



Trust & Risk Statement™

Getting Started Guide



Executive *Summary*

Employee relations sits at the center of some of your organization's most critical risks: Cultural, reputational, legal and financial. Yet unlike other core business functions, ER has historically lacked standardized, executive-level metrics to demonstrate its impact. As a result, employee relations teams are often asked to explain complex, high-stakes work using lagging indicators or qualitative narratives in environments that demand data to drive decision-making.

The Trust & Risk Statement™ is here to change that.

Designed to make employee relations measurable and strategic, the Trust & Risk Statement™ translates ER activity into business-relevant insights leaders can act on. It shifts the focus from reactive, after-the-fact reporting to leading indicators that help organizations anticipate risk, allocate resources more effectively and build trust at scale.

This Getting Started Guide is designed to help employee relations leaders take the first step and focus on what matters most — without overcomplicating the work. It provides a clear starting point for aligning employee relations data to business priorities and building a consistent, credible approach to measuring trust and risk over time even when data and processes are still maturing. Most importantly, this guide reflects the realities ER leaders face today.

Here's what you can expect from this guide:



A clear framework for aligning employee relations metrics to business priorities.



Guidance on selecting indicators across operational efficiency, trust, risk and compliance.



Practical steps for auditing data, breaking down silos and establishing a reliable baseline.



A narrative structure for communicating insights and impact to executive stakeholders.

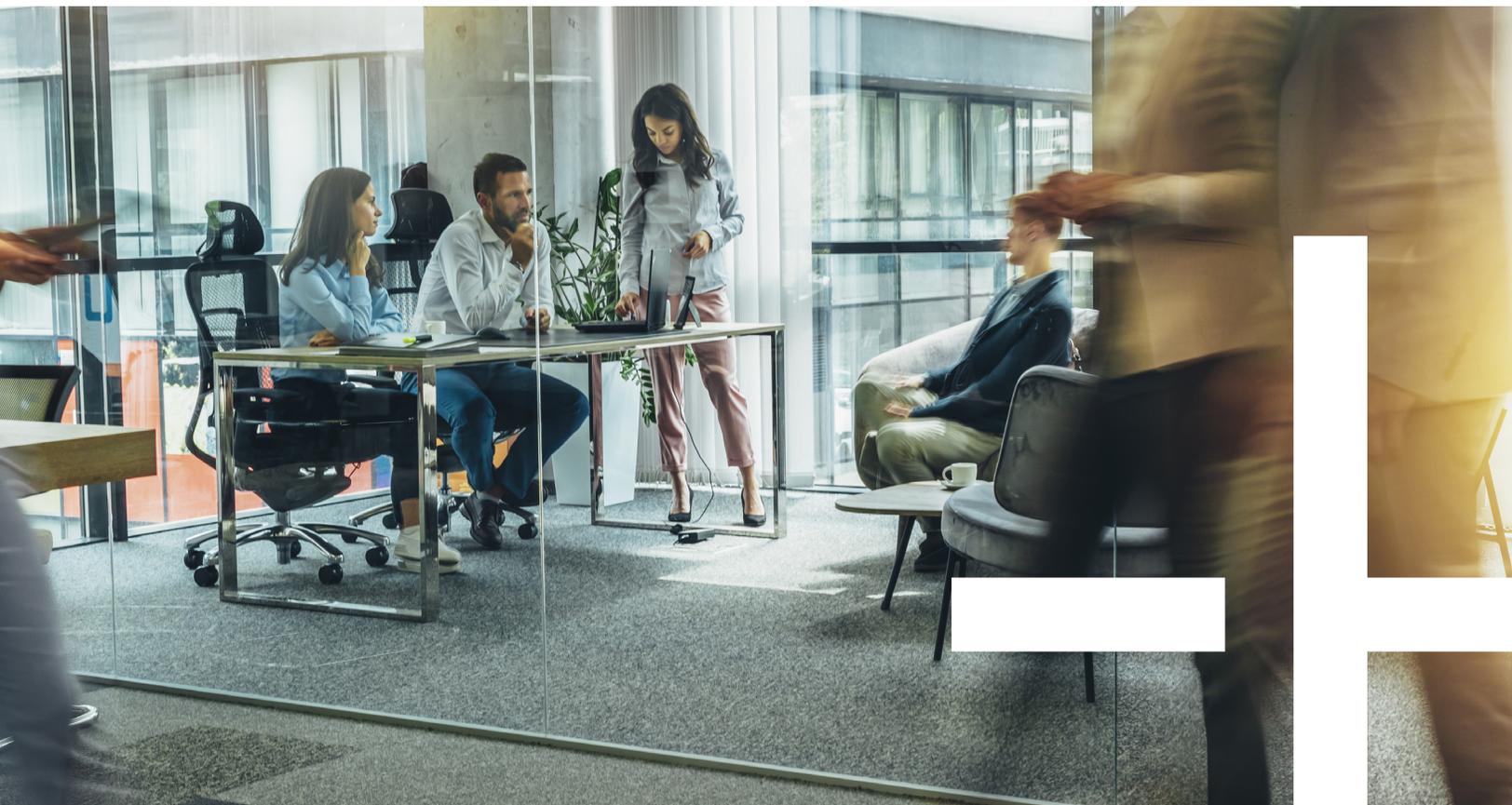
As expectations for accountability, transparency and risk management continue to rise, ER leaders have a growing opportunity to demonstrate their team's value. The Trust & Risk Statement provides the structure to do exactly that, transforming employee signals into insights executives understand and trust.

