

HRACUITY®
FOURTH ANNUAL
**EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
BENCHMARK STUDY**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** A Message from the CEO
- 4** Methodology and Study Terminology
- 5** Key Findings
- 8** Organizational Resources
- 13** Managing Cases
- 18** Issue Trends
- 20** Metrics and Analytics
- 27** Perspective on Capabilities
- 31** About the Study

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

When we launched this year's Benchmark Study in mid-February, we had no idea that the COVID-19 pandemic was about to unfold, drastically changing the way we all do everything. Over the last 4 months we have proudly watched HR and employee relations professionals take the lead in guiding their organizations through seemingly endless transitions, supporting employees adapting to innumerable challenges and charting complex strategies without a playbook.

We are grateful that so many ER leaders were willing and able to make this Study a priority during this time (and certainly understand the challenges of those who just could not participate this year!). I am proud to report that the result is the broadest Benchmark Study yet, with participation from more than 200 enterprise organizations, representing over 5.5 million employees globally.

This year's data reveals evidence of clear industry standards and widely adopted best practices that underscore the forethought and intentional efforts of employee relations practitioners to deliver a better employee experience. Trends illustrating the continued elevation of employee relations have emerged. Visibility and reporting structure of the function are changing along with a shift toward increased transparency with employees and a recognition of the importance of more advanced analytics tools and resources for ER practitioners, as well as resources to enable managers to be more effective leaders. Participants also provided new insights and perspective on specialization occurring within the function and on practitioners' capabilities.

Data also continues to emerge as a major force as organizations have begun to value and act on employee data. ER leaders are focused on bridging the gaps in knowledge, technology and analytics so they can effectively allocate resources, proactively identify risks, and drive business strategy.

We value our partnership with the employee relations community and are happy to share this report each year. We hope that it not only offers a window into the current state of employee relations but that it also empowers employee relations leaders to continue this important work, knowing that these efforts will lead to better and fairer employee experiences.

We hope you are all well and staying safe and healthy. We extend our appreciation to every ER leader who participated in the Study for their willingness to gather and share their organization's data and insights to help transform the landscape of the workplace.



Deborah J. Muller

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METHODOLOGY AND STUDY TERMINOLOGY

Methodology

On behalf of HR Acuity, Global Strategy Group fielded an online survey targeted to employee relations professionals at enterprise organizations in the United States with at least 1,000 employees via email, social media and an online panel. Participants included employee relations leaders from 207 organizations. This research was conducted between February 25 and April 7, 2020 and has a confidence interval of +/-6.8%.

Terms Used Throughout the Study

Employee Relations Professionals

Individuals who are dedicated to managing or working on employee relations matters.

Human Resources Business Partners or Generalists

Individuals who provide strategic or operational human resources support to business or functional areas.

Employee Relations Organizational Models

Centralized

There is a centralized team of employee relations professionals or a "Center of Expertise" responsible for managing employee relations issues and conducting investigations across the organization (this group does not have to be geographically centralized).

Mixed

There is a centralized group for managing some or most of the employee relations cases and investigations but field resources (HR generalists, business partners and/or managers) still manage some employee relations issues.

Decentralized

Employee relations issues are managed within the specific lines of business by HR generalists, business partners or employee relations professionals. Employee relations matters are not centralized.

Acronyms Used Throughout the Study

CHRO

Chief Human Resources Officer

COE

Center of Expertise

EEOC

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

ER

Employee Relations

ERP

Employee Relations Professional

FTE

Full-Time Equivalents

HR

Human Resources

HRBP/G

Human Resources Business Partner/Generalist

HRIS

Human Resources Information System

KEY FINDINGS

As political activism increases in and out of the workplace and global social movements change the way employees and organizations behave, the role of employee relations professionals has become more important than ever. As a result, the findings of this Study indicate that company leaders are dedicating more time and resources to their employee relations teams and these teams are beginning to standardize their processes and develop industry-wide best practices to support employees and organizations as effectively as possible.

This year's data includes input from more than 207 enterprise organizations, representing approximately 5.5 million employees globally and 3 million employees in the United States, a major increase from last year's Study. The numbers in this report represent data from the 2019 calendar year. The key findings from the research are below.



The number of employee relations professionals grew in 2019 but is largely expected to remain the same in 2020.

- As predicted in last year's Study, the number of employee relations professionals grew significantly in 2019 to .88 ER professionals per 1,000 company employees.
- More than half of employee relations professionals (56%) now expect employment levels to remain the same in the next 12 months. This stabilization could be a result of last year's hiring increase, though concerns over the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the US economy may also be a contributing factor.



As employee relations teams continue to operationalize best practices, industry standards are solidifying.

- Since last year's Study, there has been movement toward standardizing industry processes. Nearly two-thirds of employee relations teams (62%) now use a centralized employee relations model, and over half of the teams using a mixed model (57%) are currently considering transitioning to a centralized model. This suggests that the industry is beginning to standardize around centralization as a best practice.
- Over half of employee relations teams (59%) now have a structured process for conducting investigations, representing an 18-point increase over last year.
- Over half (57%) are also now conducting investigation trainings at least annually, a major increase since last year's Study. This suggests that companies are taking employee relations policies and processes more seriously and employee relations teams are beginning to formalize and institutionalize their best practices and conduct annual trainings.

KEY FINDINGS



Job specialization is increasing among employee relations professionals as the scope of many employee relations teams expands.

- The scope of employee relations continues to expand, with greater numbers of teams managing alternative dispute resolution (41%) and engagement initiatives (39%) since last year's Study.
- While cases are still primarily assigned by line of business, this year's data shows a shift, with increases in case assignment by subject matter and case type. This suggests that as employee relations teams grow and take on more responsibilities, ER professionals may be starting to specialize by subjects and case types.
- The number of case assignments by line of business decreased, suggesting an increased focused on neutrality, as assignments by case type or subject matter better allow for a highly-skilled neutral party to manage issues rather than an individual who is tied to the situation by line of business.



As the industry continues to develop best practices, company leadership is increasingly reliant on employee relations data.

- A majority of employee relations teams (52%) now report directly to the Chief Human Resources Officer or the Head of Human Resources, representing a shift away from reporting to the Vice President of Human Resources since last year. This highlights the growing importance of employee relations teams within organizational structures and an increased interest from company leadership in hearing directly from the ER team.
- There has been a notable increase in the number of employee relations teams who report their metrics to Compliance, Diversity and Inclusion and managers at their organization, again showing the increased interest in employee relations from a variety of departments.
- Respondents report a major increase in requests from leadership for tracking metrics, suggesting that tracking data is increasingly valued within organizations as well.



Though nearly all companies are tracking employee relations data of some kind, many still lack the tools to fully utilize this information.

- An overwhelming majority of employee relations professionals (92%) now track employee relations data, a major increase from last year.
- Large increases over last year in tracking employee history and time to conduct investigations suggest that employee relations teams are becoming more strategic in tracking data and are increasingly focused on thoroughness and effectiveness rather than simply how quickly they can close cases.
- But nearly one-fifth of those tracking employee relations data are not actually using it for anything, suggesting effective methods are still needed for tracking and analyzing employee relations data.
- Many respondents express frustration that their existing resources to track employee relations data are manual, bulky and time consuming, indicating a need for more effective tracking and management tools.



Access to an employee relations technology platform increases confidence and efficiency.

- Two-thirds of employee relations teams (64%) are using an employee relations technology platform to track issues, up from last year.
- Employee relations professionals who use an employee relations technology platform feel far more confident that they have the tools to do their jobs effectively than those who do not use one.
- These tools are increasing productivity and helping employee relations teams effectively take on more work, as the share of employee relations professionals handling 26 or more cases at one time is highest at companies using an employee relations technology platform.



Job performance, accommodation, and policy violation cases have increased, while the increase in sexual harassment cases seen last year has slowed.

- Case volumes related to job performance, accommodation cases and policy violations increased the most in 2019, while union organizing attempts, workplace violence, and theft/fraud increased the least.
- The biggest decrease in rising case volumes from last year was in harassment allegations. In contrast, last year's Study showed a 48% spike in harassment allegations following the #MeToo movement, as people felt empowered to come forward and report misconduct. In addition, last year's respondents identified the primary areas of focus to address #MeToo as training and investigation processes. So this year's decrease may be due to efforts made by organizations to rigorously address harassment claims in response to #MeToo.



Employee relations professionals are somewhat confident in their ability to do their jobs but express a need for predictive tools and resources.

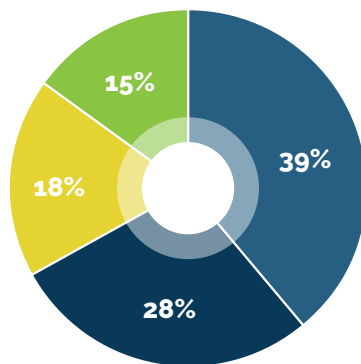
- Fewer than half of employee relations professionals (45%) feel very confident that they have the tools to work effectively.
- They are most confident handling policy violations, performance issues, and behavioral issues, and are least confident handling retaliation and discrimination cases.
- Employee relations professionals using a centralized model and technology platforms specifically for employee relations express more confidence than those who do not.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Participating Organizations

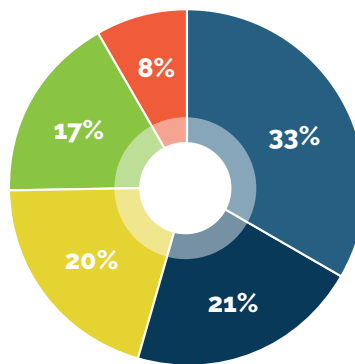
Respondents are all employee relations professionals and include Chief Human Resource Officers, Heads of Human Resources, Vice Presidents, Senior Directors, Directors, Senior Managers, and Managers, with the majority at the Director level or higher.

