

Chapter 11: Managing Employee Relations

Importance of Employee Relations

Improve Production:

- Productivity is significantly impacted by employee's ability attitude.

Reduce Employment Costs:

- Have concern for and interest in employees
- Reduces absenteeism
- Reduces turnover

Help Employees Grow and Develop

- Help employees achieve personal goals
- Improves morale
- Improves loyalty
- Improves productivity

Implementation of Organizational Strategies:

- Goals and strategies need to be communicated and employees need to provide their commitment

Downward Communication Systems

Downward Communication: information that begins at some point in the organization and proceeds down the organizational hierarchy to inform or influence others.

• Necessary for decision makers to have their decisions carried out
These communications also give employees knowledge about organization and feedback

Examples of Downward Communication:

1. In-house publications and Pre-recorded Messages,

- Informs employees about current developments
 - Fosters long term understandings about objectives and missions

Ex: newsletters, employee handbook etc.

2. Electronic Communication

Ex: email, intranet

3. Social Media and Mobile Devices

Ex: twitter/facebook, security/usage associated with use of technology

4. Information Sharing and Open Book Management

Ex: communicate info about economic performance of organization to employees

Solicit input/proposals for change

Upward Communication Systems: Information initiated by people who seek to inform or influence those higher up in the organization's hierarchy.

Examples:

1. Grapevine Communication: informal discussions with coworkers, ex: at the water cooler, provides useful off the record feedback.

2. Electronic Communication: cellphones, emails etc.

3. In-House Complaint Procedures: register formal complaints about coworkers, supervisors, work, policies etc.

4. Manager-Employee Meetings: Get inputs from employees on a wide range of issues.

- Open Door Policy: company policy that encourages employees to address their problems to higher levels of management.
- Peer Review: panel who hears an employees presentation of the problems and makes recommendations.
- Mediation: neutral third party meets with the parties and tries to resolve the issues, mediator cannot impose a settlement though.
- Arbitration: neutral third party hears both parties views of the case and makes a *binding* decision. Non union setting.

5. Suggestion Systems: formal method for generating, evaluating and implementing employee ideas.

- Management must provide prompt and fair assessment

6. Attitude Survey: Systematic method of determining what employees think of their organization

- Should give summaries and be committed to acting on findings.

Counseling: discussion of a problem with an employee, with the general objective of helping the worker resolve the issue or cope with the situation, to become more effective at both work and outside the workplace.

Types of Discipline:

Discipline: Management action to encourage compliance with the organization's standards.

Preventive Discipline:

- Action taken prior to any infraction to encourage employees to follow the rules so infractions are prevented.

How?

- Clearly communicate policies, expected behaviour, and punishments

Corrective Discipline: Action that follows a rule infraction and seeks to discourage further infractions.

- Discipline may be progressive in nature.

Why discipline?

- Reform offender
- Deter others from similar actions
- Maintain consistent group standards

Due Process:

- Company must ensure that established rules and procedures for disciplinary action are followed
- employees have an opportunity to respond to the charges made against them.
- Disciplinary procedures typically outlined in employee handbook.

Hot Stove Rule: disciplinary action that should be like when you touch a hot stove; it is with warm warning, immediate, consistent and impersonal.

Progressive Discipline System:

1. Verbal reprimand by supervisor
2. Written reprimand, with a record on file

3. One- to three-day suspension from work
4. Suspension for one week or longer
5. Discharge with just cause

Positive Discipline:

- Focus on the specific problem rather than the employee's attitude or personality.
- Gain agreement with the employee that a performance problem exists and that the employee is responsible for changing his or her behaviour.
- Approach discipline as a problem-solving process.
- Document suggested changes or commitments by the employee.
- Follow up to ensure that the employee is living up to his or her commitments and to reduce the likelihood of having to take more severe action.

Wrongful Dismissal: dismissal without just cause or reasonable notice of termination.

Just Cause: Any act by the employee that could have serious negative effects on the operation or reputation of the organization

Ex:

- Incompetence
- Misconduct
 - Theft
 - Drunkenness
 - Insubordination
- Lying about qualifications

Requirements in Dismissing an Incompetent Employee:

The employer must provide:

- Reasonable
- Objective standards of performance in a clear,
- Understandable manner.

- The employee must fail to meet those standards.

- The employer must have given the employee a clear warning she/he has failed to meet the standards, including particulars to the specific deficiency.
- The warning must clearly indicate the employee will be dismissed if she/he fails to meet the requisite standards.

The Wallace "Effect"

- Awarding of extended periods of notice in a number of wrongful dismissal cases in which the employer was found to have terminated an employee in bad faith.

Employee Rights, they have three main rights they are;

Right to Privacy: access to information, monitoring e-mail/internet usage, video surveillance, etc.

Right to Fair Treatment: freedom from discrimination and harassment, reasonable accommodation

Rights in Business Closings and Workplace Restructuring: advanced notice, outplacement services

Job Security and Downsizing:

- No-Layoff Policies
 - Employees who have job security are more receptive to change
 - More likely to be innovative
- Organizational Downsizing
 - Organizations continue to downsize
 - Morale sinks
 - Productivity drops
 - Employees distrust management

