

Wigdor LLP Files Gender/Religious Discrimination And Retaliation Lawsuit Against Luxury Bed Retailer Hästens

April 6, 2021 • News & Press

On March 31, 2021, Wigdor LLP filed a lawsuit on behalf of Lizandra Vega in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York against Hästens Beds, Inc., Hästens Sängar AB and Hästens LTD (together, “Hästens”). Hästens is a Swedish, family-owned company that makes and sells luxury beds that retail for up to \$400,000, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit accuses Hästens and its CEO, Jan Ryde, of imposing certain spiritual beliefs onto employees, fostering a sexually hostile work environment, using sexist training materials in the workplace and retaliating against employees who complain about gender-based harassment. Mr. Ryde is also a named Defendant in the lawsuit.

As set forth in the lawsuit, Mr. Ryde forces his employees to adhere to a certain set of spiritual beliefs as a condition of their employment, including the “law of attraction,” Spiral Dynamics, the David Hawkins’ Scale of Enlightenment, and the *Four Agreements*. To enforce these belief systems, Hästens employs Gregory Downey as a full-time “Global Mindset and Culture Lead” to lead employees in daily “mindset coaching” sessions, which are effectively mandatory, the Complaint alleges.

In addition, as alleged, Hästens employs a personal hypnotherapist and clairvoyant, Peter Von Ah, to advise Mr. Ryde about employee issues, such as individual employees’ “vibrational levels” and their so-called enlightenment levels. Both Mr. Downey and Mr. Von Ah have outsized influence over executive decisions at Hästens, the lawsuit alleges.

As set forth in the Complaint, Ms. Vega — a successful and well-regarded executive recruiter with over 20 years of experience — was expected to use this matrix of belief systems to source and recruit executive talent at Hästens. She was allegedly told to disregard resumes and candidates’ past work experiences in order to recruit people that were “cooler,” “younger,” “more authentic,” or that had “enough self-love” and “abundance.”

The lawsuit alleges that on multiple occasions, Hästens distributed sexist “training videos” to employees that contained highly vulgar and offensive language. Multiple employees complained about these inappropriate videos, including Ms. Vega, according to the lawsuit. Shortly after Hästens became aware of Ms. Vega’s complaint, Mr. Ryde suddenly and inexplicably excluded Ms. Vega from all of his email communications until she was told she was fired on January 7, 2021, the lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit further contends that Hästens then took advantage of the worsening COVID-19 crisis in New York City to provide a sham conditional offer to Ms. Vega: she could either physically travel to a WeWork office in New York City to “train her eventual replacement” and receive a 50% reduction in pay, or she would be fired. When Ms. Vega refused to agree to this sham offer that was an attempt to get her to

quit, she was fired for the second time on January 26, 2021, the lawsuit states.

ICYMI: a disturbing new lawsuit accuses Hästens CEO Jan Ryde of forcing his bizarre spiritual beliefs onto his employees and hiring a "clairvoyant hypnotist" to evaluate employees based on their "vibrational levels" and how "enlightened" they are. <https://t.co/haW64yaSqO>
– Wigdor LLP (@WigdorLaw) [April 1, 2021](#)

Ms. Vega is represented by Wigdor LLP Partner [Jeanne M. Christensen](#).

Statement from Jeanne M. Christensen, Partner at Wigdor LLP:

“Hästens’ policing of its employees’ spiritual beliefs is a brazen abuse of corporate power that falls far outside the bounds of lawful employment practices. Forcing employees to undergo spiritual coaching, assessments by a ‘clairvoyant hypnotist’ on payroll, psychological manipulation – these are not the hallmarks of a safe or lawful work environment. The company’s willingness to blatantly retaliate against Ms. Vega for standing up to workplace gender discrimination suggests that Hästens is not nearly as ‘enlightened’ as it claims. We look forward to holding Hästens accountable for these disturbing and unlawful practices.”

[Read the Full Complaint Here](#)

The Daily Beast

“‘Sexist’ Luxury Mattress Brand Forced Hypnotherapy, ‘Spiritual Coaching’ on Employees: Lawsuit”

March 31, 2021

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New York Post

“CEO of luxury mattress maker Hästens imposed ‘mind control’ on staff: lawsuit”

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