By Size



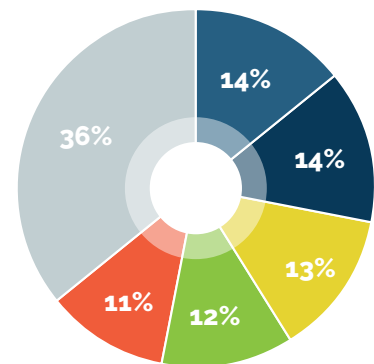
- 1,000 - 3,499
- 3,500 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 20,000+

By Revenue



- 100 million or less
- 101 - 999 million
- 1 - 5 billion
- 5.1 - 10 billion
- More than 10 billion

By Industry



- Manufacturing, distribution or construction
- Financial services or insurance
- Technology
- Health care or hospitals
- Professional or business services
- Other

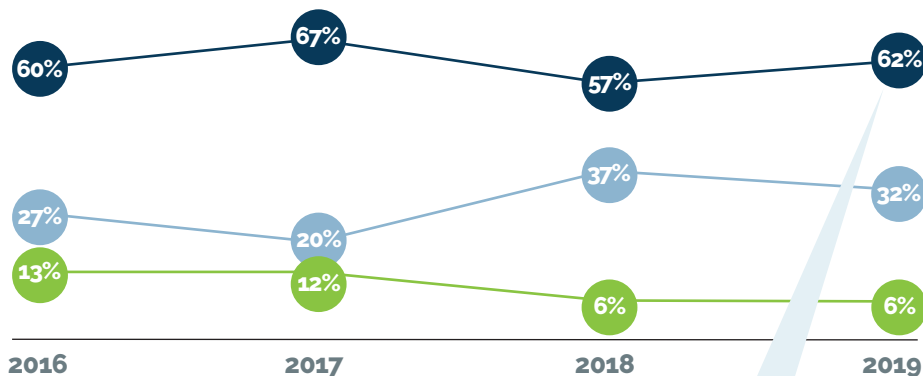


Organizational Model

Use of a centralized employee relations model has trended upward over the past year. Nearly two-thirds of employee relations professionals now report using a centralized organizational model, suggesting that the industry is beginning to standardize, and best practices may be emerging. As the number of teams using a centralized model has increased, the number of teams using a mixed model has decreased.

Current employee relations model

- Centralized
- Mixed
- Decentralized



With another **8%** expected to follow suit in the next 12 months.

Reporting Structure

A majority of employee relations teams now reports directly to the Chief Human Resources Officer or the Head of Human Resources, representing a shift away from reporting to the Vice President of Human Resources since last year's Study. This highlights the growing importance of employee relations teams within organizational structures and an increased interest from company leadership in hearing directly from the ER team.

Where the employee relations team reports

Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), or Head of Human Resources



Vice President of Human Resources (Director level)



Shared services



Legal



Compliance



Notable change
CHRO, or Head of Human Resources
+18
from 2018

○ Change from 2018

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Staffing Ratios

In last year's Study, nearly half of the participants said they expected the number of employee relations professionals at their organization to increase in the next 12 months. As predicted, the number of employee relations professionals did grow significantly in 2019. As in previous years, this data supports the concept of economies of scale where larger organizations use relatively fewer overall resources than smaller organizations.

To help organizations benchmark their resources relative to organizational size, we normalize the data by providing the median number of resources per 1,000 employees.

Staffing Ratios by Number of Employees (FTE per 1,000 employees - median)

Number of US Employees	Employee Relations Professionals	Human Resources Business Partners or Generalists	In-House Lawyers (dedicated to labor and employment matters)
OVERALL	.88 +21	2.60 +10	.39 +18
1,000-3,499	2.40	4.17	1.00
3,500-9,999	1.00	3.00	.44
10,000-19,000	.72	1.86	.23
20,000+	.39	1.15	.14

Change from 2018

Staffing Ratios by Organizational Model (FTE per 1,000 employees - median)

Organizational Model	Employee Relations Professionals	Human Resources Business Partners or Generalists	In-House Lawyers (dedicated to labor and employment matters)
OVERALL	.88 +21	2.60 +10	.39 +18
CENTRALIZED	1.00	3.00	.40
MIXED	.65	2.64	.28
DECENTRALIZED	.62	2.05	.16

Change from 2018

In contrast to this growth in 2019, the number of employee relations professionals is largely expected to remain the same in 2020. This stabilization could be a result of last year's increased resources. Concerns over the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the US economy may also be a contributing factor.

Expectations for the number of resources in the next 12 months

Employee Relations Professionals

38% -5
INCREASE

Human Resources Business Partners or Generalists

31% +3
INCREASE

In-House Lawyers (dedicated to labor and employment matters)

18% +8
INCREASE

Change from 2018

Scope of Responsibilities

Employee relations teams handle a wide range of issues, and team members are largely trained to handle most or all of the issues that their teams handle. Policy violations, behavioral issues and discrimination cases are the most common. These numbers are in line with last year's Study for all issues except for accommodations. The number of teams handling accommodations dropped 15 points in 2019.

Issues handled by employee relations teams



○ Change from 2018



ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

The scope of employee relations continues to expand, with greater numbers of teams managing alternative dispute resolution and engagement initiatives since last year's Study. However, fewer teams are handling the analytics component than last year.

Additional functions managed by the employee relations team



Notable changes in issue management

INCREASE FROM 2018

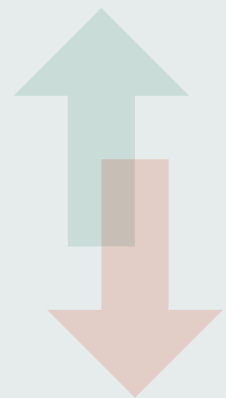
Alternative dispute resolution
+16

Engagement initiatives
+17

DECREASE FROM 2018

Employee relations analytics
-12

Accommodations
-15



MANAGING CASES

Case Volumes

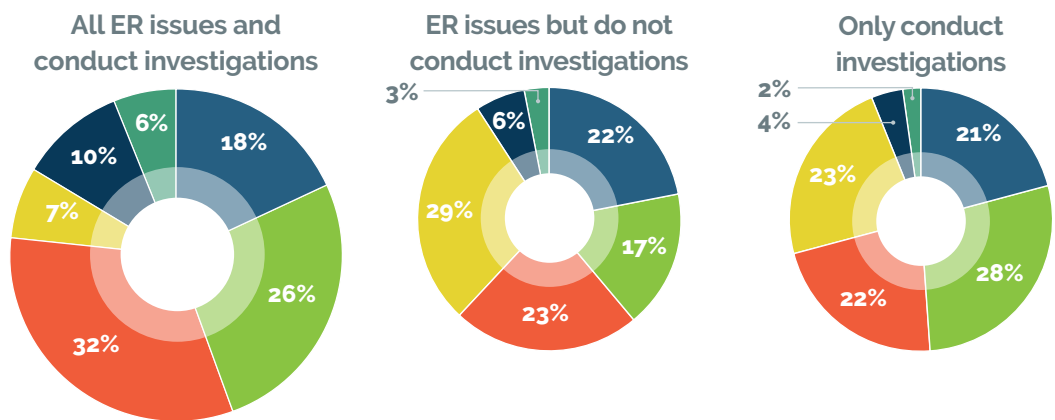
The vast majority of employee relations professionals handle six or more cases at any given time. Though the numbers have dropped since last year's Study, employee relations professionals who handle all employee relations issues and conduct investigations have the heaviest case loads.

Case loads are highest at large companies, likely because these companies also have fewer employee relations professionals per 1,000 employees than smaller companies. Organizations that use an employee relations technology platform also experience higher case volumes, suggesting that technology and analytics are helping employee relations professionals manage the volume effectively.

