# Work and Employability

## Chapter Summaries

Chapter One – Introduction to Employment Relations

* This chapter explained that employment relations (ER) is the term that covers industrial relations (IR), employee relations and Human Resource Management (HRM), including strategic HRM (SHRM), as they interact with each other.
* It discussed the various characteristics of the employment relationship, including how ER is complex, multifaceted and continuous.
* It outlined the main actors in the employment relationship, including state and government agencies, employees, trade unions, employers and employer associations.
* It discussed that ER can be analysed from a number of different theoretical perspectives (unitarism, pluralism, radicalism and corporatism), which have their origins in the ideologies underpinning IR, employee relations and HRM.

Chapter Two – The changing nature of work

* The key drivers of changes to work and employment are technology, globalisation, diversification of social values and economic factors such as resource booms and busts
* The labour market in Australia is influenced by geographic, generational and gender issues.
* Economic and political systems influence the types of market economies and employment arrangements.
* There has been a push towards advanced work and high performance systems.
* Contemporary work arrangements include the strong use of contract and temporary workers, as well as part-time and casual labour.
* Flexible employment forms can leave workers excluded from entitlements given to permanent workers, such as paid leave.

Chapter Five – Managers, employer strategy

* Management is a third force between the employer and the workforce
* A number of theories have influenced how managers manage people and this has implications for combining an organisations business model with its employment relations strategy
* A significant part of management strategy is managing people in a cost effective and efficient manner. There are different forms of flexibility that managers can adopt, including forms of flexibility that will benefit employees.
* Managers can seek formal training from professional associations to assist them in developing their skills. Professional associations play a representative role in employment relations and offer a range of trade and business services to their members.

Chapter Four – employee representation

* Trade unions act as collective agents for their members to improve wages and conditions and are a representative form of indirect employee voice.
* Employees join trade unions for instrumental, ideological or behavioural reasons such as feeling obligated to join.
* The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is the national peak body for the Australian union movement and coordinates federal policies for the movement as a whole on a range of issues, runs test cases before industry tribunals, lobbies state and federal governments on issues of concern, runs training and education programs for union officials and represents workers in international bodies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
* The Australian union movement is involved in the international union movement through its support of ILO conventions and through affiliation with international counterparts e.g. CFMEU is affiliated with the ICEM.
* Trade unions have adopted different strategies to attempt to halt membership decline, including the servicing model and organising model, as well as forming alliances with community groups for achieving common goals.
* Trade union membership in Australia and other developed countries is declining due to a range of changes in the nature of work and the labour market
* Direct forms of employee voice have developed as a result of HR practices and replace the need for trade unions while still improving organisational performance and employee job satisfaction. Indirect and collective voice occurs through trade unions, joint consultations and collective bargaining.

Chapter Ten – Staffing

* This chapter defined human resource management as designing management systems to ensure human talent is used effectively and efficiently to accomplish organisational goals; organisations use both hard and soft approaches to attract, maintain and develop human resources.
* It discussed the importance of human resource management planning, including various objective and subjective techniques to forecast the demand and supply of human resources.
* It provided a detailed analysis of the various elements of the staffing process, including job design and analysis, job description, person specification, recruitment, selection and appointment; the discussion on job design centred on Hackman and Oldham’s job characteristics model
* It discussed the various forms and methods of job analysis, including the main characteristics of job descriptions and person specifications.
* It outlined that recruitment is a process which may alter its steps depending on the position but which is designed to attract the largest pool of suitably qualified and skilled candidates; this chapter reviewed the various ways in which recruitment can take place and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
* It discussed that selection is the process of allocating the best applicant to thee vacant position, and reviewed the validity and reliability of the various methods; whichever selection methods are used, the important outcomes is to secure the best person for the job.
* It briefly outlined the appointment process, which involves confirming key details such as start date, position, title, remuneration, reporting lines, location and conditions.
* It outlined that there are costs associated with selecting the wrong person for the position, including to the person appointed, the organisation and other employees – loss of reputation, increased turnover and burnout are just some of these.
* It discussed the global staffing options model, which outlines the different categories of managers, such as flexpatriates, expatriates, propatriates and globalpatriates, and provides an international comparison on recruitment and selection techniques on the US, morocco and Ireland.

