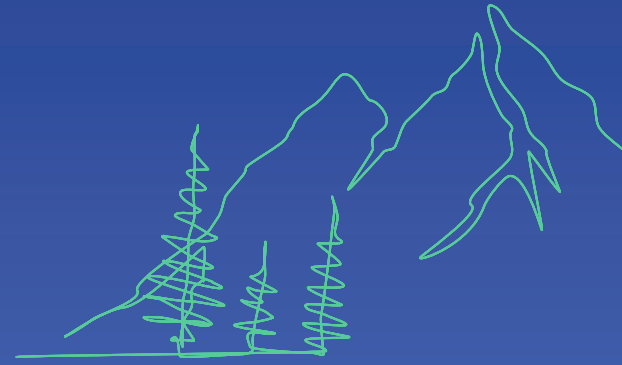


Taking Employee Relations to *New Heights*

Insights from the 2024 Employee Relations Roundtable



Year after year, the ER Roundtable gathers senior ER leaders from top organizations for meaningful conversations about ER's most pressing challenges and opportunities. This year, over 120 senior ER leaders joined us in Denver for interactive sessions. **While we wish you could have experienced this first-hand, we wanted to share a glimpse into the insights and discoveries that emerged:**

KEY LEADERS SHAPING EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AT THIS YEAR'S ROUNDTABLE



This year, we launched the inaugural Employee Relations Leader Award to honor those making a significant impact on workplace culture, safety, fairness and transparency. These leaders elevate ER, drive innovation and inspire teams while strengthening their organizations' reputation.



With over 40 nominations representing employee relations leaders from a variety of organizations and industries, the winners were:



Cindy Tyeskey-Gage
Salesforce



Jeffrey Rivera
Tampa General Hospital



Tory Niceswander
The Hershey Company

1

Election Impact: When Global Politics Enter the Workplace

Given the political uncertainty marking the U.S. election season and the ongoing polarization and divisiveness in an increasingly complex world, it's no surprise that employee activism is again on the rise. Managing sociopolitical employee discourse is a delicate balance. Organizations take varied approaches, from zero-tolerance policies to providing safe spaces for discussions. To support employees, ER remains focused on mitigating risk.



Enforce existing policies. Some organizations rely on standard policies that apply to any specific event, such as social media policies, emergency closure procedures, harassment policies and codes of conduct. This enables ER to focus on the conduct itself when addressing disciplinary actions related to politically raised issues. It also empowers managers to handle divisive conversations.



Adopt new policies. Some organizations have introduced new policies that specifically prohibit political self-expression in the workplace, including restrictions on political clothing and bumper stickers. Others have adopted policies to foster positive and respectful discourse, such as Political Neutrality Policies, Collegial Engagement Policies and Respectful Workplace Policies. Data can also be used to influence policy changes based on trends observed over set intervals (e.g., 30, 60 or 90 days).



Collaboration is critical for facilitating guided conversations. Organizations that provide safe, structured environments for open dialogue, such as listening circles and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), find it beneficial for ER to work alongside Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) teams. Mediation groups also support employees with differing perspectives, including religious and political views.

2

Navigating AI Ethically and Responsibly while Emphasizing Human Connections

Artificial intelligence is a powerful tool, but most organizations have not yet fully embraced it for use in employee relations. Its misuse can lead to significant risks, including legal consequences. Here are some steps we can take in employee relations to ensure ethical and responsible use of AI while preserving the integrity of our work.



Approach AI with caution. Organizations have ethical concerns about relying on AI, especially in investigations. AI cannot replace critical human elements of our role. Great investigators possess skills in human judgment, context and nuances—qualities that AI cannot replicate. AI transcriptions aren't always accurate either, and AI introduces a risk of bias and invalidity.



Establish company-wide policies and guardrails. Policies clarifying expectations for AI usage, outlining acceptable and prohibited actions, such as the importance of removing personally identifiable information (PII) are essential. Creating an AI governance committee and offering AI training sessions can further reinforce expectations.



Assess the risks before leveraging AI. When figuring out how to use AI, use a risk matrix. Plot out the matrix, assign risks and manage pros/cons with your team. Come up with a good, defensive plan for stakeholders, counsel and create guidelines to follow.

3

Processes That Build Trust: Implementing ThroughCare™ Strategies

Case volumes and mental health issues continue to rise. The level of support employees receive throughout all stages of issue management significantly impacts their well-being, engagement, trust and retention. Here are some practical steps you can take throughout the process to enhance employee experience, foster employee loyalty, achieve better outcomes.

ThroughCare™ is a framework developed by HR Acuity based on conversations with our ER community that helps organizations adopt robust processes to effectively handle employee relations issues and investigations to build and maintain trust with employees.



Set touchpoints throughout every step of the process. From the moment an issue is reported, promptly reach out to the complainant to let them know you are aware of the issue and that it will be taken seriously. Maintain open communication throughout the investigation. After the investigation is complete, build in touchpoints at specified intervals to check on their well-being and monitor for any potential retaliation.



Employee feedback is invaluable. Don't shy away from conducting surveys or requesting employee feedback. Understanding how employees feel is essential for building and fostering employee trust. Even negative feedback is an opportunity to grow and improve.



Take a structured approach to process improvement. Start by piloting a program that focuses on one specific issue type. Clearly define the specific components you will follow, such as surveys and touchpoints. Consider communication methods that are most suitable for your employee base, whether that's through email, text messages or meetings. Determine how you will measure success and be prepared to refine the process based on feedback and metrics.

4 Forecasting the Future: Using Employee Relations Data Proactively

Strategic use of employee relations data and predictive analytics can identify patterns, mitigate risks and inform decision-making. Organizations are leveraging data analytics to guide proactive and impactful employee relations.



Use predictive analytics to tackle larger challenges. There is a focus on using analytics to address broader issues, such as enhancing manager effectiveness and understanding case complexity. A particularly effective approach from one organization involved examining data to uncover racial disparities in claims and identify proactive solutions for instances of disproportionate misconduct across varied demographics.



Integrate employee relations data with other human resources and business data. Technology that offers robust ER data analytics and reporting capabilities enables teams to more efficiently produce impactful reports. Organizations are focused on integrating their ER data across systems (e.g., HRIS) for a more holistic view of organizational health.



Share data with leaders and cross-functionally. Cross-functional collaboration is becoming increasingly important as organizations aim to address ER concerns more holistically. Many organizations are sharing qualitative data with leadership teams to provide actionable insights.

See why we're the **#1 leader** in employee relations case management.

TAKE A CURIOSITY TOUR

www.hracity.com/book-a-demo



ABOUT HR ACUITY

While you can't prevent every employee relations issue, you can change how you respond. HR Acuity is the only technology platform specifically built for employee relations and investigations management. HR Acuity's SaaS technology empowers you with built-in intelligence, templates and reporting so you can conduct best practice, fair investigations; uncover trends and patterns through forward-looking data and analytics; and provide trusted, consistent experiences for your people.



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