Number of Cases at ER Professionals Handle at Any One Time

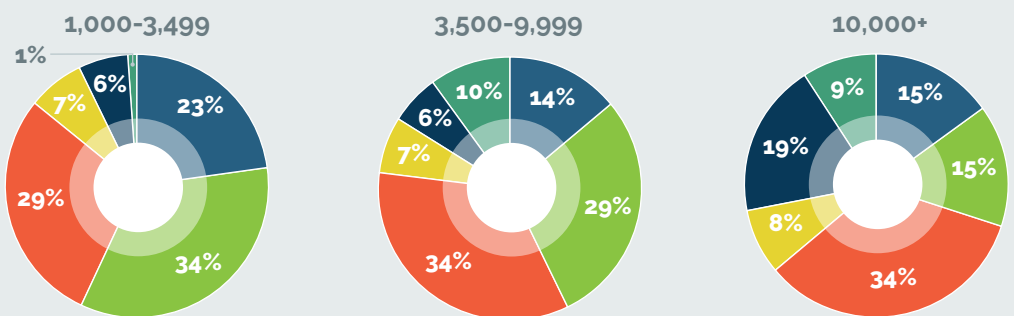
- 5 or fewer
- 6-10
- 11-25
- Not applicable
- 26-35
- 36 or more

By Scope of Role

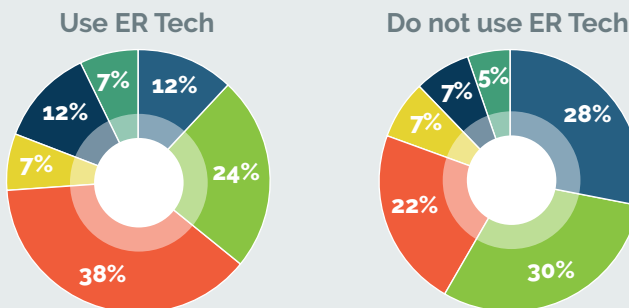


A Deeper Look at the Data

By Number of Employees*



By Technology Platform*



* This data is for ER professionals who handle all ER issues and conduct investigations

MANAGING CASES

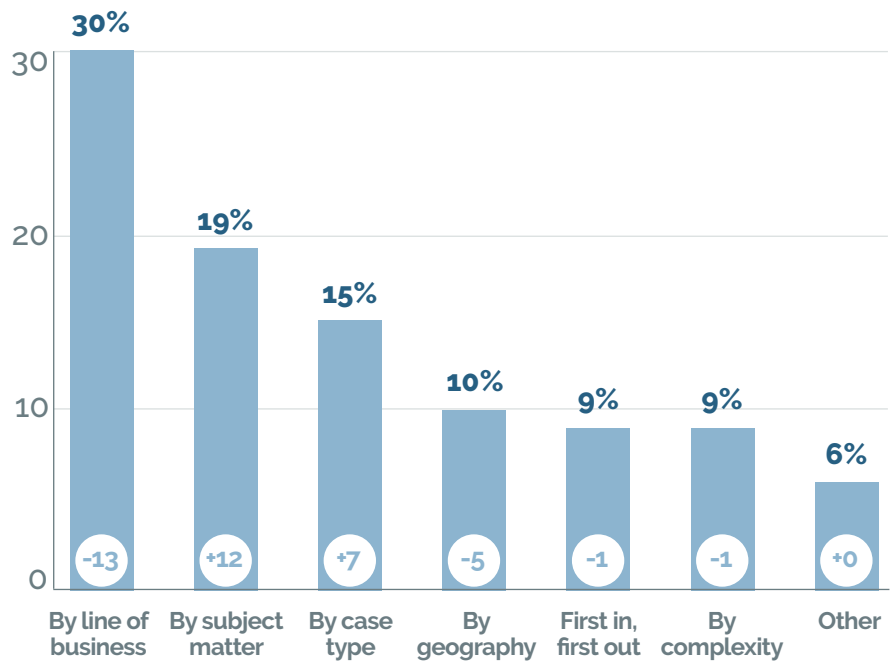
Case Assignments

While cases are still primarily assigned by line of business, this year's data shows a shift, with increases in case assignments by subject matter and case type. This suggests that ER professionals may be starting to specialize in certain issues. The decrease in case assignments by line of business may also suggest an increased focus on neutrality, as assignments by case type or subject matter better allow for a highly-skilled neutral party to manage issues rather than an individual who is tied to the situation by line of business.

Time to Close

More common and widely handled cases like time and attendance issues and leave management issues are generally handled quickest, while sexual and non-sexual harassment, discrimination and retaliation cases often take at least several weeks.

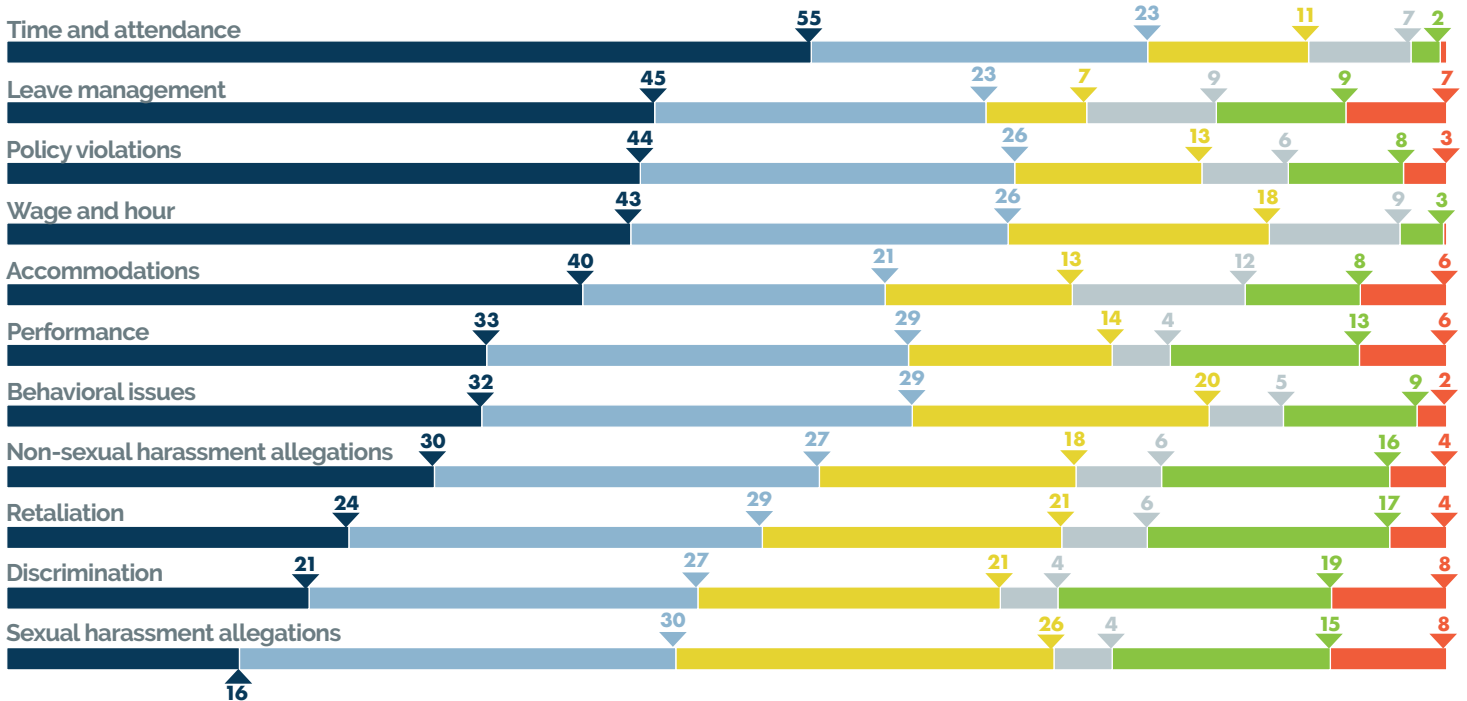
Primary method for assigning cases on the employee relations team



○ Change from 2018

Length of time cases are typically open

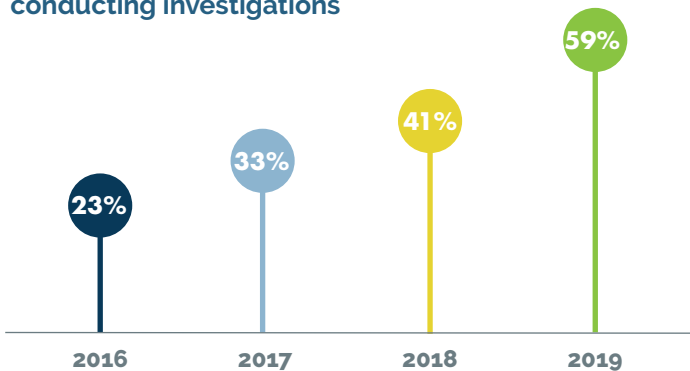
■ 5 or fewer ■ 6-10 ■ 11-25 ■ Not applicable ■ 26-35 ■ 36 or more



Investigation Practices

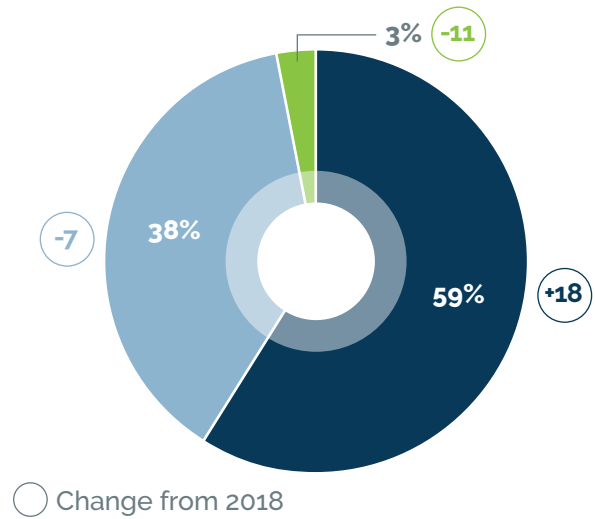
The transition to required, structured investigation practices has grown every year since 2016 and 2019 was no exception. Over half of employee relations teams now have a structured process for investigations, representing an 18-point increase over last year. This far exceeded the 10% in last year's Study who said they intended to switch to a required investigation process in 2019.