Chapter Eleven – Learning and Development

* This chapter discussed that learning is a critical part of human resource management as learning contributes significantly to the processes of knowledge creation and the management of knowledge employees. The ability for organisations to attract, develop and maintain individuals with high levels of skill and knowledge is closely linked to the performance and overall success of the organisation.
* It differentiated between a learning organisation, which is a particular type of organisation which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself, and organisational learning, which is an activity or process of learning within organisations and is used to describe certain types of activities that take place in an organisation.
* It outlined the distinctions between learning, training and development. Differences between skills, knowledge, competence and self-efficacy were also discussed.
* It explained experiential learning and discussed the role experience plays in the learning process. Kolb’s experiential learning model and Honey and Mumford’s learning style models were discussed in detail. These models indicate that people perceive and gain knowledge differently, they form ideas and think differently and they act differently, which is important from a human resource development perspective.

Chapter Twelve – Performance Management

* Performance management is a process and control function used within organisations to improve and manage the performance outcomes of individuals, teams and the organisation.
* The performance management process incorporates all functions, processes and stages that occur in the organisation. There are five key functions of performance management, including orientation, performance appraisals, reinforce performance standards, managing performance and exiting the organisation.
* Performance appraisal is a formal review and evaluation of an employee’s job performance and productivity in relation to goals that have been agreed upon
* The performance appraisal of employees is used to support the continued high-performance of staff, their career development and the advancement of the organisation. Additionally, it can be used to assist in the achievement of the organisations strategic objectives.
* There are four critical steps to a successful performance appraisal:
  + Review the performance appraisal form for the position and write individual goals
  + Halfway through the appraisal cycle period, review the goals and other performance standards to ensure they are still relevant and on track
  + Conduct the performance appraisal interview at the end of the period
  + Implement any learning and development actions required and continue ongoing informal feedback
* It is important to consider the impact of cultural differences on appraising performance internationally. Consideration of Hofstede’s model could be helpful in designing a performance appraisal system that complements the culture in which the appraisal would be undertaken
* Managing poor employee performance should occur as quickly as possible once identified. Thee way in which poor performance is managed should be determined by the issue or incident that has occurred. Coaching should be provided when a performance gap is identified. However if, during coaching the poor performance gap is a direct result of the employee’s behaviour, attitudes or actions – which do not improve – then counselling should commence. Disciplinary action may be required in instances whereby unsatisfactory or inappropriate behaviour has been identified; however, all steps must be fully and comprehensively identified.
* It is important to manage absenteeism as it is very costly and a growing concern to businesses. Absenteeism is seen as a sign of corporate ill health and may lead to harmful workplace behaviour and decreased morale levels among employees.
* Common harmful behaviours in the workplace include bullying, harassment, misappropriation/misconduct and workplace violence. An organisation should provide strategies to prevent such behaviours from occurring. This chapter discussed in detail the best practice strategies to dealing with these behaviours.
* Managing the health and wellbeing of employees is vital to an organisations ongoing success. Poor management of the health and wellbeing of employees can be very costly to an organisation in numerous ways including a reduction in performance and an increase of absenteeism, and may lead to internal culture issues.

