



# THE ART OF LABOR RELATIONS READINESS

**A STRATEGIC GUIDE TO POSITIVE  
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

---

How to create, manage and sustain a culture of engagement.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Labor Readiness.....1

## CHAPTER ONE

The Evolution of Positive Employee Relations.....3

## CHAPTER TWO

Creating A Best-in-Class LRRS Strategy.....6

## CHAPTER THREE

Implementing A Successful Readiness Campaign.....15

## CHAPTER FOUR

Ensuring Sustainable Readiness.....25

## GETTING STARTED

Assess Your Needs.....26



WALL STREET JOURNAL

**“A GALLUP POLL LAST YEAR FOUND THAT 68% OF AMERICANS APPROVE OF UNIONS, THE HIGHEST SHARE SINCE 1965.”**

INTRODUCTION:

# THE IMPORTANCE OF LABOR READINESS

Today, company leaders are concerned about the potential for increased union organizing activity, and with good reason. The aftermath of the pandemic, changing legislation, shifting public sentiment toward unions, and employee concerns about balancing work and life have created a perfect storm, in which [the NLRB has seen a 56% increase in petitions for unionization](#).

Employees today now expect their companies to respond more quickly than ever. Younger workers identify more and more with the companies they choose to work for, seeing no separation between work life and personal life, particularly online.

## WHY DO MODERN COMPANIES NEED TO ASSESS THEIR LABOR RELATIONS READINESS?

The current administration has strongly signaled that it supports organized labor's efforts to increase union membership, going so far as to create a [Cabinet-level task force on union organizing](#). The National Labor Relations Board is moving to expand the rights of employees and unions and limit the rights of employers.

The sweeping recommendations included in this new report have the potential to impact your organization, your employees, your customers, and your vendors whether you are an employer who provides federal contract services and interacts with state and federal agencies or you are entirely operating in the private sector with no government interaction.

Throughout the report, there are numerous mentions of the “private sector” and its employees, including [a chart showing a comparison between private-sector and public-sector employee union membership rates over the last 90 years](#). The graphic illustrates that union membership has declined steadily in the private sector, while union membership in the public sector has remained fairly constant since the 1970s.

As an organization, there are many things you should be doing now to prepare as new policies are rolled out at various government agencies. Some of those include, but are not limited to:

- 1 Educate your executive team, board members, and other stakeholders
- 2 Assess your current state of readiness and update your strategic plan as needed
- 3 Engage your public affairs, communications and government relations staff
- 4 Develop an internal team of experts
- 5 Provide labor relations training for your HR professionals
- 6 Engage your managers to talk to employees about their rights

For the remainder of this book, we'll cover the fundamentals and best practices for assessing your company's labor relations readiness and strategizing solutions for gaps. We'll also include steps for sustaining your positive employee relations campaign and taking an innovative, holistic approach to your readiness. ■

## THE PROACTIVE ERA

**A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO POSITIVE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS CONSIDERS THE ENTIRE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR WORK AND PERSONAL LIVES.**

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE EVOLUTION OF POSITIVE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Today's worker is seeking more than a job. They're looking for belonging, fulfillment and even self-actualization, even as they tend to change jobs more frequently. They're seeking peers to affiliate with, and pride in their work.

As leaders, we're expected to step up – and stay one step ahead – of the challenges facing workers today. This shift has ushered us into a new era of labor and employee relations – something IRI Consultants calls the Proactive Era.

But how did we get here? And what does this mean for the future of HR and Labor Relations professionals? Today, we've got a roadmap for how we can navigate this paradigm shift.

### THE THREE ERAS THAT DEFINED EMPLOYEE & LABOR RELATIONS

#### Reactionary Era (pre-2000)

Leading up to the turn of the century was the Reactionary Era, which began in earnest in the mid-1970s. Employers focused on responding to union drives, rather than preventing unionization. They were reluctant to say the word "union" because it would increase employee awareness of labor unions and "put ideas in employee's heads." When organizing campaigns did occur, companies often brought in paid "union busters."

In the 80s, the number of workers participating in union elections plummeted, and union membership really began to decline. Big unions

like the United Steelworkers and United Auto Workers lost 40 percent of their membership, and unions in general ran fewer elections.

#### The Engagement Era (2000-2019)

Then, employer perspectives began to change, prompted by a number of factors that included growing globalization. Employers began to focus on employee engagement, and there were practical reasons. A 2002 seminal study on the relationship of employee satisfaction-engagement and business performance, published in the Journal of Applied Psychology, found that business units with high employee engagement experienced 1-4 percentage points higher profitability; \$80,000-\$120,000 higher monthly revenue; and lower turnover rates.



Employee surveys were found to be one of the best ways to determine employee engagement.

