

USA Today exec fired for 'negative attitude' while grieving baby's death: Lawsuit

 [foxbusiness.com/business-leaders/usa-today-fired-discrimination-lawsuit](https://www.foxbusiness.com/business-leaders/usa-today-fired-discrimination-lawsuit)

Stephanie
Pagones

A former sales executive for USA Today hit the media company with a federal discrimination lawsuit alleging her bosses fired her for having a “negative” attitude after her newborn son died and getting pregnant again soon after, court papers show.

“The reality is that USA Today did not want a female employee that might temporarily need time off,” digital sales director Serena Bhaduri alleged in the suit filed Thursday in Manhattan federal court. “It definitely did not want a female employee who had taken maternity leave the year before, taken four weeks of bereavement after her infant son died, and was pregnant again.”

Bhaduri had been working in digital sales for USA Today, which is owned by Gannett in January 2019 when her 2-month-old son died tragically. Both media companies, as well as two of Badhuri's managers, are named in the suit.

Neither USA Today nor Gannett responded to FOX Business' request for comment.

But when she returned to work in February 2019, her supervisor told her she had a “negative” attitude and was causing her colleagues “to suffer ‘low morale.’ ” Her boss allegedly began to micromanage her and began criticizing her work more or for no reason, according to the employee's complaint. She made a complaint about her immediate boss about a month later.

Badhuri notified her supervisors in May of her plans to take a month bereavement leave as she mourned the loss of her son. But within days she began to lose high-revenue clients and at least one multimillion-dollar account, according to the suit.

“Adding insult to injury, [Bhaduri’s direct supervisor] assigned Ms. Bhaduri’s clients to a newly hired, single male employee, who did not have children,” the lawsuit states.

She learned she was expecting again while on bereavement leave and told her supervisors soon after.

Badhuri’s supervisors “ramped up their campaign of discrimination and retaliation against her in an effort to generate pretextual justifications for her eventual firing,” court papers say.

The newly expecting mother was fired Aug. 13, with her boss allegedly telling her “the

termination was based on Ms. Bhaduri's 'negative attitude,'" which she alleged was contributing to a "'toxic' workplace."

"The reality is that USA Today did not want a female employee that might temporarily need time off. I definitely did not want a female employee who had taken maternity leave the year before, taken four weeks of bereavement after her infant son died, and was pregnant again," according to the complaint

She later learned another colleague was fired soon after becoming pregnant.