



Part X

Employee relations

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DEFINED

Employee relations consist of all those areas of human resource management that involve relationships with employees – directly and/or through collective agreements where trade unions are recognized. Employee relations are concerned with generally managing the employment relationship as considered in Chapter 15.

These relationships deal with the agreement of terms and conditions of employment and with issues arising from employment. They will not necessarily be subject to collective agreements or joint regulation. Employee relations, therefore, cover a broader spectrum of the employment relationship than industrial relations, which are usually regarded as being essentially about dealings between managements and trade unions. This wider definition recognizes the move away from collectivism towards individualism in the ways in which employers relate to their employees. The move in this direction has been prompted by a growing insistence on management's prerogative supported by the philosophy of HRM, the requirement to meet competition with slimmer and more efficient organizations, a massive restructuring of industry in the 1980s, the 1980s concept of the market economy and free enterprise and by trade union legislation.

Employee relations practices include formal processes, procedures and channels of communication. It is important to remember, however, that employee relations are

mainly conducted on a day-to-day informal basis by line managers and team leaders; without the framework of employment and employee relations policies but acting mainly on their own initiative.

PLAN

This part covers the broad subject of employee relations under the following headings:

- *the framework of employee relations – the conceptual framework to industrial relations. The HRM approach to employee relations developments in industrial relations and the parties involved (Chapter 50);*
- *employee relations processes, including collective bargaining (Chapter 51);*
- *negotiating and bargaining skills (Chapter 52);*
- *processes for employee involvement and participation (employee voice) and communications (Chapters 53 and 54).*