



# 2021 WBI U.S. WORKPLACE BULLYING SURVEY

The Fifth National Scientific WBI Study  
Zogby Analytics, Pollster

7.

## ROLE OF THE TARGETED PERSON

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## 7. ROLES OF TARGETED PEOPLE

Question: What was the role of the targeted person?

Table 14

**TARGETS**

**52%**  
**NOT**  
**MANAGEMENT**

**40%**  
**MANAGERS**

Adults sample	Proportion	Percentage
Non-supervisory employee	.3630	36%
Lead worker, not supervisor	.1575	16%
<i>Not Management</i>	.5205	52%
First-line supervisor	.1392	14%
Manager	.1849	18%
Senior manager or executive	.0776	8%
<i>Management</i>	.4018	40%
Owner, president, CEO	.0639	6%
Contractor	.0159	2%

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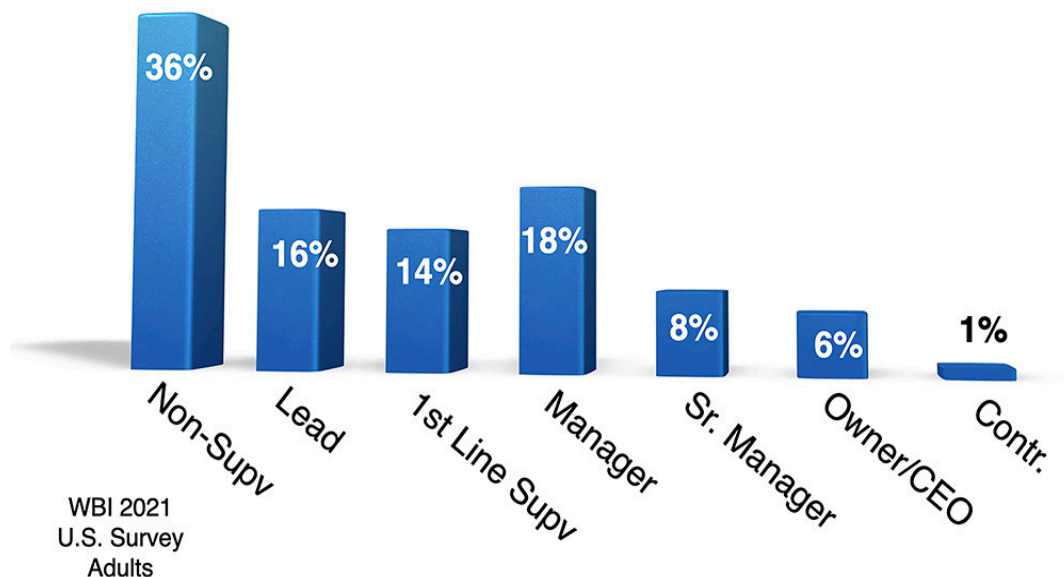
Unshaded rows in Table 12 were response options for survey respondents in the Adults national sample. There were two categories of positions that were not management and three levels of management positions. One myth about workplace bullying is that managers do all the bullying and non-supervisory workers are their only targets.

Our 2021 results show that employees who are not management comprise the majority of bullied targets (52%), but managers are also bullied (40% of all targets), especially mid-level managers (18%). Bullying thrives in hierarchical organizations. Managers have bosses, too.

Freedom from bullying is one of the prerequisites of being on top of the hierarchy. Of individuals targeted for bullying, only 6% are at the very top. Contractors are rarely bullied (2% of all targets), according to the Adults sample respondents. Without the constraints of an employee, contractors are free to escape bullying workplaces. A key component of targethood is the bullied employee's limited ability to flee harmful work environments without financial consequences.

The distribution of roles for the Adults sample respondents was not provided.

Figure 9



Remember that the pollster provided data from the national Adults sample and a subset of Employed respondents. It is noteworthy that Employed sample responses to this question generated different results than the Adults detailed on the previous page.

*Question:* What was the role of the targeted person?

Table 15

Employed sample	Proportion	Percentage
Non-supervisory employee	.2881	29%
Lead worker, not supervisor	.1585	16%
<i>Not Management</i>	.4466	45%
First-line supervisor	.1556	16%
Manager	.2190	22%
Senior manager or executive	.0864	8%
<i>Management</i>	.4610	46%
Owner, president, CEO	.0749	7%
Contractor	.0172	2%

**TARGETS**

**46%**  
**MANAGERS**

**45%**  
**NOT**  
**MANAGEMENT**

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Respondents from the Employed sample reported that managers were more frequently targeted for bullying (46%), again with mid-level managers experiencing the most bullying (22% of all targets) than were employees not in management. Non-supervisory employees were targets in 29% of cases.

The distribution of roles for the Employed sample respondents was not provided. We can only hope that the numbers of managers and non-managers in the sample approximated the real world distribution, with fewer managers than others.

The results shown here suggest that managers are equally likely to be bullied as others. Therefore, we can reasonably expect advocates to end abusive conduct at work to come from the ranks of management. At the very least, managers could be less adversarial to bullied complainants since they ostensibly understand the experience themselves.

Figure 10