Organizations with a required, structured process for conducting investigations



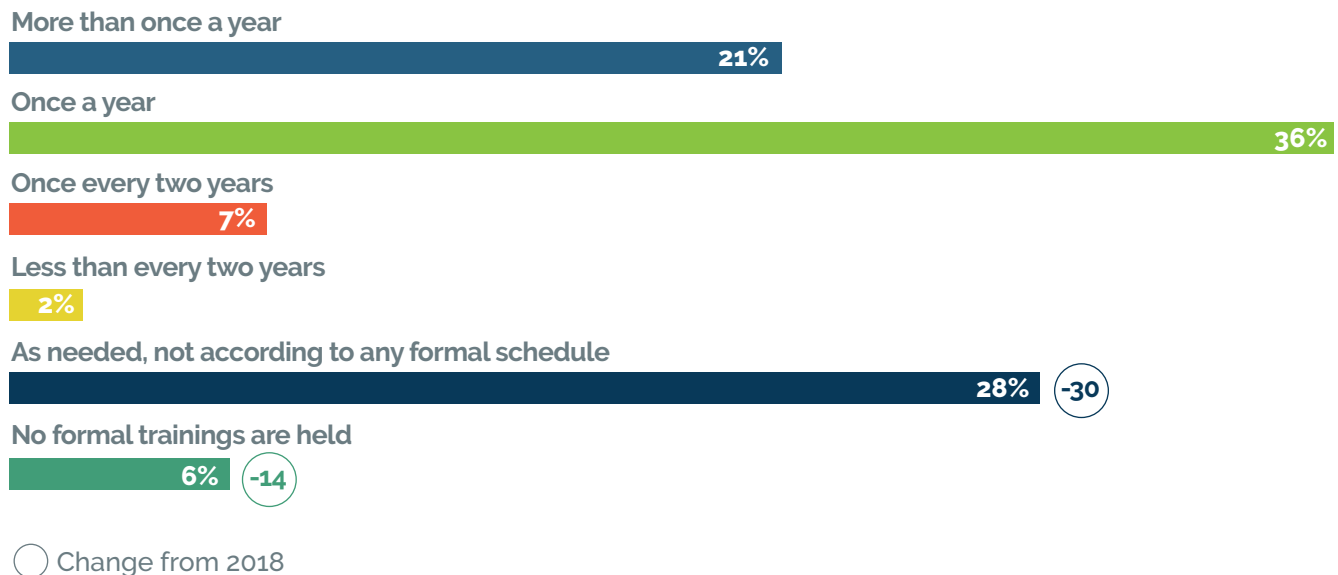
Required Investigation Processes

- The organization has a required, structured process for conducting investigations
- The organization provides a suggested process for conducting investigations, but it is not required
- The organization has no specific guidelines or processes for conducting investigations



Over half of employee relations teams are also now conducting investigation trainings at least annually, a major increase since last year's Study. This suggests that companies are taking employee relations policies and processes more seriously and are beginning to formalize and institutionalize employee relations best practices for conducting investigations.

Frequency of investigation trainings

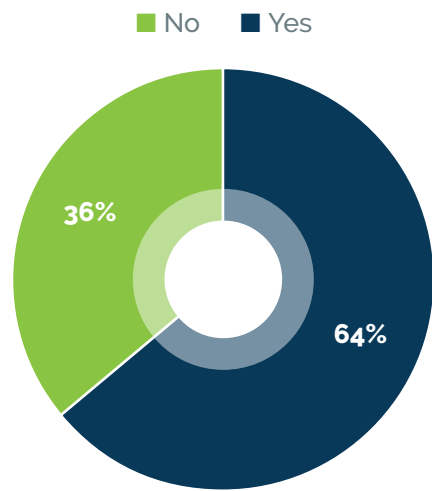


MANAGING CASES

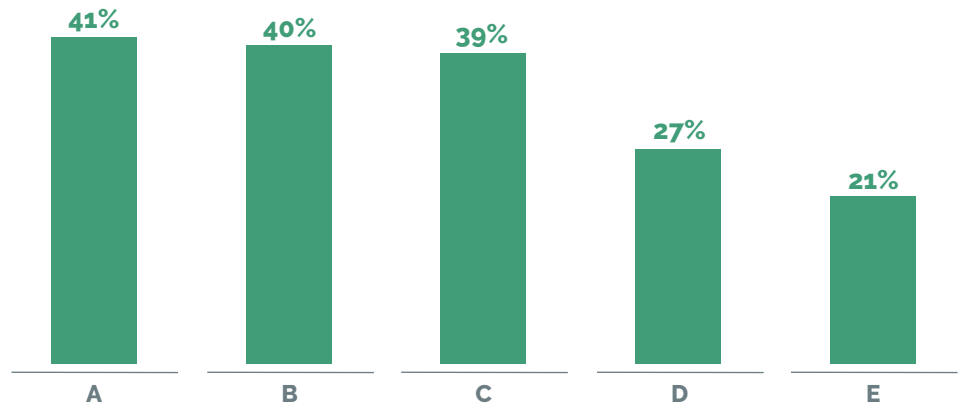
Employee Relations Tracking

Two-thirds of employee relations teams are now using a technology platform to track employee relations issues. A plurality of teams is using an employee relations technology platform, though many are still using Excel, basic databases and HRIS solutions to track employee relations data. Many teams are actually using more than one of these tools to track issues and investigations.

Does your organization use any sort of employee relations and investigation technology platform to track issues and investigations?



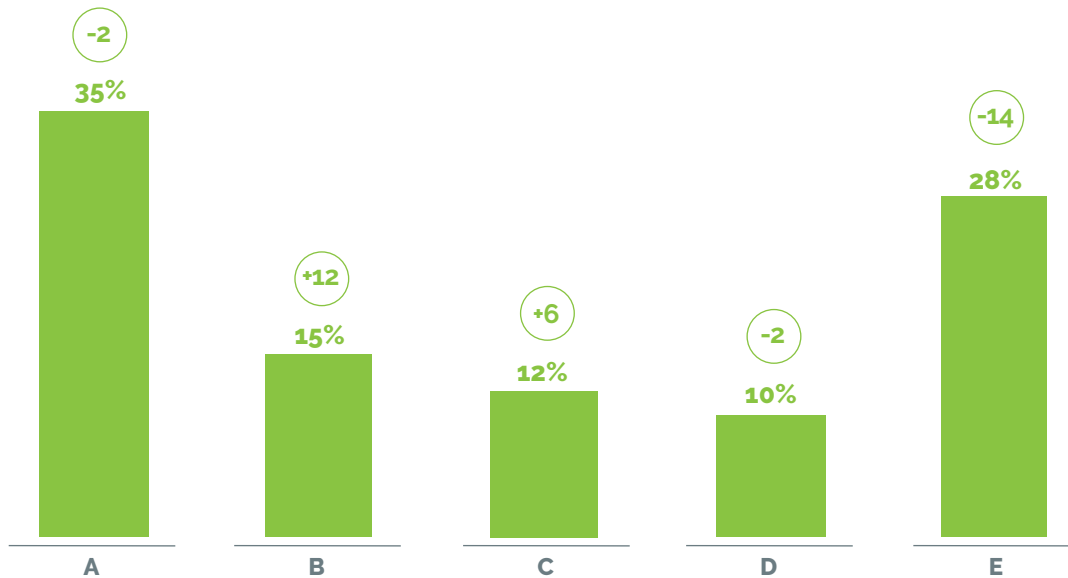
Primary tracking method



- A. Employee relations technology platform (e.g. HR Acuity, i-Sight, etc.)
- B. Spreadsheets or basic database (e.g. Excel, Access, SharePoint, etc.)
- C. HRIS (e.g. ADP, Oracle, Ultimate, Workday, etc.)
- D. Hotline (e.g. EthicsPoint, Navex, etc.)
- E. Ticketing system (e.g. Salesforce.com, ServiceNow, etc.)

In line with the increased standardization of processes we are seeing industry wide, there has been a shift since last year's Study toward using a centralized system for storing employee relations documentation. Half of all teams now store documentation in a case management system or with the centralized HR team, while there has been a decrease in teams who use a less structured, mixed system.

Primary system of storing employee relations documentation



- A. Documents stored in a case management system
- B. Documents are sent to a centralized HR team for filing
- C. Human Resources Business Partners and/or Employee Relations Professionals maintain their own documentation
- D. Documents are uploaded and stored on a shared drive
- E. Mixed, some combination of personal storage, shared drive, central filing or case management system

Change from 2018

Common benefits cited by those using employee relations technology for tracking:

"It is **simple** to integrate and **workforce-friendly**."

"**Easy** to keep track of information and store it **safely**."

"It allows our organization to track employee-related issues **easily and efficiently**."

"It is **unique, innovative**, has the features we need, **easy to use**, and **quite efficient**."

