

SAMPLE CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

**Prepared By: Megan Stewart
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EXHIBITS

- EXHIBIT 1** Written Complaint from Mary Fields to Lisa Samson, dated January 10, 2026
- EXHIBIT 2** Performance review of Louisa Norton, completed by Lisa Samson, dated December 13, 2024
- EXHIBIT 3** Performance review of Tricia Pham, completed by Lisa Samson, dated December 13, 2024
- EXHIBIT 4** Excerpt from Employee Handbook, dated January 2024, including the “Internal Promotions” policy

I. INTRODUCTION

On January 10, 2026, Customer Service Representative Mary Fields submitted a written complaint to Customer Service Manager, Lisa Samson (**Exhibit 1**). Fields alleges that Customer Service Supervisor Louisa Norton has “bullied” and “discriminated” against her because of her pregnancy and breastfeeding status.

II. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The investigation commenced with the interview of Fields on January 10, 2026, and concluded on February 7, 2026.

The scope of the investigation is whether Norton “bullied” Fields and/or treated Fields differently because of her pregnancy and breastfeeding status.

This Investigator reviewed documents provided by witnesses. Copies of relevant documents are enclosed with this report. This Investigator also interviewed the witnesses identified below. All interviews were conducted in person unless otherwise noted.

Witness Name	Witness Title	Interview Date(s)
Eduardo Duarte	Customer Service Supervisor	January 12, 2026
Bryanna Ellison	Former Customer Service Representative	January 24, 2026 ¹
Mary Fields	Customer Service Representative	January 10, 2026; January 26, 2026
Fred McKenzie	Customer Service Representative	January 17, 2026
Louisa Norton	Customer Service Supervisor	January 26, 2026
Tricia Pham	Customer Service Leader	January 24, 2026
Lisa Samson	Customer Service Manager	January 10, 2026

This Investigator explained the fact-finding purpose of the investigation to all witnesses. This Investigator also explained the importance of fully disclosing all relevant information, and keeping the information discussed confidential. Finally, this Investigator

¹ The interview with Ellison was conducted by phone.

notified all witnesses that they are protected from retaliation related to their participation in this investigation.

This Investigator reached factual conclusions regarding Fields' allegations. When an allegation is described as "substantiated", this Investigator determined that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred. When an allegation is described as "unsubstantiated", this Investigator determined that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct did not occur.

III. BACKGROUND

Fields began working for the Company as a Customer Service Representative in the Customer Service Department (the "Department") on April 17, 2024. Fields was initially assigned to two daytime shifts per week, reporting to the daytime Customer Service Supervisor, Eduardo Duarte, and three night shifts per week, reporting to Norton.²

Fields' primary responsibility is to answer phone calls from customers who are placing orders, inquiring about orders already placed, or returning or exchanging orders. Fields sits in a cubicle at the end of a row, in a room with approximately 20 other such cubicles. Initially, during the night shift, Fields sat next to former Customer Service Representative Bryanna Ellison. However, Ellison left the Company in July 2024.

At the time of her hire, Fields was approximately five months pregnant. On July 14, 2024, Fields commenced a four month leave of absence related to the birth of her child. She returned to work on November 13, 2024.

When she returned to work, Fields requested to work only night shifts. Samson granted Fields' request.³ Consequently, Fields began reporting to Norton only.

On January 10, 2026, Fields submitted a written complaint to Samson regarding Norton (**Exhibit 1**). That same day, Samson notified Director of Human Resources Cassandra Boyce of the complaint, and the Company immediately commenced the Investigation that is the subject of this Report.

IV. REMEDY REQUESTED

² Fields felt she had a good working relationship with Duarte, but as further described below, has always had difficulty working with Norton. Duarte and Norton both felt Fields' performance was generally satisfactory, but had different perspectives on her reliability and attitude. Duarte felt Fields was a dependable employee and had a positive, team-oriented attitude. In contrast, Norton felt Fields had difficulty consistently completing her assigned duties, and resisted constructive criticism.

³ Until she received the complaint that is the subject of this report, Samson was unaware that Fields had problems working with Norton.

Fields would like Duarte to be assigned to supervise the night shift, so that Fields does not have to work with Norton anymore. Also, she would like to be promoted to Customer Service Leader.

V. SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS, WITNESS STATEMENTS, AND FACTUAL FINDINGS

The allegations made by Fields, relevant witness statements, and this Investigator's factual findings are summarized below.

A. Allegation: From April 17, 2024, until July 14, 2024, Louisa Norton “bullied” Mary Fields because she was pregnant by “yelling” at Fields and “belittling” Fields in front of coworkers.

1. Fields

From the time of her hire, Norton has “bullied” Fields by “yelling” at her when she makes mistakes, and “belittling” her by pointing out the mistakes in front of others. For example, at a team meeting on June 2, 2024, Norton said that a new Customer Service Representative had improperly informed a caller of the Company's return policy, resulting in Norton having to “calm the caller down and give them something free so they wouldn't be pissed off.” Even though Norton did not attribute the mistake to Fields, Fields is the only new Customer Service Representative, so everyone knew she was the one who made the mistake. Also, a few days before the meeting, Norton yelled at Fields about the issue in front of Ellison, telling her, “You need to read the training manual,” and “This mistake is NOT okay.”

Fields believes Norton's conduct is related to her pregnancy because Fields is the only pregnant employee.

2. Norton

Norton sometimes yells at Fields, but her behavior is not related to Fields' pregnancy. Norton has done the same to others. She has a tendency to become easily frustrated with new Customer Services Representatives, who are not properly trained. Norton has been “working on” the problem with Samson.

Norton sometimes points out Fields' mistakes in front of her coworkers, and she does the same to others. Her behavior is not related to Fields' pregnancy. Norton was not referring to Fields when she made the comment in the June 2, 2024, meeting. She was referring to an incident a few weeks prior involving Customer Service Representative Fred McKenzie, who has only been with the Company for a few months at that time. Norton was frustrated with McKenzie because she felt he had been employed by the Company long enough to know their return policy. She said she had to “calm the caller down and give them something free so they wouldn't be pissed off.”

A few days before the meeting, Norton told Fields, “You need to read the training manual,” and “This mistake is NOT okay,” because she felt Fields needed better training. Ellison may have heard the conversation.

3. Samson

Since Norton was promoted to Customer Service Supervisor in February 2024, Samson has received several complaints from various Customer Service Representatives that Norton “yells” at them, points out their mistakes in front of others, and is generally rude. None of the associates who complained were pregnant. Samson has discussed these problems with Norton several times, and also addressed them in Norton’s December 2024 performance review (**Exhibit 2**).

4. Duarte

Duarte has observed Norton “yelling” at and “belittling” several Customer Service Representatives about work-related issues, including McKenzie and Pham. Norton will yell things like, “Don’t you know the policy?” and “Seriously? You haven’t figured it out?” Norton is particularly hard on new Customer Service Representatives, who often do not have the skills of more seasoned employees.

Duarte was at the June 2, 2024, meeting. He heard Norton reference an incident in which a Customer Service Representative misinformed a caller about the Company’s return policy. Duarte understood she was talking about McKenzie, because Norton had previously told Duarte about the incident.

Norton’s conduct is unprofessional, but she does not direct it any particular employee. It is just how she treats people generally.

5. McKenzie

Norton “yells” at all the Customer Service Representatives and treats them disrespectfully, although, he has never heard her yell at Fields specifically. She criticizes employees in front of others, saying things like, “Don’t you get it?” At the June 2, 2024, meeting, Norton criticized McKenzie for not knowing the Company’s return policy, although she did not refer to McKenzie by name. McKenzie felt “humiliated.”

6. Ellison

Ellison accepted another job because working with Norton was “horrible.” Ellison complained to Samson about Norton several times. Norton treated Fields just as badly as she treated everyone else. For example, sometime in late May 2024, Norton criticized something Fields did (Ellison cannot remember what) and said something like, “Read the training manual.” A couple days later in a meeting, Norton made a comment about having to “calm down a customer who was pissed off.” Ellison had wondered if Norton was referring to the incident with Fields, but McKenzie said it was about him.