According to Gartner research, in 2015, 89 percent of organizations used surveys to collect engagement data. By 2018, employers were using annual/biannual surveys, pulse surveys, social analytics tools and employee sentiment analytics. In 2019, 74 percent of organizations were still using formal, large-scale surveys. Sixty-four percent of companies not using formal surveys still used small-scale pulse surveys or random topic-specific surveys. Technology was enabling employers to communicate with employees in numerous ways – mobile apps, social media, videos, union-facing websites, etc. Employees who never saw or heard from top executives could listen to podcasts and watch videos with executive level messaging.

A focus on employee engagement meant employer practices had to change in order to stay union-free. Employers adopted the phrase, “Not anti-union, but pro-employee” to reflect the new perspective. The goal of Positive Employee Relations became to change employee perception’s from “the company fights unions because unions hurt the bottom line” to “the company cares about and acts in the best interests of employees.” This required a whole new approach that included strategies like:

- Developing a union-free operating philosophy
- Transparently helping employees understand why the company wants to remain union-

free and why third-party representation is unnecessary

- Requesting employee feedback on everything from benefits to grievance procedures
- Encouraging employees to ask questions
- Communicating the union-free operating philosophy to new-hires during orientation and onboarding
- Training leaders on employee and employer rights concerning unions
- Striving to develop an organizational culture of open communication

Management strategies evolved from the union busting decades. Now, management was working to remain union-free through collaboration, servant leadership and adherence to values.

**Proactive Era (2020-present)**

Today, we find ourselves in the Proactive Era. This era has been characterized by employers going beyond mere employee surveys into a new, holistic approach to positive employee relations, in which team members understand the value of operating union-free for themselves. Not because their *employer* wants them to remain union-free, but because *they* want to remain union-free themselves. This is the future of employee relations.



A holistic approach to positive employee relations is one which management considers the whole employee experience within context of their work and personal lives. Employees are recognized as people with physical, psychological and mental health needs. The holistic approach leads to employees wanting to maintain their direct connection to the employer, rather than going through a third party, because the employer empowers employees. The employer is not taking care of the employees but rather is helping employees take care of themselves.

- Are supported in many ways, including through training, benefits, opportunities for development, flexible work arrangements, healthy and safe workplaces and so on
- Are engaged which means they embrace the organization’s values and are committed to their jobs in order to meet organizational objectives
- Experience true diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Positive employee relations is about relationships and belonging, not transactions; pride in work; and trust in senior leaders, managers and supervisors.



Employees take care of themselves by avoiding a union because a union takes power away from individuals. The employer puts the well-being of the employees first, taking away union claims that management only cares about profits. Of course, leadership training in the critical skills is needed to develop this high level of positive employee relations. For example, can your leaders identify and address employee relations vulnerabilities?

There is no need for a union because employees:

- Have a voice in the organization and control over their careers
- Have positive relationships with managers and supervisors
- Are provided the necessary resources to do their best work
- Believe they do meaningful work

It may seem like a tall order to shift from employee engagement to a holistic approach to positive employee relations, but with the Labor Relations Readiness System, your organization can use a proven model to take advantage of today’s environment and work toward becoming a true employer of choice. ■

CHAPTER TWO

# CREATING A BEST-IN-CLASS LRRS STRATEGY

IRI’s Labor Relations Readiness System is a comprehensive review of an organization’s current preparedness to address organizing efforts and associated employee issues.

The Labor Relations Readiness System™ (LRRS) was developed by IRI Consultants to help companies proactively identify and address potential employee relations vulnerabilities – instead of simply reacting to a petition for election.

### DEVELOP A PROACTIVE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS STRATEGY

In the past, companies would wait until they recognized active union organizing to address employee concerns. Don’t wait until you have activity. At that point, it’s a costly and time-consuming challenge. You’ll feel like you’re playing catch-up, always on the back foot, answering union promises, defending against union accusations.

Instead, begin working on your Positive Employee Relations Strategy now. Your Labor Relations Readiness training can provide a strong foundation in employee rights and teaches managers how to discuss union organizing in real-world settings.

