

ATTORNEYS: TAKE HEED OF HURD'S DEMISE AT HP

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Shayna Balch was quoted in *The Phoenix Business Journal* on October 16, 2010. The article "Attorneys: Take heed of Hurd's demise at HP" focused on the lessons learned by local business owners and executive from Mark Hurd's ouster as Hewlett-Packard (HP) CEO. Hurd was released from HP after sexual harassment claims by a contractor turned up Hurd's alleged improper use of expense counts related to spending time with the woman, Jodie Fisher.

HP's internal investigation found Hurd did not harass Fisher, but he violated business conduct policies via improper use of company expense accounts and money to facilitate his relationship with Fisher.

Shayna stated that, "Relationships between executives and subordinates create plenty of pitfalls, and companies need to tread carefully in how they handle any claims."

"Should the consensual relationship end badly (which it normally does), the subordinate may complain that the relationship was harassment all along and claim she felt she had to go along with the relationship to keep her job," Shayna said. "If anyone complains of sexual harassment or discrimination, the company should promptly conduct a thorough investigation. Even if that investigation does not substantiate a complaint of harassment or discrimination, other misconduct or examples of poor judgment on the part of the executive may come to light.

"These other examples of poor judgment can be just as devastating to the company's reputation as a guilty verdict in a sexual-harassment lawsuit," she added.

Related People



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