T&R The Trust & Risk Statement™ *Framework*

The Trust & Risk Statement is built on a simple concept: Meaningful insight results from consistent, comparable data aligned to business priorities.

This framework helps you put that concept into action. It defines the core components of the Trust & Risk Statement and the standardized metrics that make trust and risk measurable across organizations. Together, they establish a shared language for evaluating employee relations performance, identifying emerging risk and informing executive decision-making.

You may already track some of these data points today. Others will require new definitions, cross-functional partnerships or time to establish a baseline. That's expected. The pages that follow introduce the full framework first, then guide you through a practical, step-by-step approach to applying it.



Operational Efficiency Metrics

Metric	What It Is:	Why It Matters:	How to Calculate:
Case Volume (per 1,000 Employees)	This KPI normalizes case volume against workforce size, offering a clearer picture of how employee issues scale within your organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusting for headcount, normalizing case volume allows for apples-to-apples comparisons across teams, geographies and peer organizations. A spike may reveal cultural challenges, workload imbalances or increased trust in reporting — each requiring a different response. Low volume may signal a lack of trust in ER processes. It's foundational for resource planning and allocation and an effective employee relations strategy. 	$\left(\frac{\text{Total Cases}}{\text{Avg. Employee Headcount}} \right) \times 1,000$
Staffing Ratio	This KPI calculates how many ER professionals are available per 1,000 employees, offering a normalized view of staffing levels across organizations of varying sizes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right-sizing ER staffing is essential for effective case handling, timely responses and maintaining trust in the process. Too few ER professionals may signal under-resourcing, which can delay investigations or cause burnout. Too many may indicate inefficiencies or underutilization. It aligns resources with workload and risk, supports smarter planning and budgeting and protects reputation during growth. 	$\left(\frac{\text{Number of FTE ER Professionals}}{\text{Total Employees}} \right) \times 1,000$
Issue-to-Case Ratio	This metric measures the average number of distinct issues associated with each case. It helps quantify case complexity by capturing how many different concerns are raised within a single employee relations case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all cases are equally complex. A high issue-to-case ratio highlights complex investigations that may require deeper expertise, more time or broader coordination. It helps leaders assess workloads beyond raw case counts, allocate necessary resources and anticipate training or process needs. It also surfaces trends, such as recurring issues that often appear together, which can inform policy or culture changes. 	$\frac{\text{Total Number of Issues Logged Across All Cases}}{\text{Total Number of Cases Opened}}$
Average Time-to-Close	This KPI tracks the average number of days it takes to resolve a case — from the date it's opened to the date it's officially closed. When segmented by issue type, it highlights where certain cases require more time and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-to-close reflects process efficiency and the complexity of employee relations issues. Longer cycle times may signal investigation delays, resource constraints or procedural roadblocks. Overly short times may suggest surface-level resolution without proper depth. Monitoring helps strike the right balance between setting realistic expectations and ensuring a timely, thorough process. 	$\frac{(\text{Close Date} - \text{Open Date})}{\text{Number of Closed Cases}}$

