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### Why employees don't speak up: Fear of negative consequences

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By Steven Priest

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“Around here, the first whale to the surface gets the harpoon,” said the PhD research scientist. He was summarizing the views of an English pharmaceutical firm’s focus group.

Fear of negative consequences is one of the two main reasons employees don’t speak up about misconduct they know about. (The other, covered in my last column, is the belief that raising issues won’t change anything.)

News media are filled with stories of retaliation, where employees lose their jobs seemingly in response to raising an issue. In case there was any doubt of its prevalence, the #MeToo movement has made clear the retaliation that many people feel and experience.

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