ISSUE TRENDS

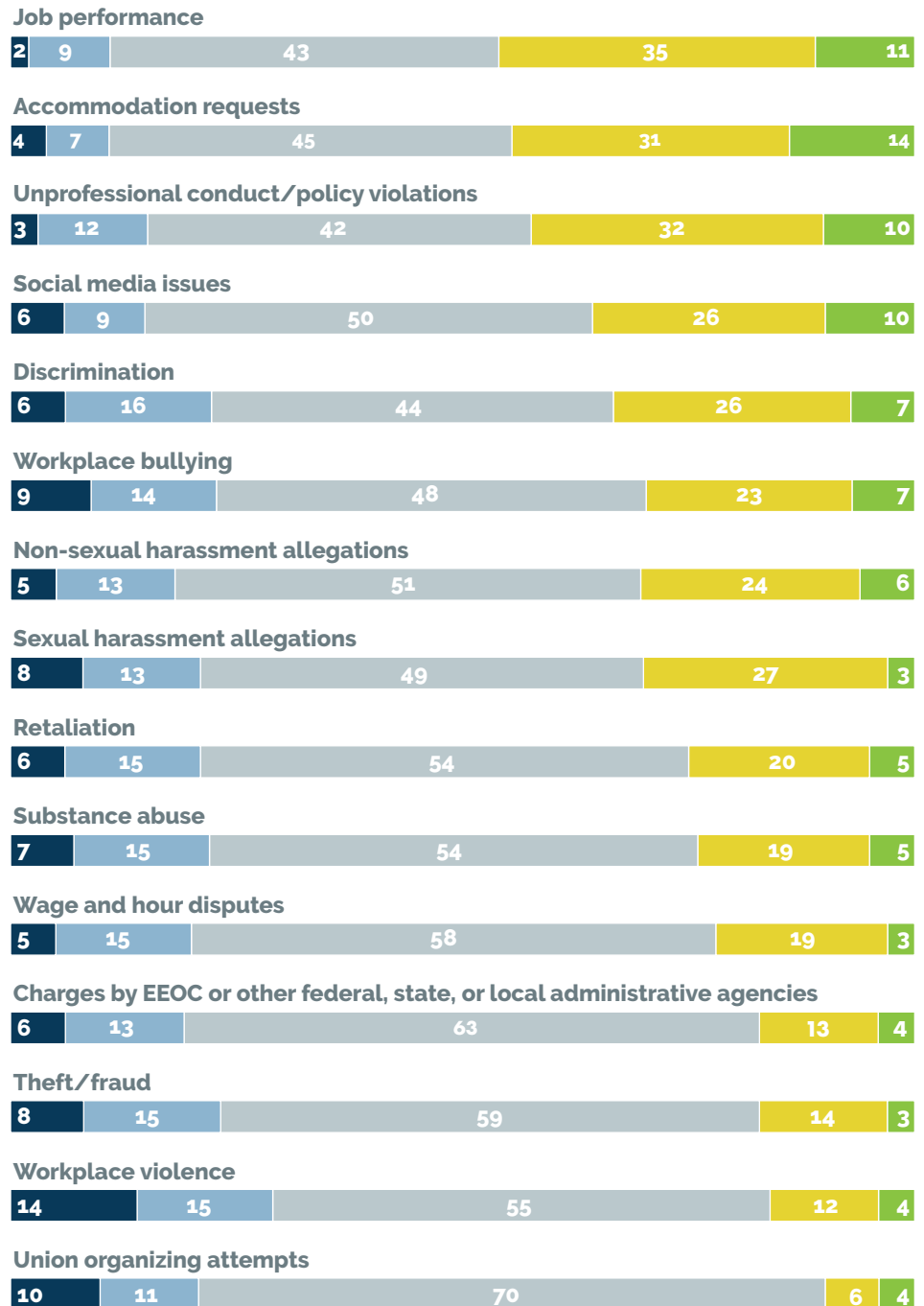
Issue Trends

Job performance, accommodation requests and policy violations increased the most in 2019, while union organizing attempts, workplace violence, and theft/fraud increased the least.

Last year's Study showed a 48% spike in harassment allegations due to the #MeToo movement, as employees felt more empowered to come forward and report misconduct. In addition, last year's respondents indicated they were most focused on improving training and investigation processes to address #MeToo. This year, the biggest decrease in rising case volumes was in harassment allegations, perhaps due to efforts made by organizations to adapt their investigation processes in order to rigorously address harassment claims in response to #MeToo.

Volume of cases by issue type

■ % Significant decrease
 ■ % Some decrease
 ■ % The same
 ■ % Some increase
 ■ % Significant increase



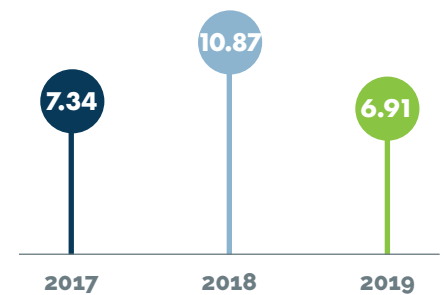
Issue Volume

Job performance cases continue to be the most common issues handled by employee relations professionals. Following last year's spike in the number of harassment cases, the number of discrimination, harassment and retaliation allegations has dropped back down to levels even lower than the volume in 2017.

Number of cases handled in 2019 (average per 1,000 employees)

ISSUE CATEGORY	Average number per 1,000 employees
Performance Issues (e.g., performance counseling or discussion with employee, performance advising or coaching with manager or supervisor, performance documentation, performance employee rebuttal, etc.)	61.94
Policy Violations (e.g., Inappropriate use of social media, workplace violence, electronic communication, code of conduct, confidentiality, theft, fraud, falsification, attendance, substance abuse, etc.)	28.73
Behavioral Issues (e.g., unprofessional conduct, inappropriate behavior, bullying, non-protected harassment, insubordination, conflicts between co-workers, etc.)	20.14
Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation allegations	6.91
EEOC or other federal/state/local agency changes	3.2

Average Number of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Allegations Per 1,000 Employees



Notable change

Up from
1.29
in 2018

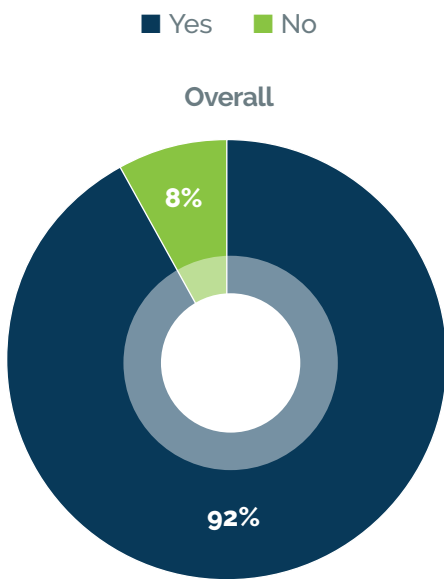


METRICS AND ANALYTICS

Tracking Overview

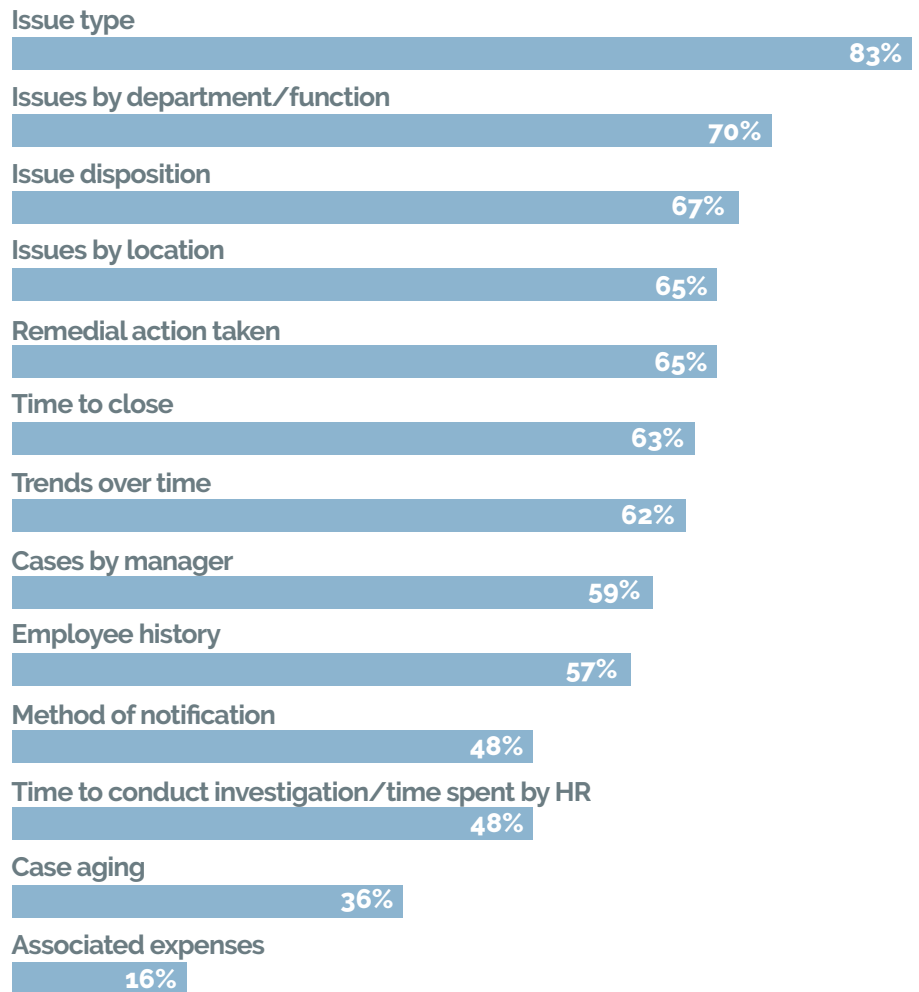
The number of employee relations professionals tracking ER and investigation data continues to grow year to year and an overwhelming majority is now tracking this data. That said, the number is lower for organizations using a decentralized model, which may suggest that use of a centralized organizational model makes tracking easier.

