

## What are Employee relations and how to do them well?

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The average employees spends at least a third of their life at work. That is close to 90 000 hours of their lifetime. Work therefore preoccupies a large proportion of employee's thoughts. Maintaining healthy employee relations is also central to organizational performance. Because of this, the impact of an employee's relationship with their employer is vital to ensuring good quality of life. Rousseau,1989, and Schein,1965 postulated that the beginning of a good employee –employer relationship is a social and psychological contract. This contract consists of beliefs about reciprocal obligations between the two parties. How organisations fulfil or fail to fulfil this contract has an effect on the employees.

Industrial relations has been overtaken by employee relations as the measure for looking at employee-employer relationships. Unlike industrial relations which focuses on collective relationships, it focuses on both individual and collective relationships in the workplace, with an increasing emphasis on direct forms of representation. It places more effort in helping line managers to establish trust-based relationships with employees. Employee relations focuses on:

- conditions of the workplace
- Safety of employees in the workplace
- pay and benefits awarded to employees
- work-life balance
- rewards and recognition
- workplace conflict.

### Improving Employee Relations

The following issues must be taken care to improve employee relations:

- Management should display fair and just treatment towards employees.
- Ensure employee's jobs are not monotonous
- Maintain a continuous interaction with the employees.
- Reward employees for meeting and exceeding the organisations expectations.
- Encourage employee feedback.
- Provide employees with a competitive salary.
- Be approachable and friendly with employees

### Benefits of Good Employee Relations

- Heightened Employee Loyalty
- Increased Motivation

- Higher levels of employee engagement with their role.
- Greater productivity and less time lost.
- Morale levels throughout your workplace will rise, forging a strong team atmosphere.
- More competition, meaning more results and better performance.
- Fewer Chances of Workplace Conflicts
- Improves the Trust and Confidence
- Ensures a Better Workplace Culture
- Enhanced Work-life Balance

## Effects of Poor Employee Relations

When there is a fragile bond between the employee and the employer the following is likely to occur:

- Dissatisfied customers
- Decreased revenue
- High staff turnover
- Increased recruitment and training costs
- Loss of skills and experience

## How to Manage Employee Relations?

1. Ensure all conversations involve listening, dialogue and problem solving.
2. Be transparent with your staff about any changes to their jobs.
3. Train your managers in employee relations.

## Strategies to Improve Employee Relations

- Create an employee relations handbook to act as a blueprint for both management and staff.
- Have one short weekly meeting, rather than hourly checks, and then trust your staff to approach you if they have concerns.
- Do not show favouritism towards any employees and don't subject anyone to unfair treatment, either.
- If you're giving out an instruction, always explain it in the simplest way possible.
- Build a management structure that gives each employee a weekly one-to-one for around half an hour with their line manager or supervisor.
- Reward your staff with a benefits package focused on their wellbeing
- Celebrate employee success
- The employee of the month award is still a great way to single someone out for special recognition.
- Be honest and transparent with your staff
- Improve your communication.

## Conclusion

Employee relations is basically how you deal with your staff. If they are treated well, you can be assured that you will reap the benefits from hard-working staff who enjoy their work and value their employer.

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