

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

WORKPLACE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Employees today demand to be treated with respect and dignity and to have a voice in building the workplace culture. One of the most effective tools in human resources is a fair, credible and effective alternative process for resolving employee conflicts.

Peer Review, when designed as an in-house grievance procedure, gives employees a participatory process for handling their problems in a way understood to be fair and impartial. Organizations with a proven system for dealing with employee conflicts benefit from reduced exposure to litigation, higher morale and better productivity.

GOAL: TO PROVIDE AN EQUITABLE AND TIMELY RESOLUTION TO WORK-RELATED ISSUES.

IRI Consultants helps clients establish and implement a Peer Review Process to resolve work-related issues, encourage an objective review of the facts and take advantage of shared decision-making as an internal “last-step option” to improve an organization’s conflict resolution process.

An effective Peer Review Process is not intended to replace normal communications between employees and their supervisors/managers. Instead, it helps prevent disputes from escalating or leading to litigation.

Under this system, a neutral party facilitates the Peer Review Process and resolution of the case is made by an employee’s peers.

PEER REVIEW PANEL

The Peer Review Process relies on a trained, objective review panel that has the confidence of employees and management. Peer Review Panel members are randomly selected from a pool of trained, qualified employees who are understood to be “peers” of any employee involved in a review case. The panel also includes a designated number of managers specially trained in this process. The panel typically consists of five individuals, three of whom are non-management employees.

All aspects of the peer review panel hearings are strictly confidential. A Peer Review Panel cannot render a decision that is more severe than the original management action leading to the appeal hearing, and all decisions are final and binding.

PROCESS

An effective Peer Review Process allows employees to have their issues resolved in a reasonable time frame strictly outlined in the charter. The Peer Review Panel is provided with all the documentation necessary to understand the case, then reviews the witness list and participates in a hearing. Panel members have the opportunity to question all participants and get additional materials or information from management upon request.

The panel then deliberates in private and votes by secret ballot, with each member required to review and sign the decision.

Certain issues and matters are customarily excluded from the peer review and appeal process, including changes to company policy, reductions in force, changes to company benefit plans, incentive plans or stock plans and any matter that is a legal obligation of the company.

The success of peer review depends on the extent to which employees have confidence in the system. When well-designed, peer review is a process preferred by employees as a means of resolving problems because they know that their peers understand their work environment and have accepted responsibility and accountability for their decisions.

ADVANTAGES OF A PEER REVIEW

- Effectively solves issues within the workplace through a process that is accepted as fair and reasonable by employees
- Supports the company's commitment to treat employees with respect and dignity
- Helps build a spirit of trust and cooperation between employees and management
- Encourages employees to resolve their disputes in a constructive, open-dialogue manner
- Enhances employee involvement and understanding of the business and management's understanding of employee issues
- Produces final resolution not subject to further appeal within the company
- Provides a well-documented case record of the issue if appealed to an outside agency



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