

PART 5

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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All jobs have the potential to be alienating, making the job holder indifferent or hostile both to the job and to the management, who are seen as responsible for obliging the employee to continue doing the job.

Employee relations is largely concerned with preventing or alleviating that type of alienation. Because the issues are often collective, concerning a number of people in a similar situation, many procedures incorporate the recognition of trade unions and ways of making that recognition productive for both parties. Working safely in a healthy environment is included here as there is a legal obligation to involve employee representatives in monitoring management arrangements for safe working. Safe working is ultimately a matter of employees working safely because they understand and follow the practices that are provided for their personal safety.

Two parallel chapters, on diversity and equality, deal with the issue of people being treated fairly, not only because we all want to be fair in the way we do things, but also because there is a strong social justice theme to consider, as well as significant legal requirements. Furthermore, people who feel they are managed with due respect for their diversity and recognition of their equality are more likely to be resourceful humans than those who do not sense that respect and recognition.

Whether unions are recognised or not, there are always points of disagreement between managers and the managed and here we consider two rather 'heavy' areas: grievance and discipline. Few managers like to participate in grievance and discipline processes, but they are very interesting and provide the opportunity for major change and improvement for the manager who handles them well.