Trust & Experience Metrics

Metric	What It Is:	Why It Matters:	How to Calculate:
Anonymous Reporting Mix	This KPI measures the proportion of issues submitted anonymously, offering insight into employees' willingness to self-identify when reporting concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher rate of anonymous reporting can signal fear of retaliation or lack of confidence in the ER process. • A lower anonymity rate suggests greater transparency and psychological safety. • Tracking over time helps organizations assess employee trust, evaluate the effectiveness of speak-up culture initiatives and identify pockets where employees may not feel safe coming forward. 	$\frac{\text{Number of Anonymous Reports}}{\text{Number of Total Reports}}$
Speak-up Utilization Rate	This KPI tracks the percentage of employees who raise concerns through your reporting channels, particularly platforms like Speakfully, during a given time period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher utilization rate indicates that employees feel psychologically safe, trust the process and believe their voices will be heard. • A low rate may reflect fear, skepticism or a lack of awareness. • Monitoring this metric helps organizations evaluate the strength of their speak-up culture and identify areas needing additional communication or training to ensure employees feel safe reporting concerns. 	$\frac{\text{Unique Employees who Opened } \geq 1 \text{ Speakfully Report During the Period}}{\text{Average Employee Headcount}}$
Retaliation Allegation Rate	This KPI tracks how often retaliation is reported in connection with employee relations cases, either as a standalone concern or as a follow-up to a prior issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even the perception of retaliation can erode trust and discourage employees from speaking up. • A higher rate may signal breakdowns in protection protocols, communication or culture. • Monitoring helps ER teams identify risk hot spots, ensure safeguards are working and demonstrate accountability to employees who raise concerns. 	$\frac{\text{Number of Retaliation Claims}}{\text{Number of Total Cases}}$
Case Aging	This KPI tracks the volume of cases that remain unresolved beyond 30 days, highlighting how long issues are lingering in the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A growing share of aged cases may point to investigation bottlenecks, resource gaps, or process inefficiencies. But it's not just operational — it also impacts trust. • Long delays can leave employees feeling ignored or uncertain, impacting productivity and willingness to report future concerns. • Monitoring this helps ER teams stay ahead of backlogs and maintain credibility with the workforce. 	$\text{Number of Open Cases Older than 30 Days}$
Post-Case Voluntary Attrition Rate	This KPI tracks the rate at which employees voluntarily leave the company within 12 months of being involved in an ER case, indicating how the case experience and handling may influence retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rise in post-case attrition can signal gaps in how cases are managed or closed out. • Even when no policy is violated, the experience of being part of a case — as a reporter, respondent or witness — can influence someone's decision to stay or go. • Tracking this metric helps ER and HR understand how case handling impacts retention and where additional support or follow-up may be needed. 	$\frac{\text{Voluntary Exits Within 12 Months of a Case (excluding ER-driven terminations)}}{\text{Total Employees Involved in ER Cases}}$

Risk and Compliance Metrics

Metric	What It Is:	Why It Matters:	How to Calculate:
Case Disposition Rate	This KPI measures the percentage of investigations that result in a substantiated finding — meaning the concern raised was confirmed through evidence and fact-finding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking disposition rates helps surface patterns across investigators, issue types or business units. Consistently high or low rates could flag bias, inconsistency or training gaps. It's also a valuable signal for legal and compliance risk — helping ER leaders assess investigative rigor, identify outliers and ensure outcomes are fair and aligned with organizational standards. 	$\frac{\text{Number of Substantiated Findings}}{\text{Number of Closed Investigations}}$
Policy Violation Rate	This KPI measures how often ER cases result in a confirmed breach of company policy following an investigation and review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear lens into organizational risk and accountability. A high policy violation rate could indicate deeper issues with culture, training or management practices. A very low rate, on the other hand, might suggest over-reporting of low-risk concerns — or inconsistent investigative outcomes. Tracking this rate helps ER teams assess issue severity, ensure consistency in findings and spot where policy clarity or manager education may be needed. 	$\frac{\text{Number of Violations Substantiated}}{\text{Number of Closed Cases}}$
Perf. Mgmt. Impact	This KPI tracks the cost of performance-related actions, like severance tied to performance management or failed PIPs, normalized per 1,000 employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This metric provides a financial lens on how effective (or costly) your performance management practices are. A rising spend may indicate gaps in early feedback, coaching or manager capability. When viewed alongside other ER metrics, it helps identify whether performance issues are addressed proactively — or only after they escalate into costly outcomes. 	$\frac{\text{Performance management spend}}{\left(\frac{\text{Headcount}}{1,000} \right)}$
Legal / Settlement Cost per 1,000 Employees	This KPI calculates the financial impact of employee relations matters by measuring legal fees and settlement payouts, normalized to company size.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This metric offers a hard-dollar view of risk exposure tied to ER issues. Rising costs may reflect inadequate issue handling, late intervention or patterns of noncompliance. This metric helps build the business case for stronger ER processes, early resolution strategies and investment in prevention efforts — translating risk into real financial terms leaders understand. 	$\frac{\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Legal} \\ + \\ \text{Settlement} \\ \text{Spend} \end{array} \right)}{\left(\frac{\text{Headcount}}{1,000} \right)}$
Labor / Regulatory Filings per 1,000 Employees	This KPI tracks how often employee relations issues escalate to formal external filings — such as with the EEOC, NLRB or other national or regional labor and regulatory agencies — normalized by workforce size.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's a key risk indicator, reflecting potential exposure to legal action, reputational harm and increased scrutiny. A high filing rate suggests breakdowns in internal resolution processes or trust in internal channels. Monitoring this rate helps ER teams spot red flags early, assess trends by geography or business unit and prioritize proactive interventions. 	$\frac{\text{Number of filings}}{\left(\frac{\text{Headcount}}{1,000} \right)}$