7. Pham

When Pham first started, Norton was “kind of rude” to her and sometimes “yelled a little bit,” but now Norton is “much nicer.” Pham does not want to “say anything bad” about Norton because she feels “things are good now.” She cannot recall ever hearing Norton “belittling” Fields or anyone else.⁴

Factual Finding: *Substantiated that from April 17, 2024, until July 14, 2024, Louisa Norton “bullied” Mary Fields and “belittled” her by yelling at her in front of her coworkers. Otherwise unsubstantiated.*

1. Norton admits that she yells at Fields and others and criticizes employees in front of their coworkers. However, she denies that her conduct is related to Fields’ pregnancy. (**Source:** Norton)

2. Other employees have observed or experienced Norton yelling at or “belittling” Fields and others. In addition to Fields, Norton directs this behavior toward employees who are not pregnant. (**Sources:** Duarte, Ellison, McKenzie, Pham)

3. Samson has received complaints about Norton yelling at employees and treating them disrespectfully, and has discussed these issues with Norton. No one else who has complained about Norton (other than Fields), is pregnant, and no other employees stated that Norton’s conduct is related to pregnancy. (**Sources:** Ellison, Norton, Samson, **Exhibit 2**)

4. At the June 2, 2024, meeting, Norton was criticizing McKenzie, not Fields, for not knowing the Company’s return policy. (**Sources:** Duarte, Ellison, McKenzie, Norton)

B. Allegation: On June 14, 2024, Louisa Norton “discriminated” against Mary Fields because of her pregnancy and/or childbirth by denying her a promotion to the position of Customer Service Leader.

1. Fields

On June 13, 2024, Fields told Norton she planned to take a four month pregnancy/childbirth-related leave of absence.

On June 14, 2024, the Company advertised a position for Customer Service Leader for the night shift. Although Fields had only worked for the Company for a short time, she was qualified for the position because she has worked in customer service management for many years, with other employers.

⁴ Fields, Ellison, and McKenzie all described Pham as Norton’s “favorite.” Fields said she did not think Pham would “say anything bad” about Norton, and Ellison said she thinks Pham will “protect” Norton.

Later that day, Norton heard Fields talking to Ellison about the opening, and Norton told Fields it “wasn’t the right time.” Fields believes this was because Norton did not want to hire her into the position, and then allow her to be out on a pregnancy/childbirth-related leave of absence. Fields does not know if there is a Company policy or practice not to allow employees in the Introductory Period to apply for promotions.

2. Norton

Norton did not decide who to interview or hire for the Customer Service Leader position that was announced in June 2024, although she interviewed the final candidates. Samson decided who Norton would interview, and Samson made the final selection.

Norton spoke with Fields briefly one time about the vacant position. Norton was walking by Fields’ cubicle and overheard Fields talking to Ellison about the position. Norton said, “It’s not the right time.” The comment was not related to Fields’ pregnancy. Norton made the comment because Fields had not completed her 90-day Introductory Period. According to Company policy, employees in the Introductory Period are not eligible to apply for promotions. However, Norton did not explain what she meant, and Fields never asked her about it.

3. Samson

Samson, not Norton, selected Pham as the Customer Service Leader. She made the decision based on Pham’s years of experience as one of the best rated Customer Service Representatives in the Company (**Exhibit 3**). Also, Pham, unlike many other members of the Department, works well with Norton.

Samson did not consider Fields for the position because Fields had not completed her Introductory Period. The Company’s policy is that employees must complete the Introductory Period to be eligible for transfer or promotion (**Exhibit 4**). Samson’s decision not to interview or hire Fields into the position and to hire Pham instead was unrelated to Fields’ pregnancy and/or childbirth.

4. Ellison

Fields told Ellison that she might apply for the Customer Service Leader position as Norton was walked by. Norton said to Fields, “You can’t. It’s not the right time.” Ellison understood that Norton was referring to the fact that Fields had not completed the Introductory Period, and therefore was not eligible for promotion under Company policy. Norton “wasn’t really paying attention,” and did not stop to explain what she meant, which is “typical.”

Factual Finding: *Unsubstantiated.*

1. Samson, not Norton, decided not to interview or hire Fields for the Customer Service Leader position. (**Sources:** Norton, Samson)

2. Consistent with Company policy, Samson did not consider Fields for the promotion because she was still in her Introductory Period, and thus was ineligible for promotion. Samson denies the decision was related to Fields' pregnancy and/or childbirth. (**Source:** Samson, **Exhibit 4**)

3. Norton told Fields it was "not the right time" to apply for the Customer Service Leader position because Fields had not completed the Introductory Period, so she was ineligible for the promotion. (**Sources:** Ellison, Norton, **Exhibit 4**)

C. Allegation: On several occasions from November 13, 2024, to January 5, 2026, Louisa Norton "discriminated" against Mary Fields based on her breastfeeding status by not allowing Fields to take extra breaks to express breast milk.