Do teams track employee relations and investigation data?



While over two-thirds of teams continue to track data related to issue type and department, there are indications that the focus of tracking is beginning to shift. Large increases over last year in tracking employee history and time to conduct investigations, along with a big decrease in focus on case aging, suggest that employee relations teams are becoming more strategic about tracking data and are increasingly focused on thoroughness and effectiveness rather than simply how quickly they can close cases.

Types of employee relations data currently tracked



Tracking Best Practices and Challenges

Many employee relations teams aim to use tracking data to design better trainings and resources for employees and managers, proactively identify risk, inform cultural and inclusion efforts, and educate leaders about key trends.

Here are some best practices and examples of how teams are using ER analytics:



METRICS AND ANALYTICS

Respondents cited challenges with existing systems or generic technology for reporting employee relations analytics:

“The biggest challenges are the lack of automation and the manual data clean up that has to occur before we can analyze the data.”

“It’s manual — Excel and homemade dashboards. A system would help but we can’t afford it yet.”

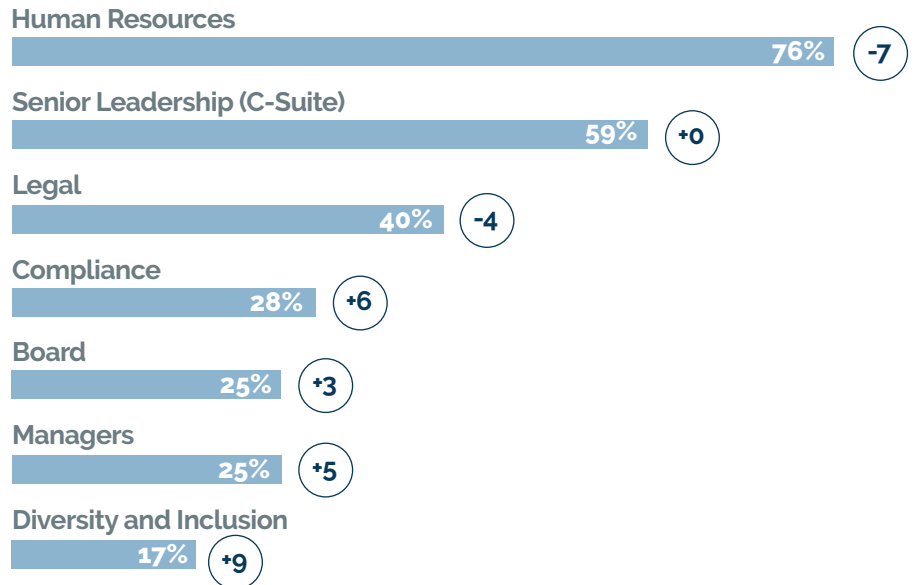
“Overall our system is challenging to get data out of, so it takes time and a bit of manual effort to make it workable.”

“All manual, subject to human error, spreadsheet technology with manually created updates and history.”

Reporting and Using Metrics

Consistent with last year’s Study, tracking data is most widely shared with Human Resources and senior leadership. But there has been a notable increase in the number of employee relations teams who report their metrics to Compliance, Diversity and Inclusion and managers at their organizations. This again shows the increased importance of employee relations data within organizations and increased interest in employee relations from a variety of departments. It also shows that employee relations teams are using data to collaborate more strategically company wide.

To whom in your organization do you report metrics related to employee relations activities?

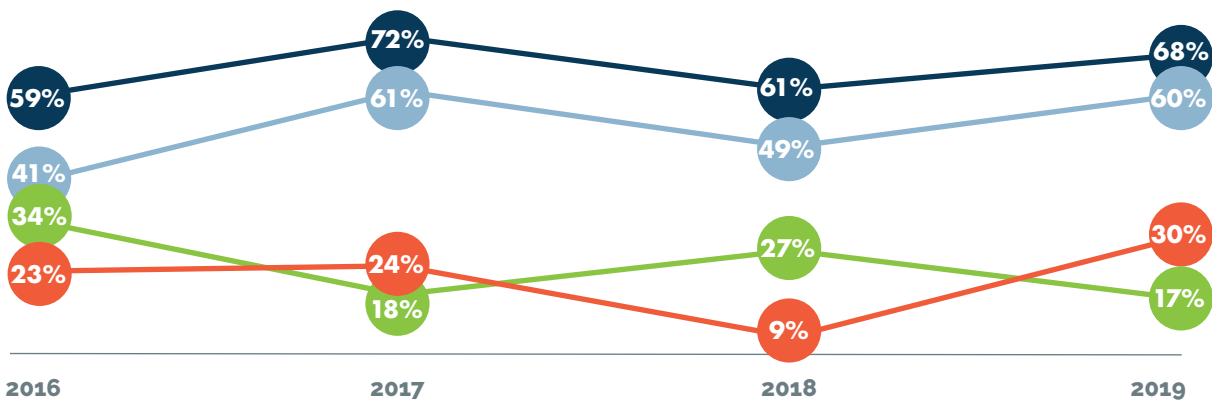


○ Change from 2018

Though employee relations teams are primarily using tracked metrics for data-driven insights and initiatives to create better policies, nearly one-fifth of employee relations teams are still not using their metrics and data for anything at all. This suggests that best practices are still needed for tracking and analyzing employee relations data.

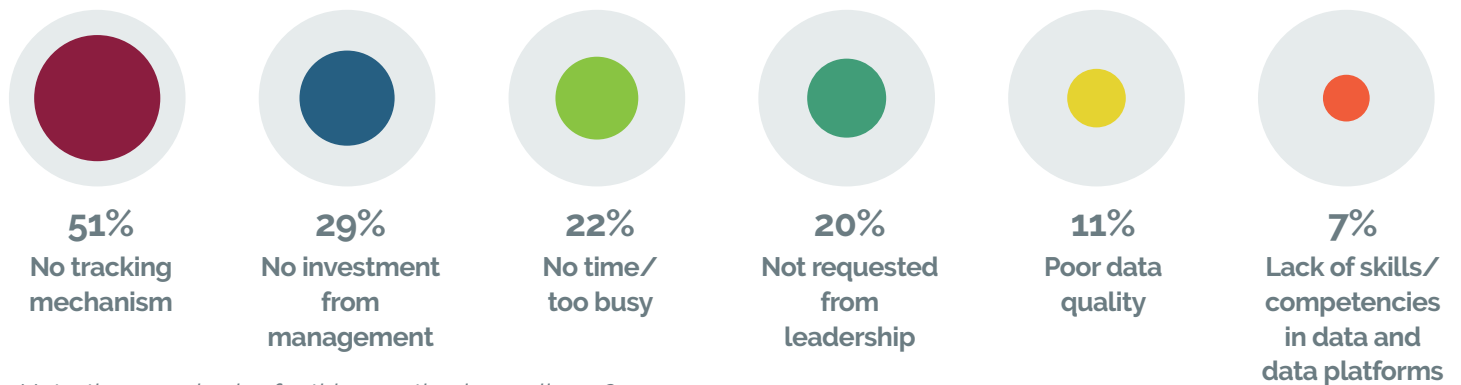
How metrics are currently used within the organization

- Obtained for more data-driven employee insights and initiatives
- Utilized to create better employee relations policies
- Used to construct predictive models of employee behavior
- Gathered, but not really used



While 38% fewer respondents cite poor data quality as a reason for not tracking, most employee relations teams indicate this gap is due to the absence of any tracking mechanism. There has been a major increase in employee relations professionals saying tracking metrics have been requested from leadership and major efforts have been made to improve data quality. This suggests that tracking data is increasingly valued within organizations, but some teams still lack the tools and resources to track effectively.

