

## **Employee Relations**

The term 'employee relations' refers to a company's efforts to manage relationships between employers and employees. An organization with a good employee relations program provides fair and consistent treatment to all employees so they will be committed to their jobs and loyal to the company. Such programs also aim to prevent and resolve problems arising from situations at work.

Employee relations programs are typically part of a human resource strategy designed to ensure the most effective use of people to accomplish the organization's mission. Human resource strategies are deliberate plans companies use to help them gain and maintain a competitive edge in the marketplace. Employee relations programs focus on issues affecting employees, such as pay and benefits, supporting work-life balance, and safe working conditions.

### **Importance of Employee Relations - Why Employee Relations at Workplace?**

Every individual at the workplace shares a certain relationship with his fellow workers. Human beings are not machines who can start working just at the push of a mere button. They need people to talk to, discuss ideas with each other and share their happiness and sorrows. An individual cannot work on his own, he needs people around. If the organization is all empty, you will not feel like sitting there and working. An isolated environment demotivates an individual and spreads negativity around. It is essential that people are comfortable with each other and work together as a single unit towards a common goal. It is important that employees share a healthy relation with each other at the work place.

### **The reasons why employee relations are important in an organization:**

☐ There are several issues on which an individual cannot take decisions alone. He needs the guidance and advice of others as well. Sometimes we might miss out on important points, but our fellow workers may come out with a brilliant idea which would help us to achieve our targets at a much faster rate. Before implementing any plan, the pros and cons must be evaluated on an open forum where every employee has the right to express his opinions freely. On your own, you will never come to know where you are going wrong, you need people who can act as critic and correct you wherever you are wrong. If you do not enjoy a good relation with others no one will ever come to help you.

☐ Work becomes easy if it is shared among all. A healthy relation with your fellow workers would ease the work load on you and in turn increases your productivity. One cannot do everything on his own. Responsibilities must be divided among team members to accomplish the assigned tasks within the stipulated time frame. If you have a good rapport with your colleagues, he will always be eager to assist you in your assignments making your work easier.

☐ The organization becomes a happy place to work if the employees work together as a family. An individual tends to lose focus and concentration if his mind is always clouded with unnecessary tensions and stress. It has been observed that if people talk and discuss things with each other, tensions automatically evaporate and one feels better. Learn to trust others, you will feel relaxed. One doesn't feel like going to office if he is not in talking terms with the person sitting next to him. An individual spends around 8-9 hours in a day at his workplace and practically it is not possible that one works non stop without a break. You should have people with whom you can share your lunch, discuss movies or go out for a stroll once in a while. If you fight with everyone, no one will speak to you and you will be left all alone. It is important to respect others to expect the same from them.

☑ An individual feels motivated in the company of others whom he can trust and fall back on whenever needed. One feels secure and confident and thus delivers his best. It is okay if you share your secrets with your colleagues but you should know where to draw the line. A sense of trust is important.

☑ Healthy employee relations also discourage conflicts and fights among individuals. People tend to adjust more and stop finding faults in each other. Individuals don't waste their time in meaningless conflicts and disputes, rather concentrate on their work and strive hard to perform better. They start treating each other as friends and try their level best to compromise and make everyone happy.

☑ A healthy employee relation reduces the problem of absenteeism at the work place. Individuals are more serious towards their work and feel like coming to office daily. They do not take frequent leaves and start enjoying their work. Employees stop complaining against each other and give their best

☑ It is wise to share a warm relation with your fellow workers, because you never know when you need them. You may need them any time. They would come to your help only when you are nice to them. You might need leaves for some personal reasons; you must have a trusted colleague who can handle the work on your behalf. Moreover healthy employee relations also spread positivity around.

### **The Importance of Employee-Employer Relation:**

Employee relations can make or break an organization. Great employee relations will make a business successful in the long run. A good understanding between employees and employers is important to reduce industrial disputes. A positive relationship between employers and employees leads to higher motivation and employee engagement. When employees are happy, they are more productive. They will put more effort into their work, and this translates into satisfied customers and more revenue. While developing and maintaining good employee relations can be challenging in most workplaces, healthy relationships among workers are beneficial not only to the individuals but to the entire organization. Managers should set a good example when it comes to employee relations. Managers who have a good working relationship with their employees help establish a culture that encourages great employee relations.

#### **1. Growth and Development**

A harmonious relationship between employees and employers contributes to economic growth and development, which then leads to an increase in efficiency. Greater efficiency, in turn, leads to higher productivity and growth. It is important to keep the employees motivated if organizations want to get the best from them. Workers lacking in motivation will reduce productivity in a workplace. When employees have a positive relationship with their managers, they will work more efficiently. They will put their best efforts (not the minimum effort) to ensure the success of the project. Organizations that have harmonious relationships will be able to ensure continuity of production. Proper use of resources ensures maximum production. Employees will be motivated to work hard, and this will help the organization grow.

#### **2. Reduction in Turnover**

Employee relations are the backbone of any business. Poor employee relations will affect productivity and result in high employee turnover. It is only when employees feel valued that they will use their skills and experience to the fullest to contribute to the growth of the company. Organizations that have good employee relations provide higher wages and other attractive benefits, making it in the best interest of the employee to stay. Even if the employee is not 100% satisfied with their company, they are less keen to suddenly abandon a company for another when they are happy with their work environment. A pleasant work environment improves employee morale and motivation. Most

employees who work in companies are in the high-retention-risk category. The critical skills that they possess help the company progress, and the cost of replacing a skilled employee can be extremely high.

