 2 hours it spanned and despite being virtual ran precisely on time. With a war room like project team at backend, the awards ceremony flew past seamlessly in clockwork precision. Yes! We had done it. KelpHR PoSH Awards® 2021 created joy not only for the award winners but for each one of us at KelpHR for having delivered a dream initiative like a dream. And we got a media coverage of about 200 clips & digital impressions of about 30 crores.



# JURY'S PERSPECTIVE

When I was first requested to be a part of KelpHR PoSH Awards 2021, I was very curious but clueless. I had no idea what to expect. At the same time, I was keen to know about the innovations of companies in preventing harassment, to see how many understood true compliance with the spirit, over the letter of the law. But I did not know how many companies would apply, and could only guess at the format of evaluation.

There are some awards that rely on audience votes, some that are conferred by industry bodies at a price, KelpHR's PoSH Awards®, made the jury's verdict the basis for the list of winners. Despite demanding schedules, I, along with my esteemed fellow judges, worked tirelessly on tight deadlines to deliver our evaluations. After it was all over, KelpHR wanted to get our experience of the process, our thoughts on the initiative and I helped put together all the thoughtful responses, full of insights. Here are some excerpts condensed into an essay.

The initial onboarding was smooth and seamless, and we were given a detailed how-to on using the platform for evaluation of the entries, and also how to approach the judging process itself. Once the entries had closed, the evaluation window opened and we judges rolled up our sleeves, to complete our scoring within the set timelines. The process of evaluation was challenging. A lot of effort and time was required to carefully review every entry and that process was quite a learning experience and time consuming as well.

One big challenge, I felt was the virtual nature of the evaluation process - which created a roadblock for detailed discussions between the jury members. Though we live and work in a virtual world and virtual discussions can achieve similar levels of detail and nuances; yet I missed interacting with the great group of people which formed the jury. Some tweaks in modes of jury interaction would yield better results.

When it came to the subject matter - the questionnaire was simple, comprehensive and sought the right details. While some of the questions seemed a little outside the scope of pure PoSH law, when viewed strictly, surely we could all appreciate why. Safety at the workplace

is the fundamental parameter, but it happens to be a piece of the larger picture of workplace culture, part of a larger framework of functional governance structures and inclusive practices.

It was heartening to see that many participating organisations had a good understanding of PoSH law, and there was a high level of sensitivity to women's issues. We also noticed a clear trend of employers investing in diversity and inclusion initiatives and that they wanted to be known for such initiatives and practices.

Finally, I would add that the nature of questions was styled to evoke meaningful responses from global corporations, MNCs or large organisation. We would want more participation from smaller/regional and local organisations who are not as organized. We want to see participation from companies in tier 2 and tier 3 cities and across all sectors and industries. KelpHR could also consider having regional preliminary rounds for greater inclusivity.

I'd like to take a moment here to appreciate the ambition and hope displayed by the creators of the KelpHR PoSH Awards®. It could work well to introduce a competitive spirit towards doing the right thing. It would motivate organisations to understand what else can be done in the domain of PoSH. Awards for PoSH compliance will end up correlating goodwill and reputation with diversity and inclusiveness. This is a great way to incentivise the behaviour and cultural reforms we need in all industries. And then we have the benefits of winning organisations increasing employer brand value and being an employer of choice.

I really wish more organizations enter the run, not just global MNCs and corporates but even medium and small enterprises, firms, proprietor concerns. PoSH awareness must go beyond just corporate culture. Initiatives like this must drive this to be 'the culture' and the KelpHR PoSH awards® initiative is marching towards that.

I am grateful to have been part of this initiative and am excited about the future editions. KelpHR PoSH Awards® have the power to change our world.

*Please note: The Jury perspective is compiled from the collective responses of jury members and written out in one person's voice to make for an easier read.*



## Top 25 Safest Workplaces in India

ABC  
Consultants  
Private  
Limited

Arohan  
Financial  
Services  
Limited

DBS Bank  
India Ltd

Eka Software  
Solution  
Pvt. Ltd.

FlexiLoans

IKS Health  
Pvt Ltd

InterGlobe  
Aviation  
Limited  
(IndiGo)

ITC Infotech  
India Ltd

K Raheja  
Corp

Merit Data  
and  
Technology  
Pvt Ltd

NGK SPARK  
PLUGS  
INDIA  
PVT LTD

OEC India  
Services  
Pvt Ltd

SE2 Digital  
Service LLP

Shoppers  
Stop Ltd.

Square Panda  
India

TA Digital

TaeguTec  
India  
Private  
Limited

TATA POWER

Thoughtworks  
India

TITAN COMPANY  
LIMITED

Uber

Virtusa  
Consulting  
Services  
Pvt Ltd

VisionSpring  
Foundation

Volvo Group  
India

WNS GLOBAL  
SERVICES  
PRIVATE LTD