Reasons for not using employee relations metrics and analytics among those who do not track data:



Note: the sample size for this question is small, n=16

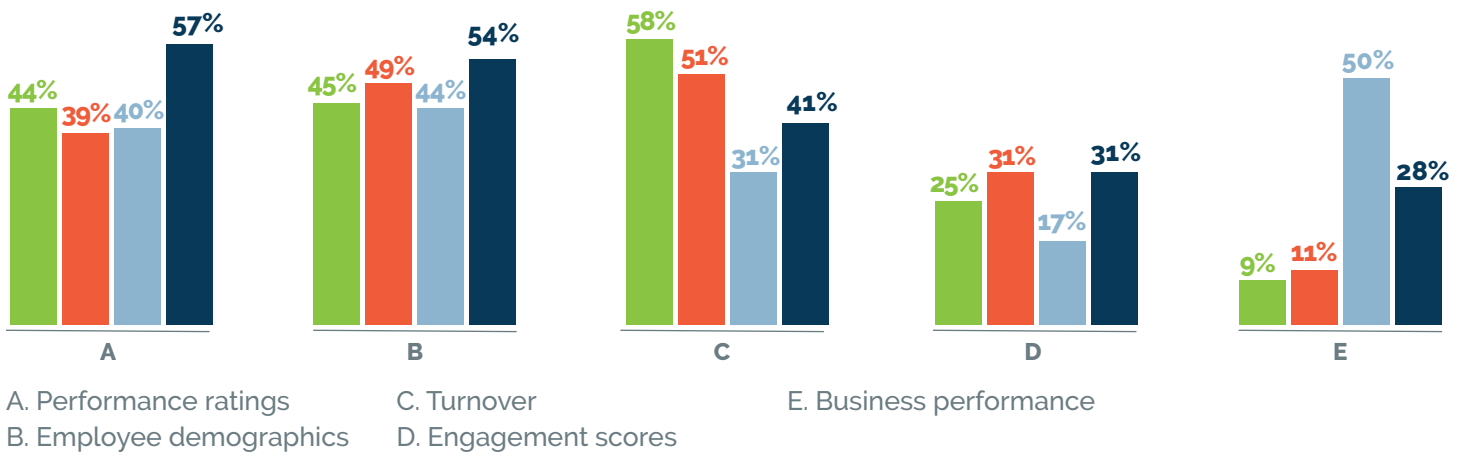
METRICS AND ANALYTICS

Integration and Advanced Analytics

This year's data shows that ER teams are more widely integrating employee relations investigation data with other employee data to optimize analysis, again showing increased buy-in and collaboration from other departments and a streamlining of employee relations practices. A majority of employee relations teams now include performance ratings and demographics when analyzing employee data.

Data integrated with employee relations investigation data for analysis

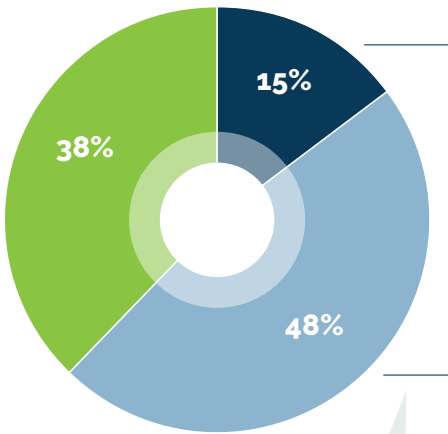
■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019



Nearly two-thirds (63%) of employee relations teams report they are either using their data for predictive analytics or artificial intelligence currently or are planning to do this in the future. This represents a substantial increase from last year's Study, when only 31% said they were doing this or considering it for the future.

Use of predictive analytics or artificial intelligence

- Yes, doing this currently
- Yes, plans to do this in the future
- No, not currently doing and no plans to do



TREND ALERT!
+32
 increase from 2018

Sharing Data with Employees

Though almost all employee relations teams track employee relations and investigation data, fewer than one-third share this data with employees, and large companies are even less likely to do so. Last year's *#MeToo in the Workplace* report showed a new trend of transparency developing, with 17% of organizations expecting to begin to publish harassment metrics in the coming year. The fact that 29% are now doing so indicates that these organizations are driving accountability and demonstrating to employees that allegations will be taken seriously. This trend in transparency will be important to watch in the future.

Do you share aggregated, anonymous investigation data with employees?

- Yes
- No

Overall



By Size

1,000 - 3,499 US employees



3,500 - 9,999 US employees



10,000+ US employees



Companies that are using an employee relations technology platform are more likely to share data with employees, as reporting is likely more feasible for teams that already have quick access to data and analysis.

By Technology

Use ER technology platform



Do not use ER technology platform

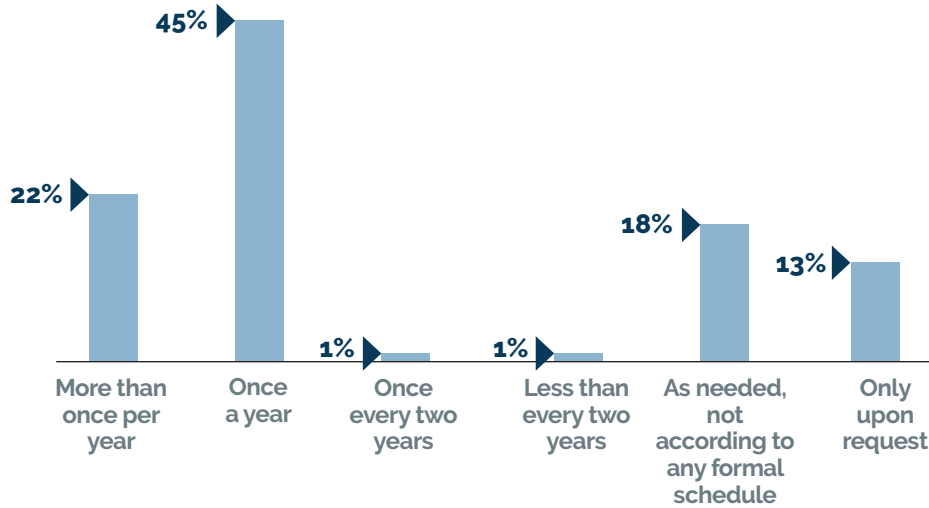


METRICS AND ANALYTICS

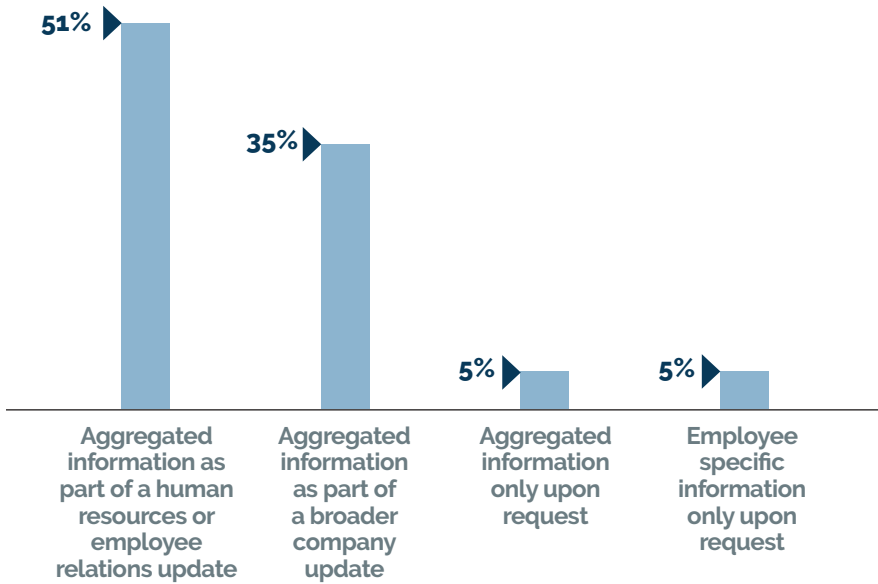
Frequency and format of investigation data shared with employees

The companies that do share employee relations data with employees most often do so annually as part of a human resources or employee relations update.

Sharing frequency



Sharing methods



PERSPECTIVE ON CAPABILITIES

Confidence Levels

While most employee relations professionals feel at least somewhat confident that they have the tools and resources to do their jobs effectively, fewer than half actually feel very confident.

Employee relations professionals who use an employee relations technology platform and a centralized organizational model feel more confident than those who do not, suggesting that the right tools and resources can help job confidence levels industry wide.

How confident are you that you and your team have the tools and resources to do your jobs as employee relations professionals effectively?