Getting *Started*

1 Define Your “North Star:” Your Organization’s Main Business Priority

First, align your metrics to a major business problem.

Action: In collaboration with key stakeholders, identify the single most critical priority for your C-suite right now. Ensure cross-functional alignment to facilitate seamless data sharing later.

Select one or create your own:

- **Cost or Efficiency** (Budget tightening, operational excellence)
- **Impact of AI** (Layoffs, learnings, skill-development process improvement)
- **Leadership Capability & Effectiveness** (Manager training, upskilling)
- **Growth** (Rapid hiring, market expansion)
- **Business Mergers & Acquisitions** (Harmonizing processes/cultures)
- **Unionization** (Union avoidance or relationship management)
- **Employee Retention** (Keeping top talent)



Tip: Don’t choose your priority in a silo. Socialize your selected North Star with the departments you’ll need data from later (e.g., finance, HR, legal, compliance) to ensure they agree on its relevance.

2 Determine Your Organization’s Data Readiness

The Trust & Risk Statement is a framework designed for growth over time. [This assessment](#) pinpoints your current data capacity, ensuring your strategy remains realistic and sustainable for your team.

By identifying whether you are at a Foundational, Intermediate or Advanced level, you can focus on the metrics that match your current capabilities while building a roadmap for the future. This approach drives immediate value and establishes long-term organizational maturity.



Scan the QR code to access the assessment

3 Identify Your Metrics & Formulas

Even if your business priority is efficiency, you may need a risk metric to tell the full story.

Select Your Metrics

Use the table below to select the combination of two or three metrics that best support your business case. Ask yourself: *Based on my North Star business priority, will the C-suite care if this metric fluctuates?* If the answer is no, pick a different metric.

Tip: Be sure to pick those that are within your Readiness level (determined in step two).



Readiness Level	Operational Efficiency Metrics <i>(Focus: Speed, Capacity, Process Cost)</i>	Trust & Experience Metrics <i>(Focus: Retention, Sentiment, Culture)</i>	Risk & Compliance Metrics <i>(Focus: Liability, Financial Exposure, Brand)</i>
Foundational (The Basics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Volume (per 1,000 Employees) Average Time-to-Close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Aging Anonymous Reporting Mix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor / Regulatory Filings per 1,000 Employees (e.g., EEOC, NLRB, DOL, OSHA)
Intermediate (Process Consistency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Foundational Metrics Staffing Ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Foundational Metrics Focus on consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Foundational Metrics Case Disposition Rate Policy Violation Rate
Advanced (Strategic Insight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Foundational and Intermediate Metrics Issue-to-Case Ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Foundational and Intermediate Metrics Post-Case Voluntary Attrition Rate Retaliation Allegation Rate Speak-Up Utilization Rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Foundational and Intermediate Metrics Performance Management Impact Legal / Settlement Cost per 1,000 Employees (e.g., internal legal time, outside counsel fees, litigation costs, EEOC settlements)

Find Your Formulas

Once you've selected your metrics, review the formulas in the tables below. These reveal the specific data points you will need to audit in step four.