Chapter Thirteen – Reward Management

* This chapter defined reward management as the process by which organisations distribute financial or other rewards to employees
* It explained the importance of effective reward management systems, and of linking human resource strategies to the overall business objectives in order to enhance performance and drive the competitive success of the organisation, as well as to attract and retain key employees.
* It outlined motivation as a key element in reward management and how motivation is linked to the performance and retention of employees. The key elements in the motivation process were discussed, highlighting the importance of need identification and need deficiency. It also outlined the process by which goals are attained to lead to increased motivation or to reassess the need deficiency.
* We discussed the early motivation theories, including the scientific theory and the importance of monetary factors and incentives used to motivate employees. It also outlined the human relations theory, which focuses on individual needs and social aspects that influence motivation.
* It discussed the modern motivation theories, including content, process and reinforcement theories. Content theories focus on the nature of human needs and what motivates them and include Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, McClelland’s APA theory, Alderfer’s ERG theory, McGregor’s theory X and Y and Herzberg’s two-factor theory. Process theories focus on understanding psychological processes involved in motivation and include goal-setting theory, equity theory and expectancy theory. Reinforcement theories focus on the environmental responses and consequences that influence behaviour and include skinners reinforcement theory.
* It discussed several different approaches to pay strategies/structures, including fixed and variable levels, time, results, enterprises, performance, skill and knowledge and various flexible benefit plans
* It considered common problems and issues reward management can generate, including the various decisions that need to be made and the possible communications strategies that can help to overcome these issues.
* It outlines the most common international compensation approaches, including going rate balance sheets and local plus.
* It discussed the five-stage negotiation process (preparation and planning, defining ground rules, clarifying and justifying your case, bargaining and problem-solving and closure [settlement] and implementation) and the key elements and activities to each of the stages.
* It outlines seven factors that are critical to a successful negotiation:
  + Requires serious thought and preparation
  + Managing the negotiation, including self and emotions
  + Communication skills
  + Look forward, not backward
  + Separate people from problems
  + Focus on interests, not fixed positions
  + Adopt a win-win attitude

Chapter Eight – diversity and inclusion

* Diversity and inclusion are about creating a sustainable organisation through authentic partnerships with community, employees (and their representatives) and all stakeholders because an organisation is not remote and disconnected from its external environment and the pressure it exerts on it
* Inequality and disadvantage in the labour market are caused by economic and regulatory restructuring, a move to the services sector and discrimination relating the gender, age, race, culture and disability. There are different forms of discrimination that occur which must be eradicated through changing perceptions of the human dimensions of diversity.
* The key characteristics of the inclusive workforce are practices that value and utilise individual and intergroup differences in the workplace, cooperation with and contribution to the surrounding community, alleviate the needs of disadvantaged groups in the wider community and collaborate widely across national and cultural boundaries. Some of the benefits include increased creativity and innovation, enhanced organisational flexibility, lower absenteeism and turnover and higher retention.
* The dimensions of diversity are the personality, internal or primary, external or secondary, organisational and cultural dimensions.
* Diversity management is a process concerned with equity and fairness, which aims to improve the awareness of others that will lead to positive behavioural changes.
* Legal compliance is merely a starting point for successful diversity management and creating inclusive workplaces and must be supported with a range of other cases, including those based on social justice and business arguments.
* In Australia, equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws attempt to achieve equality of opportunity by outlawing discriminatory behaviour. Affirmative action (AA) laws target groups of people for privileged treatment to overcome previous discrimination.

Chapter Six – negotiation and conflict resolution

* This chapter defined negotiation as a process where two or more people share their concerns and interests to reach an agreement of mutual benefit.
* It discussed the importance of negotiation and how negotiation is central to our day-to-day lives. Successful negotiations are crucial to preserve and develop positive business relationships and also reduce stress and frustration in the workplace.
* It outlined key aspects in negotiations, such as interests and positions and the forms of negotiation such as distributive, integrative and mixed motive.
* It discussed the role of power, both personal and positional forms of power, and how power has both positive and negative effects on the outcome of negotiation.
* It explained the five negotiation styles (avoiding, competing, accommodating, collaborating and compromising) and how each style is dependent on either the concern for the substance of the negotiation and /or the concern for the relationship between parties.

Chapter Nine – Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

* Health and safety at work is not just about being accident free, but promoting the highest degree of all aspects of our wellbeing with commitment, system, consultation and culture.
* Employers (PCBU’s) and workers have a duty of care to everyone their activities affect requiring risks to be eliminated or managed.
* Everyone needs to know the procedures when things go wrong and how to manage any injuries so that workers can return to work as soon as they are able.
* Building a health and safety culture means looking inside and outside the workplace for ways to make health and safety second nature.