- % Very confident
- % Somewhat confident
- % Somewhat unconfident
- % Very unconfident

Overall



By model

Centralized model



Mixed model



Decentralized model



By use of ER technology platform

Use ER technology platform



Do not use ER technology platform

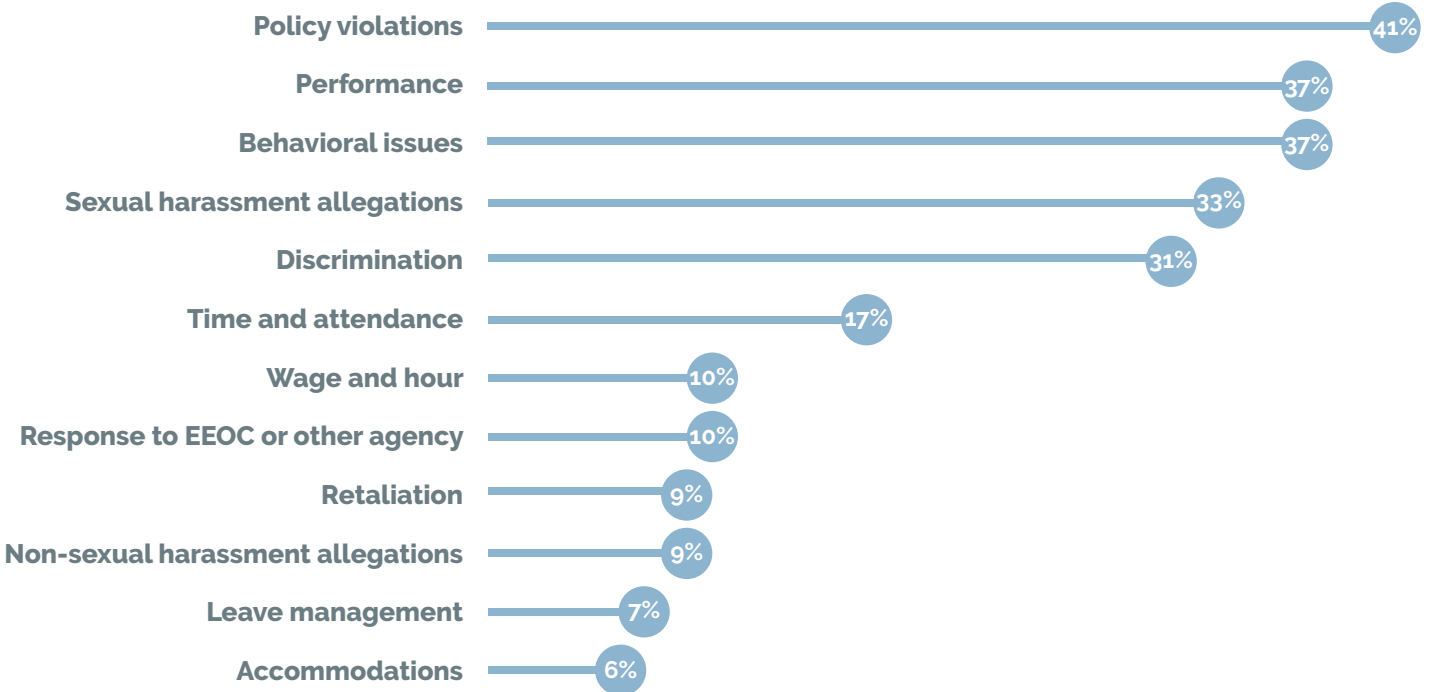


PERSPECTIVE ON CAPABILITIES

Confidence in Capabilities

Employee relations professionals are most confident handling policy violations, performance issues, and behavioral issues (which are also some of the most commonly handled case types), but are less confident handling retaliation and discrimination cases (case types that fewer employee relations professionals are personally trained to handle).

Cases most equipped to handle (respondents selected top three categories)



Cases least equipped to handle (respondents selected top three categories)



PERSPECTIVE ON CAPABILITIES

Challenges

When asked about the biggest challenges faced in their day-to-day work, many employee relations professionals report lacking the technology to effectively collect data and generate proactive, actionable employee relations insights. This further emphasizes the need for more effective tools and resources to help employee relations professionals perform their jobs as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Examples of the biggest challenges employee relations professionals face in their day-to-day work:

Lack of actionable insights

“Ability to easily create proactive actionable ER insights for the business.”

“Turning information we collect into actionable insights that will help active business problems.”

“Having the right technology to be more proactive.”

Inefficient and time consuming

“Not having access to information regarding organization changes, initiatives, etc. in a timely manner — therefore, our team’s ability to provide current and relevant evidence/counsel can be compromised.”

“Lack of an integrated data system and over-reliance on human glue makes work inefficient.”

No streamlined process

“Gathering data from multiple sources, aggregating it, manually cleaning it up and providing useful information in a meaningful timely manner.”

“Easily obtaining useful data.”

“The volume of cases and having a streamlined process for us to use.”



PERSPECTIVE ON CAPABILITIES

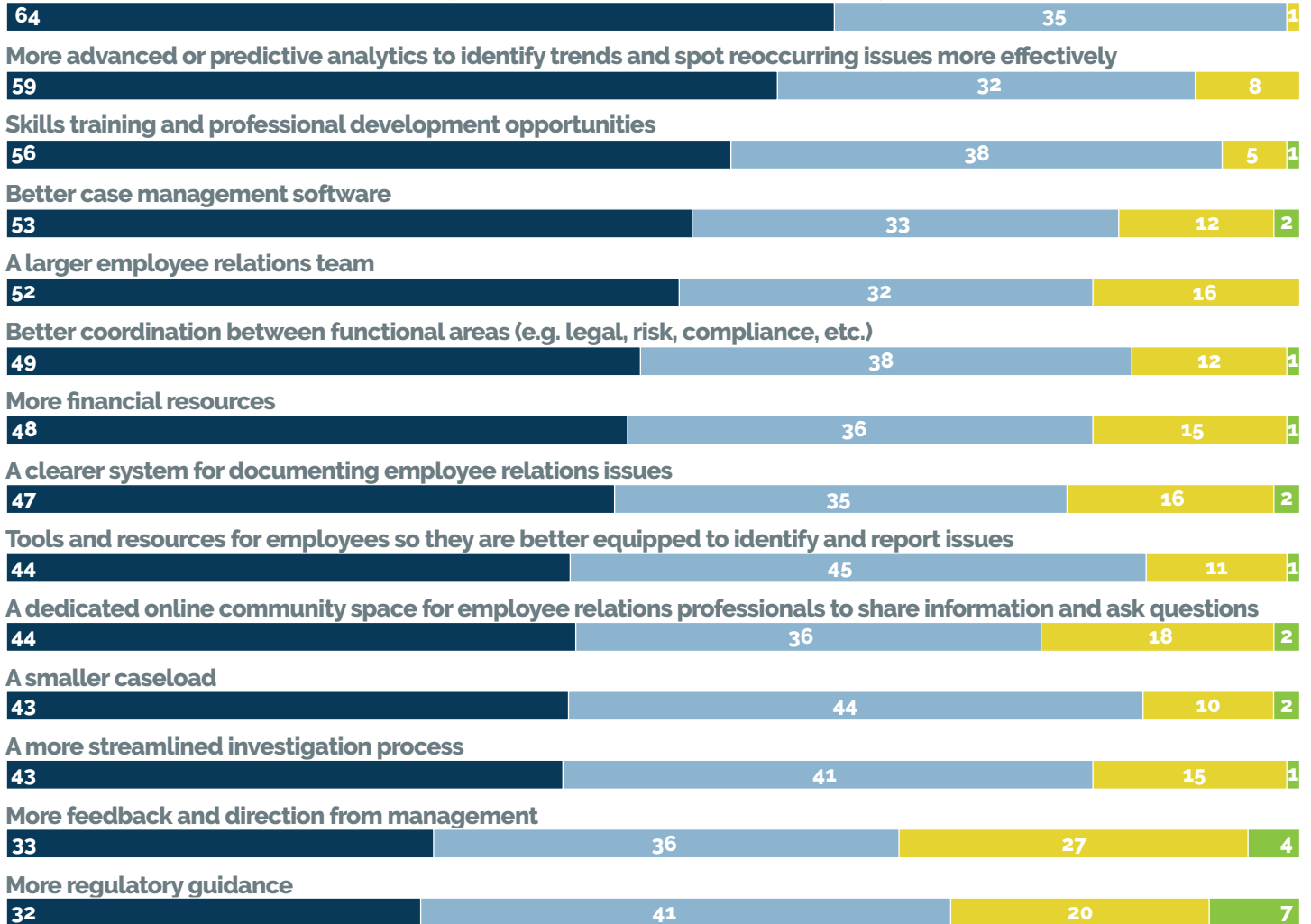
Addressing Challenges

Employee relations professionals say it would be most helpful to have additional tools and resources for managers so they are better equipped to handle employee issues and more advanced or predictive analytics to identify trends and spot reoccurring issues more effectively. Both of these resources would help reduce work loads and more effectively collect data and generate proactive, actionable employee relations insights moving forward.

Resources that would be helpful in terms of making it easier for employee relations professionals to do their job

- % Very helpful
- % Somewhat helpful
- % Not that helpful
- % Not at all helpful

Tools and resources for managers so they are better equipped to handle employee issues



ABOUT THE STUDY

Now in its fourth year, the annual HR Acuity Employee Relations Benchmark Study was launched in 2016 to identify and define best practices for employee relations management.

Organizations across a wide array of industries provide data on employee relations practices related to their organization model, case management processes, employee issue types, volumes, trends and internal data-driven metrics.

Each year the Study has grown in both the number of participants and breadth of topics. We continue to work with participants and members of the HR Acuity Employee Relations Roundtable community to refine and expand the instrument to include relevant topics on which practitioners seek benchmarking information.

Today, with participation from 207 organizations, representing approximately 5.5 million employees globally, the Study is the definitive resource for employee relations management and trends across the evolving landscape. The Study provides organizations with best practices and metrics to compare their organization's employee relations function with other similarly situated organizations.



HRACUITY®

HR Acuity is the only technology platform specifically built for employee relations and investigations management, helping organizations protect their reputations and build better workplaces.

We empower clients with built-in intelligence, templates and reporting so they can conduct best practice, fair investigations; uncover trends and patterns through forward-looking data and analytics; and provide trusted, consistent experiences for their people.

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