1. Fields

When Fields returned to work following leave on November 13, 2024, she notified Norton that she needed to take extra breaks to express breast milk. Norton said that she understood and told Fields to tell her when she needed to do so. Norton also found a vacant office Fields could use for that purpose. However, several times (Fields cannot remember the exact dates), when Fields asked if she could take a break, Norton said, "Maybe after a few more calls." But Norton never followed up with Fields to tell her she could take a break. Fields has never heard Norton tell anyone else they cannot take a break.

2. Norton

When Fields returned to work, Norton generally allowed her to take extra breaks to express breast milk. However, on a couple of occasions when caller wait times exceeded Company standards, Norton asked Fields if she would mind waiting a few minutes, asking, "Maybe after a few more calls?" Norton wanted Fields to help reduce the call volume, and to then take her break when it wasn't so busy. But she didn't follow up with Fields to make sure Fields took the breaks later.

Norton does the same with other employees in similar circumstances, asking them to delay their breaks by a few minutes. She has also allowed Pham (the only other employee to make such a request) to take breaks as needed to express milk.

3. Pham

Pham had a baby in January 2024, and returned to work in March 2024. Norton approved her request for extra breaks to express milk. Also, Norton made sure there was a private room available for this purpose.

When there is heavy call volume, Norton has sometimes asked Pham to delay her break time. She has asked Pham to delay both "regular" breaks and extra breaks related

to expressing milk. Because Norton is her supervisor, Pham feels she has to agree, so she does. Pham takes her breaks after the call volume has lowered.

4. McKenzie

Norton sometimes asks employees to delay their break times when the call volume is heavy. She has asked McKenzie to do so, and he has also heard her ask others, including Fields and Pham. Sometimes, Norton's request has resulted in McKenzie taking breaks later than Company policy requires.

5. Ellison

Norton never wanted to have caller wait times that exceeded Company standards, because that would affect her bonus. So, she would "ask" employees, including Ellison, to take their breaks later to reduce the call volume. Employees knew Norton was not really asking, and they always agreed to delay their breaks.

Factual Finding: *Unsubstantiated.*

1. Norton has asked employees other than Fields to delay their breaks to reduce call volume. Employees feel compelled to agree because Norton is their supervisor. (**Sources:** Ellison, McKenzie, Norton, Pham)

2 Norton denies preventing Fields from taking extra breaks to express breast milk. However, she admits she asked Fields to delay her breaks on several occasions, and did not follow up with Fields to let her know when to take the delayed break. Norton denies that her request was related to Fields' breastfeeding status. (**Source:** Norton)

3. On occasions when there was not high call volume, Norton permitted Fields and Pham to take extra breaks to express milk. She also ensured Fields and Pham had a private location to express milk. (**Sources:** Fields, Norton, Pham)

VI. OTHER ISSUES RAISED DURING THE INVESTIGATION

During the course of the investigation, witnesses raised several areas of concern not directly related to Fields' complaint, which are described further below.

- Inadequate Training. Norton repeatedly stated that she believes new Customer Service Representatives are inadequately trained, and that the lack of training has resulted in low customer service satisfaction and high employee turnover in the Department.
- Delayed Breaks. Norton and others stated that Norton asks employees to delay their breaks, and they feel compelled to do so. McKenzie stated that the delay has resulted in him taking breaks later than Company policy permits; it is unclear how often this has been the case or if it is true of other employees. Also, it is not clear whether Norton or other supervisors

understand the Company's responsibility to allow employees to take breaks to express breast milk.

- Promotion Policy. Several witnesses expressed that not allowing employees to apply for promotions during the Introductory Period is not "fair" and results in the Company not considering otherwise qualified candidates.
- Norton's Performance. Although Samson and Norton both stated that Samson has counseled Norton about complaints Samson has received about Norton, Norton continues to have interpersonal problems with her direct reports.

VII. CONCLUSION

If the Company requires any further information regarding this matter, please contact the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

Megan Stewart