

Manufacturing case study

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Manufacturing Industry Case Study Challenges in Manufacturing Industry

Unions •HR teams must be familiar with contract language, when working in a unionized facility. In a non-union plant, an HR representative can speak directly with any member of the workforce when discipline issues arise, such as absenteeism or dress-code concerns. But when employees are union members, the union steward has to be present during those same discussions.

Those cases that could be settled with a face-to-face talk between HR and the employee now have to be resolved through grievance procedures between the union and the HR department. At the same time, HR professionals find that enforcing employee policies are sometimes easier in a union shop, because unionized workers tend to be more familiar with the rules, according to the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM).

Safety •Safety awareness is a major HR issue in manufacturing, because of the considerable risks for job--related injuries or fatalities. In an office, someone might trip over a file cabinet. Here, people can get pulled into the machines and lose arms or legs. People can get killed,” HR Manager Kristi Schmidlap tells SHRM. Human Resource specialists devote a considerable amount of time in training employees to be proactive in keeping their work areas safe. HR departments have to be diligent in enforcing safety policies, such as dress-codes in factories, where long fingernails and hair represent danger among workers using heavy machinery.

Human Resource employees also have to set examples, by consistently wearing hardhats, goggles and safety boots, when they walk through the plant. **Communication**•Most laborers in a manufacturing plant do not have

computers or desks, which eliminates emails and on-line publications as methods of disseminating information. Instead, HR professionals must rely on bulletin board postings, notices stapled to paychecks or employee meetings. With three shifts in operation, the HR representative must schedule 5: 30 A. M. sessions to ensure that the third shift hears the same message as their first- and second-shift peers. HR departments spend more time explaining common policies than their counterparts in white-collar companies, because manufacturing employees cannot access handbooks and guides that are published on the Internet. This means more interaction between HR employees and the general workforce, especially during benefits enrollment periods, when factory employees who do not have access to company computers, need HR's guidance in entering their selections on-line.