**What is Employee Relations?**

**Definition:**
Employee relations deals with the formal and informal relationships of interpersonal nature that arise from management/employee interactions in working situations.

(Bennett R., 1997)

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**Elements of Employee Relations**

1. **Policies** of communication for improving cooperation between management and workers and the control of employee loyalty and the minimization of conflict.

2. **Systems** of communication for involving employees (e.g., in management programs and in the improvement of employee care).

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**Elements of Employee Relations**

3. **Strategies** for managing relations between a company and its employees.

4. **Procedures** of communication for securing employee participation in the management of enterprise.

5. **Communication practices** between management and workers in order to maintain harmony and respect.

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**EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

**WHAT EMPLOYEES WANT?**
The view taken by several companies seems to be that their employees want (and deserve):

1. **Meaningful work:** Employees need to feel proud of their work. They want suitable challenges and the freedom to pursue them. They want to be in the game, not on the bench.

2. **High standards:** They dislike losing organizations and don't want to hang around with losers.

3. **A clear sense of purpose and direction:** They want to read good and quality information. Timely, relevant, and meaningful (truthful) information is a must.

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**THE FUNCTIONS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

1. Getting (and keeping) the people solidly behind the organization's core purpose and objectives. In short, they are committed.

2. Letting people know through countless ways—that they're important. They are cared about—first as people, and then as professionals. They need to be respected.

3. Through personal as well as structured means, the communication practices must be able to support the performance of employees.

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**...WHAT EMPLOYEES WANT?**

4. **Internal systems** that support rather than impede their efforts, and freedom to pursue some things that are important to them.

5. **A good working conditions:** This means reciprocal caring, coupled with some sense of justice and an assurance they won't be taken advantage of.

6. **To be and feel competent.**
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS – PARTNERSHIP
CONTEXT MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:
1. Employee involvement for competitiveness.
2. Training, personal development and support.
3. Equality of opportunities.
4. Representational arrangements.
5. Forms of financial involvement.
6. Occupational health and safety in working environment.
7. Composition of the workforce.
8. Co-operation with change, including new forms of work organization.
10. Adaptability, flexibility and innovation.

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RELATIONS - MANAGEMENT COOPERATION PROGRAM
1. Commitment. This must be driven from the top. CEO is committed to the process, and this filters to the management team and, ultimately, all members.
2. Credibility. CEO have to do what they say they’re going to do and communicate their reasons. Employee communication vehicles allow CEO to share information about the company’s goals and objectives. Workers then feel they are an important part of the business.
3. Patience. It’s not going to happen overnight. It’s difficult for both management and workers to change.

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RELATIONS - MANAGEMENT COOPERATION PROGRAM
4. Empowerment. Work from the bottom up: People working on the floor know how to do the job best.
5. Communication - Publicize success. Let everyone know about successful accomplishments, but also be honest about failures.
6. Persistence. Don’t give up. Perhaps 5% of your workforce may not want changes; you can’t worry about them. Demonstrated successes help workers to change.

Internal Communications
The world of internal communications (IC) is evolving rapidly as organisations realise the positive impact effective communication and engaged employees have on business performance. Best IC practice and techniques can deliver more engaging and effective communications, boost employee engagement and demonstrate the ROI of internal communications.

Key internal communication benchmarks
• Roles and titles within the IC function still show significant variation, but standards are slowly emerging.
• Employee engagement is the biggest goal for IC professionals today.
• The biggest challenge IC teams face is managing information overload.
• Intranet and email are the most popular IC channels, and perceived to be the most effective.
• Demonstrating communication effectiveness and ROI is growing in importance for IC teams.

Key best IC practice
• Engagement is about being timely targeted and relevant - sending the right information to the right employee at the right time.
• Giving employees choice empowers, fuels engagement and promotes commitments.
• Personalisation improves perceived relevance, which boosts engagement.
• Social elements entice engagement, enable employee voice, and offer valuable insight into how employees interact with your content.
• Measuring and benchmarking are the key informed decisions that deliver sustainable employee engagement.
• Measuring engagement helps demonstrate the value of internal communications to the organisation.
Some Orientation Guidelines for Employee Relations

1. Orientation should begin with the most relevant and immediate kinds of information and then proceed to more general policies of the business. It should occur at a pace appropriate for the employee.
2. The most significant part of orientation is the human side; giving new employees knowledge of what superiors and coworkers are like, telling them how long it should take to reach standards of effective work, and encouraging them to seek help and advice when needed.
3. New employees should be "sponsored" or directed by an experienced worker or supervisor who can respond to questions and keep in close touch during the induction period.

Communication Program Should Follow a Systematic Approach

The steps are:
1. Determine communication training needs and objectives;
2. Develop communication training criteria;
3. Choose the communication trainer;
4. Develop communication training material consistent with the objectives;
5. Plan, implement, and evaluate the program.

Grapevine, refers to all informal communication that occurs in an organization.

"No less than 75 to 90 percent of information carded along the grapevine is factual. Everyone thinks the grapevine is only about rumors - it's not. An active grapevine is actually the sign of a healthy organization."

Beverly Davenport Sypher, University of Kansas (1998)
"Communicate WITH employees, not TO them. Interaction is important after formal announcements have been made."

Grapevines connect people to organizational goals, socialize newcomers to the network and help all employees make better sense of their environment.

Properly nurtured, the corporate grapevine can be a valuable asset → it can help you:
1. Get a feel for the morale of your organization.
2. Understand the anxieties of your workforce.
3. Evaluate your formal communication efforts and see if they are working.

Ignoring the grapevine or try to kill it → it will inevitably lead to:
1. Low morale.
2. Lower productivity.
3. Misinformation and misunderstanding.

The grapevine is a "very important source of information that grows out of office politics. By not participating in office politics in a positive way, employees may be stunting their professional growth, respect and trust."

"Trust is the most powerful tool an organization can possess. Without trust, simple fears, poor communication and many other natural human emotions can be the biggest obstacles to achieving business/corporate success."