

# Employee relations management

Sociology, Empowerment



Employee Relations is a process of managing diversity, flexibility and change, which involves maintaining employer-employee relationships that contribute to satisfactory productivity, motivation, and morale. Employee Relations is concerned with preventing and resolving problems involving individuals, which arise out of or affect work situations.

Employee Relations cover all areas such as employer & employee relationship, communication, employee participation and involvement, developments in collective bargaining, equal opportunities, grievances handling, disciplinary management, health and safety, industrial relations and employment protection law, organizational change and people, personnel and recruitment and quality of working life etc. Today employers should now be undertaking an in-depth review of their approach to employment relations.

Organisations which out-perform their competitors do so because they apply a coherent set of people management and development practices appropriate to their needs. Successful organisations are increasingly those which have a constructive relationship with employees and a management approach which enables them to develop and draw on the full potential of their people. Considerable improvements have been made to the practice of employment relations in recent years. People are working hard and enjoy going to work. They want to learn.

However, while the damaging effects of poor relations have been radically reduced, many organisations are failing to secure the positive benefits that are available from improving them. Economic pressures dictate that organisations will change more frequently than in the past. Technology and

the demand for customised services are shifting managerial focus towards knowledge management and people as their key differentiators. This will require substantial changes in the understanding and behaviour of the people who work in organisations.

Employees will need to extend their skills and use them more effectively. But change initiatives often fail to deliver the results expected of them, largely because people issues have been neglected or not fully thought through. The test of employment relationships in the future will be their effect on managing change and eliciting employees' willing contribution. 2.

**EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS** From the beginning of organized work activity when first one person directed the work of others, the subject of industrial relations

Until the end of the 1970s, the acceptance of adversarial industrial relations, and therefore the need to resolve conflict, as being the natural order led both management and unions to develop collective bargaining to a fine art. At the end of the 1970s, the employee relations entered into a new era. Disorderly collective bargaining played its part in bringing down the elected government and marked the start of a new era during which much of the legislation underpinning trade union influence was removed and replaced by new legislation limiting the scope for damaging industrial action.

Instead, a growing coalition of interests aimed at the maintenance of industrial peace and price stability in the context of substantial inward investment resulted in their making social partnership work at the national level. Similarly, in other major countries in Europe, social partnership at national level did not break down in the way in which it did in the UK. There

is no doubt that attitudes to work and relationships at work have changed since the year 1970s.

The driving force for much change has been economic and the agenda has been framed by managers. Working patterns and practices have become more flexible and managers are using people more effectively. The term ‘Employee Relations’ was conceived as a replacement for the term ‘Industrial Relations’. Industrial relations is generally understood to refer the relationship between employers and employees collectively. The decline of industrial relations can be measured on number of different dimensions.

From peak of some 12 million plus union memberships has fallen to around 7 million today. Between 1980 and 2000, the coverage of collective agreements contracted from over three-quarters to under a third of employed workforce. At the same time, the range of issues over which bargaining took place decreased massively. The content of collective bargaining has been reflected in a dramatic reduction in industrial actions since 1980. 3. IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

While there is widespread agreement that changes in the international economy associated with globalisation have important consequences for employment relations, there are fewer consensuses about their nature and significance. One view is that globalization has created pressures for convergence between different countries in regard to employment relations. Another is that national level institutions play a mediating role in maintaining cross-national differences, leading to divergence.

A third school rejects the convergence/divergence dichotomy and argues that complex interactions between global and national (or local) forces shape employment relations outcomes.

#### 4. CHALLENGES IN 21ST CENTURY

Customers have become more demanding. They want increasingly high quality service and they want to know that the latest technology at the lowest price is available. The achievement of business goals and financial returns is increasingly depend on delivery by organizations employees, where the employee relations play major role.

The communication is the glue that makes policies real when they are ineffective. Two-way communication in employee relations is highly necessary in today's situations. Getting communication right involves both professionalism and persistence. The qualities required include focusing on positive behaviours and outcomes, taking a positive problem solving approach, anticipating problems, recommending solutions and being able to offer sound advice to senior management on implementations. The ability to manage conflict remains a key issue for many organizations.

Mediations as a method or technique of resolving work place issues represents an important shift from the traditional industrial relations framework, with its emphasis on formal discipline and grievance procedures, towards more of a 'win-win' approach consisted with the philosophy of human resources management. Commitment and employee engagement are crucial to performance but they are not consistently high enough in HR- priorities. The employee information and consultation are helpful in raising the profile of employee voice and involvement.

More effort need to be put into training and supporting employees to achieve their job objectives. As examples, team-working and change management as the basis off establishing and maintaining motivation and commitment, is among one of critical role of employee relations managers these days. 5.

**CONCLUSION** Employee relation is maintaining employee – employer relationship that contributing to satisfactory productivity, motivating employees and ensuring healthy employee morale.

The most successful organisations are those which have constructive relationships with employees and a management approach which enables them to develop and draw on the full potential of their people. Considerable improvements have been made to the practice of employment relations in recent years. People are working hard and enjoy going to work. They want to learn. However, while the damaging effects of poor relations have been radically reduced, many organisations are failing to secure the positive benefits that are available from improving them.