Before you finalize your list, look at the variables in the Calculation Formula column. Do these variables currently exist in the data you track? *(For example, if you chose Average Time-to-Close, do you currently track the specific date a case is closed?)*

✓ **IF YES:** Keep the metric. You will locate the data in step four.

✗ **IF NO:** You have two choices:

Drop it: Choose a simpler metric for now.

Build it: Keep the metric but understand that you won't be able to report on it for 90 days while you build a baseline. *(For instance, to track Anonymous Reporting Mix, you must start tagging "Anonymous" vs "Named" on every intake starting today to have the data you need in three months' time.)*

Tip: To uncover meaningful baselines, segment your data by case type, region or function. For example, Average Time-to-Close for a routine time and attendance issue shouldn't be averaged with a complex misconduct investigation. Blending them together hides the insights you need to trend effectively.

Operational Efficiency Metrics

Metric	How to Calculate
Case Volume (per 1,000 Employees)	$\left(\frac{\text{Total New Cases}}{\text{Average Employee Headcount}} \right) \times 1,000$
Average Time-to-Close	$\frac{\sum (\text{Close Date} - \text{Open Date})}{\text{Number of Closed Cases}}$
Staffing Ratio	$\left(\frac{\text{Number of FTE ER Professionals}}{\text{Total Employees}} \right) \times 1,000$
Issue-to-Case Ratio	$\frac{\text{Total Number of Issues Logged Across All Cases}}{\text{Total Number of Cases Opened}}$

Trust & Experience Metrics

Metric	How to Calculate
Case Aging	Number of Open Cases Older Than 30 Days
Anonymous Reporting Mix	$\frac{\text{Number of Anonymous Reports}}{\text{Number of Total Reports}}$
Speak-Up Utilization Rate	$\frac{\text{Unique Employees Who Opened } \geq 1 \text{ Speakfully Report During the Period}}{\text{Average Employee Headcount}}$
Post-Case Voluntary Attrition Rate	$\frac{\text{Voluntary Exits Within 12 Months of a Case (excluding ER-driven terminations)}}{\text{Total Employees Involved in ER Cases}}$
Retaliation Allegation Rate	$\frac{\text{Number of Retaliation Claims}}{\text{Number of Total Cases}}$

Risk & Compliance Metrics

Metric	How to Calculate
Labor / Regulatory Filings per 1,000 Employees	$\text{Number of Filings} / \left(\frac{\text{Headcount}}{1,000} \right)$
Case Disposition Rate	$\frac{\text{Number of Substantiated Findings}}{\text{Number of Closed Investigations}}$
Policy Violation Rate	$\frac{\text{Number of Violations Substantiated}}{\text{Number of Closed Cases}}$
Performance Management Impact	$\text{Performance Management Spend} / \left(\frac{\text{Headcount}}{1,000} \right)$
Legal / Settlement Cost per 1,000 Employees	$(\text{Legal} + \text{Settlement Spend}) / \left(\frac{\text{Headcount}}{1,000} \right)$

4

The Data Audit (Breaking Silos)

Now that you have identified the specific data points required, you need to determine who owns them.

Conduct Your Audit

Review the data points from your selected formulas and ask:

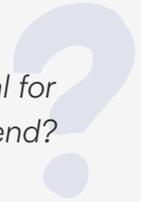
Do I own this?

Is this field already trackable in my ER case management system or spreadsheets?



Do I need a partner?

Do I need to ask finance or legal for aggregated legal settlement spend?



Make the Ask

If you need data from another department, frame the request around the North Star you identified in step one.

✗ Don't say:

"I need this data for my employee relations report."

✓ Do say:

"We are tracking specific risk factors related to [North Star/main business priority], and combining our data will provide the insights needed to drive better business decisions and demonstrate impact to leadership/the organization."



Checkpoint: The 90-Day Standard

Before you begin reporting on trust and risk, you must validate your baseline. That means to present with confidence, you need at least 90 days of clean, standardized data.

How will you cut the data?

Before proceeding, identify which segments will be most impactful for your organization. To ensure your metrics provide clear signals, your data should be sliced by:

- **Function/Department:** To pinpoint leadership issues.
- **Region:** To identify geographic hotspots.
- **Case Type:** To distinguish between routine issues and high-stakes misconduct.

What scenario best describes your current state?

Scenario A: I have clean, standardized data. +

Scenario: You have been tracking the selected data points consistently for over three months.

