

Managing in a Unionized Workplace

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1

What Do Workers Want?

- Respect – for them as people and for the work they do
- To provide a decent living for themselves and their families
- A workplace free from arbitrary rules
- Recourse if they are treated unfairly
- An environment free of unnecessary hazards

2

Labor-Management Relations

■ Self-Fulfilling Prophecy:

If you expect to have a contentious relationship with workers and the union, you probably will.

- If the employer thinks of the union or the workers as "the enemy," they should reconsider that approach

3

Collective Bargaining

- The rules by which each party agrees to live
- The rules are negotiated, with each party having a voice
- It is in no one's interest to bankrupt the employer
- Wages, hours and conditions of employment are the basic issues

4

Contract Language

- Sets the standards of conduct for both workers and employer
- States what is expected from both workers and employer
- Typically sets rules for hours of work, attendance, tardiness, wage rates, rest periods
- Provides remedies for contract violations (stipulates consequences, provides grievance procedure)

5

Sample Contract Language

■ Section 1 – Tardiness

A. Reporting to work and being ready to work at the beginning of one's shift is one of the essential responsibilities of employees. Occasional tardiness may be excused by the Employer, and the employee and the unit manager may agree to decrease the length of breaks or to extend the workday to make up for tardy time. Repeated and excessive tardiness are not acceptable and shall be defined as follows: Four (4) or more occurrences during a sixty (60) consecutive calendar day period of reporting late for work.

6

Sample continued

■ Section 1 – Tardiness

B. Penalties for violating the provisions of A above shall be as follows:

First Offense: Written Reprimand

Second Offense: Fine of one day's pay or loss of one vacation day

Third Offense: Fine of two days' pay or loss of two vacation days

Further Offense: Further disciplinary action including termination

7

Respect the People and the Process

- The vast majority of unionized workers go to work every day, perform their jobs, and go home with the expectation that they will be treated respectfully while at work and receive fair compensation for their efforts ("fairness" is a goal of the collective bargaining process)
- You can never go wrong if you "take the high road" – Do the right thing according to your values; treat others respectfully no matter how they treat you.

8