

Employee and Labor Relations in HRM

1. What are Employee and Labor Relations?

Employee and Labor Relations describe the relationship between employees, and between the employer and the employees. They include the contractual, practical, and emotional connection between the managers and their workforce. It also refers to an organization's efforts to create and maintain a positive relationship with its employees to keep them loyal and more engaged in their work.

2. Why is employee relations important?

To maintain positive employee relations, an organization must first view employees as stakeholders and contributors in the company rather than simply as paid laborers. This perspective encourages those in management and executive roles to seek employee feedback, to value their input more highly, and to consider the employee experience when making decisions that affect the entire company.

3. Examples of Employee Relations:

- **Workplace Conflicts** - Disagreements and disputes between employees happen all the time. Often, these are the results of ineffective communication. An HR department or employee relations manager will never please everyone, but if frequent conflicts come up, low morale is building and the issues will only get worse unless resolved.
- **Workplace Bullying** - When a simple conflict escalates into bullying, you've got a big problem. The consequences of letting this take place on the job are low employee performance, increased absenteeism, and bad brand reputation (not to mention legal action).
- **Workplace Safety** - If accidents are happening in the workplace, an employer may be held responsible for any injuries, medical leave, and lost wages. On top of that, the company will suffer from the high cost of lowered production.
- **Hour Issues** - When employees constantly complain that their hours are not getting counted correctly (or if managers suspect dishonest hour tracking from employees), it's time to get into the details of what is going on.
- **Pay Raise Requests** - Declining or ignoring pay raise requests is just asking for disgruntled employees and high turnover rates. Even if you do offer fair wages, fully consider each request to see if there is room to offer a raise (or other perks instead).

STARTER

Here are some word partnerships that apply to employee relations. Some of the letters are missing. Complete the words and then match them with the definitions on the right.

s dis m t n ¹

con ct of em m t ²

qu pay ³

pa n l ve ⁴

workp inj es ⁵

s ort-t m w rk g ⁶

disc pl n y and gr van e procedure ⁷

w k-re ted st ess ⁸

- a reduced working hours, usually when a company has a decrease in production
- b accidents that happen at work
- c to treat someone of either sex unfairly
- d the right for parents to take time off work to look after a child
- e the same salary for men and women
- f stress caused by negative factors in the job
- g procedure when an employee breaks the rules and what the employee can do if unhappy with a decision
- h written details given to an employee to confirm terms and conditions

Look at these questions, and choose the correct answer for each one.

1. Negotiations between employers and workers' representatives over wage increases and conditions is called:

- (a) collective bargaining
- (b) correctional bargaining
- (c) connected bargaining
- (d) corruptive bargaining
- (e) collapsing bargaining

2. If workers are unhappy with the way management is treating them, they may work strictly according to the rules of the company as a protest (with the result that production is slowed down). What do we call this method of protest?

- (a) rule with a rod of iron
- (b) work-to-rule
- (c) ruling the roost
- (d) ruling in favour
- (e) work-by-rules

3. Workers sometimes try to achieve their demands by not going to work and claiming that they are ill. What is the name of this form of protest?

- (a) a sickie
- (b) a sick note
- (c) a sickout
- (d) sick leave
- (e) a sickbag

4. When workers are unhappy with the management, they sometimes stop working and leave the company building as a protest. What is this action called?

- (a) a run-out
- (b) a skip-out
- (c) a hop-out
- (d) a jump-out
- (e) a walk-out

5. In order to make their workers agree to their conditions, the management of a company may prevent the workers from entering the building. What is this called?

- (a) a **kickout** (b) a **pushout** (c) a **blockout**
 (d) a **lockout** (e) a **knockout**

6. When there is a dispute between workers and management, a person who is not concerned with the dispute might be chosen by both sides to try to settle the dispute. What is this person called?

- (a) an **arboretum** (b) an **archbishop** (c) an **arbitrator**
 (d) an **archer** (e) an **arraignment**

7. What is the name of an employees' organisation which represents its members in discussions with employers about wages and conditions of employment?

- (a) a **job union** (b) an **occupation union** (c) a **vocation union**
 (d) a **work union** (e) a **trade union**

8. What do we call a company which you can only join if you are a member of a particular trade union?

- (a) a **limited shop** (b) a **full shop** (c) a **closed shop**
 (d) a **barred shop** (e) a **sweat shop**

9. Unions sometimes put pressure on management to keep their members in their jobs or employ more workers, even if the organisation doesn't need them anymore. What is the name of this practice?

- (a) **feather weighting** (b) **feather fanning** (c) **feather braining**
 (d) **feather bedding** (e) **feather dusting**

10. What is the name of an elected union official who represents employees in day-to-day negotiations with the management?

- (a) a **shop steward** (b) a **store steward** (c) a **factory steward**
 (d) a **workers' steward** (e) a **department steward**

11. Complete this sentence: Ordinary members of a union or organisation are known as _____ members.

- (a) **safe and sound** (b) **rank and file** (c) **cloak and dagger**
 (d) **collar and tie** (e) **moan and groan**

12. A union may stop workers from doing certain jobs, especially if they are not a member of that union. This is known as:

- (a) **restrictive practices** (b) **recumbent practices** (c) **reductive practices**
 (d) **reactionary practices** (e) **reality practices**