Action: Proceed to step five. Your data is well-prepared, so you can begin calculating and evaluating trust and risk.



Scenario B: I have the data, but it's messy.



Scenario: You have the history (such as emails, notes or PDFs), but it isn't in a spreadsheet or case management system, so you can't use your data reliably yet.

Action: Perform a historical audit.

- Get started now by blocking off time to manually review your last 20 cases in a certain region, function or case type.
- Enter this data into your new formula to create a retrospective baseline.
- During this period, use the audit to standardize your data and reduce friction for future data tracking. By doing so, you'll be ready to begin evaluating with confidence in 90 days.
- This will point you in a strong position to proceed to step five.

Scenario C: I don't have the data.



Scenario: You chose a new metric (such as Time-to-Close), but you never tracked Date Closed in the past. The data simply does not exist.

Action: Enter the baseline or pilot phase.

- Start tracking the data you want to use to measure trust and risk. Take this opportunity to share your plan with internal stakeholders, letting them know what you'll be measuring, how you'll track it and when they can expect updates.
- Provide brief updates on your progress to stay aligned and demonstrate value. For example: "We have established new tracking protocols and will have our first quarterly baseline on [date]."
- Proceed to step five to practice your routine and refine your process, but keep the data internal until you reach the 90-day mark.

5

Analyze the Results

Don't just report the number. Determine if/how it matters. That's what will get your executive leadership team's attention.

Calculate: Apply the formulas from step three to your data set.

Benchmark: Compare your results against the previous quarter, industry benchmarks and goals.

If this is your first time tracking, this number is your baseline. You will compare future quarters against this.

Tip: *Small variations (<5%) are usually noise. Look for significant shifts.*



Hypothesize:

Diagnose the movement.



High number?

Does it mean a toxic culture or simply higher trust in the reporting system?



Low number?

Is the environment healthy or is there a fear of retaliation?



The goal:

Formulate a clear theory on why the data moved before you present it.



Plan Action: Identify the areas where improvement is needed and outline initiatives to address them. With continued monitoring, you'll be able to gauge the effectiveness of employee relations interventions.

6

Build the Narrative

Use this framework to structure your executive summary, email or slide.

- **The Priority:** “To support the organization’s focus on [North Star from step one]...”
- **The Data:** “...we are tracking [metric name] to identify potential friction.”
- **The Analysis:** “Current data shows a [trend: Spike/Drop] in [department/region], suggesting [Hypothesis from step five].”
- **The Solution:** “ER is addressing this by [specific intervention] to mitigate risk and support business continuity.”

Putting the Framework into *Practice*

Employee relations work is already shaping trust and risk every day, whether it is measured or not. The Trust & Risk Statement simply makes that impact visible. By starting where you are and applying the framework with discipline, you initiate a virtuous cycle: As we provide greater clarity, our organizations rely more heavily on our expertise, leading to deeper impact over time.

As we build this muscle together, we move the entire discipline of employee relations forward, strengthening our broader community of practice and ensuring the function is recognized as the strategic pillar it truly is.

You don't have to do this *alone.*

To see how fellow employee relations leaders are leveraging these metrics and to get hands-on support, check out these helpful resources.



empowerER™ Community
Trust & Risk Group



Trust & Risk Statement
Webinar Recording



Trust & Risk
Statement Blog Post

HRACUITY Platform

Case Number	Case Name	Case Group	Involved	Primary Issue
ER-5432102			●●●	
ER-2947156			●	
ER-9516782			●●	
ER-5432102			●●	
ER-2947156			●●●	

Case Management

Investigation - In Progress

Involved Party & Interviews

Issues and Allegations

Documents & Policies

Investigations

Report an Issue

What is your concern related to?

Upload Attachments

Where are you located?

Speak-up Reporting

Manager Cases

Employee	ID	Manager	Location	Group	Open Cases
●					
●					
●					
●					
●					

To-Do

Manager Support

Analytics



RANKED 4.6 / 5 ON G2



The *Trusted Leader* in HR Case Management and Investigations Technology

Trusted by hundreds of top organizations, HR Acuity is the industry-leading platform for HR case management and investigations from intake through aftercare. Built on best practices and powered by advanced analytics, seamless integrations and defensible AI, HR Acuity helps you manage every issue with clarity and confidence. See it for yourself and [book a demo](#) today.

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