Employees are less likely to leave an organization, however, if those skills are recognized and rewarded. It is the responsibility of the company to create an engaging work environment to make the employees feel valued. The cost of recruitment, hiring, and training will come down with lower employee turnover.

### 3. Employees Have Extensive Knowledge of Company Practices

The reduction in turnover ensures that employees stay with a company for longer, which enables them to gain extensive knowledge of company policies, practices, and processes. Employees with substantial institutional knowledge are an excellent resource. They are highly skilled, very efficient, and can provide training for new employees. Most companies find it hard to replace experienced employees, and this is especially true in industries that rely on employees with highly specialized skills.

### 4. Enhanced Motivation

Disengaged employees can cost organizations millions of dollars in lost productivity. Companies that have engaged workers experience higher productivity. Organizations need to ensure that their workers feel empowered and appreciated to increase morale and motivation.

### 5. Increase in Revenue

Great employee relations will have a positive impact on the growth and revenue of a company. The benefits of a happier, healthier work environment are not only felt within the business but by the customer or end-user, too. Having more engaged and motivated employees tends to result in greater customer satisfaction and better products and services, which also tends to point to an increase in sales.

### 6. Conflict Reduction

Workplace issues and conflicts are common. Conflicts are inevitable in any organization and can range from complaints about discriminatory employment practices to working conditions. Conflicts at the workplace will have an adverse impact on the productivity of a company and are likely to contribute to an environment of distrust between employees and employers, which can affect efficiency.

Investigating, mediating, and resolving employee complaints will help create a good work environment, which will reduce conflict in the workplace. Conflict reduction will help employees concentrate on their work and will increase productivity. Resolving conflicts becomes easier when managers work on fostering relationships with employees so that they are on the same page. Organizations that have fewer conflicts have higher morale, motivating employees to give their best.

Employee turnover also slows down when there is less conflict in the workplace. The work environment becomes stable and happy, which improves the overall work culture.

### 7. Employee Loyalty

A pleasant and productive work environment will have an effect on the loyalty of the employee, encouraging a loyal workforce. Companies that have such a workforce will be able to improve employee retention. The most valuable asset of a company is its employees. The success of the company will depend on how they work. If they are engaged and motivated, they will strive to meet

the expectations of the company. A strong employee and employer relationship will benefit the employee and the organization as a whole.

Great employee relations are the key to success for any company. Regardless of the size and number of employees, all businesses need to pay attention to employee relations. This will help them achieve success. Employee relations are important, as the success of an organization is highly dependent on the engagement and productivity of the workforce.

Investing in employee relations is as important as investing in any other business practice. Well-managed employee relations will help deal with the challenges and changing of any business environment.

### **Employee Relations Tools**

The responsibilities of an employee relations specialist include everything from determining whether the company's performance management system is appropriate for the workplace size and employee occupations to planning an employee recognition banquet. Specialized tools allow the employee relations specialists to stay up to date on the latest staff viewpoints and workforce trends.

- **Employee Opinion Surveys**

One of the most valuable tools for employee relations specialists is an employee opinion survey. These surveys have two functions: They measure the workplace climate in terms of employee satisfaction and they serve as a tool to create action plans for managers in modifying work conditions to improve overall job satisfaction. Questions examine employee opinion in specific areas such as compensation and benefits; general employee opinion survey questions ask for feedback from employees on a variety of workplace issues, such as leadership, performance, pay and overall work attitudes.

- **Training Aids**

Supervisors and managers frequently consult employee relations specialists for advice on how to determine when to administer employee discipline or when to consider termination. Before effecting decisions concerning the employment relationship, leadership training may be in order. The benefits of leadership training are improved relationships between supervisors and their employees as well as more effective workforce management skills. When employee relations specialists are called on to help improve supervisor and manager performance, they general use one-on-one guidance based on their expertise supplemented by materials such as tapes and books.

- **Legal Resources**

Employee relations specialists keep current on labor and employment laws, as well as legislation that can potentially affect the work environment. Therefore, legal resources available for researching labor and employment laws are an oft-used employee relations tool. Legal resources include subscription-based services as well as publicly available resources such as legislative summaries and news feeds. In addition, knowledge of labor and employment laws permits employee relations specialists to perform the basic duty for which they are hired: protect the interests of the employer while maintaining a productive employer-employee relationship. Although legal counsel is another resource for employee relations specialists, too-frequent dependence on legal counsel can drive up employer costs.

- **Human Resource Information Systems**

Human resources information systems are tools employee relations specialists use regularly. HRIS generate employee census reports and assist employee relations specialists in analyzing workforce

trends, compensation structure, pay practices and recruitment and selection processes. Annual reports to federal agencies such as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration are based on data compiled and stored via complex HRIS.

- **Departmental Expertise**

Employee relations specialists are usually human resources generalists with a broad knowledge base. Nevertheless, despite their exceptionally broad understanding of topics such as compensation, safety, recruitment and employee development, they rely heavily on the expertise of HR department employees who handle employee issues in these areas day in and day out. An employee relations tool, therefore, is the expertise of colleagues who lend additional expertise and knowledge whenever required.