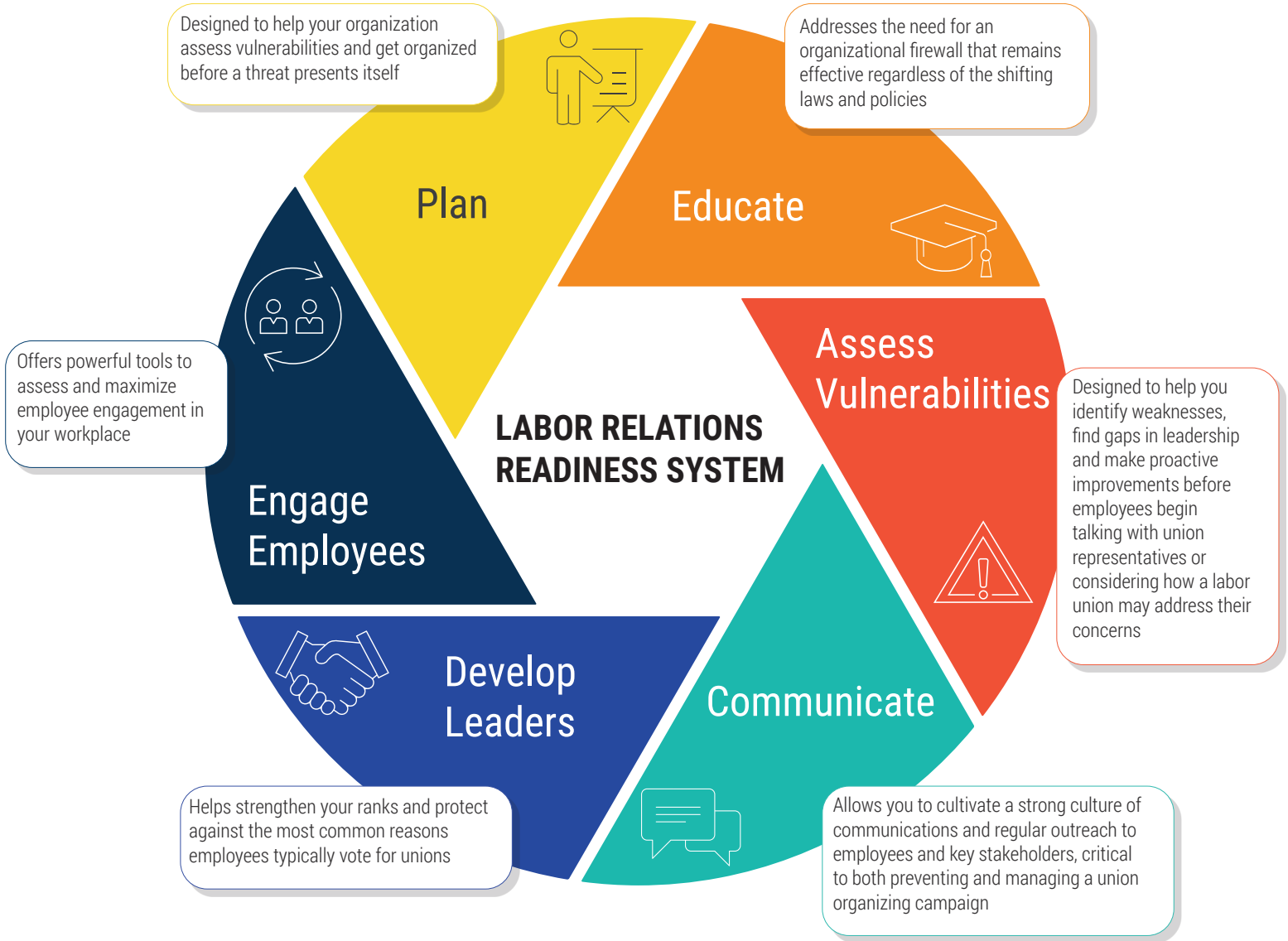
### HOW TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS EMPLOYEE RELATIONS VULNERABILITIES

The Labor Relations Readiness System has prepared companies to avert union organizing campaigns in settings ranging from healthcare to manufacturing to entertainment. With the results of the LRRS, we’ve helped some of the nation’s largest corporations avoid new unions while containing their existing bargaining units.

The six elements of the process include:

- Plan
- Educate
- Assess Vulnerabilities
- Communicate
- Develop Leaders
- Engage Employees

If you’re ready to get started with your own Labor Relations Readiness Assessment, IRI Consultants can guide you through the process. ■

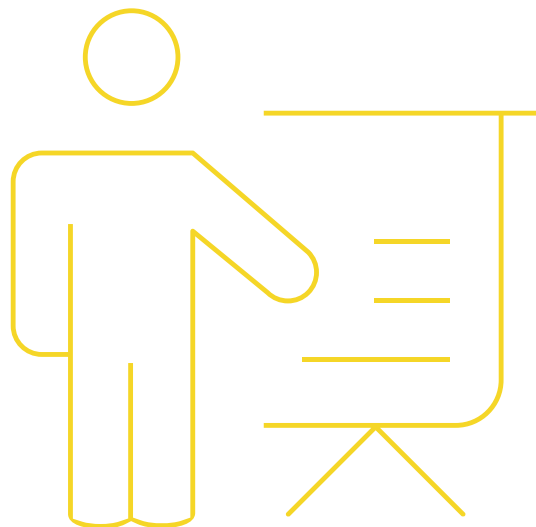


# PLAN



The importance of preparation in today's labor environment cannot be overstated. It is at the heart of both reducing the risk of union organizing activity and being prepared, should a petition for election be filed.

The components outlined within the **Plan Phase** are designed to help your organization assess vulnerabilities and get organized before a threat presents itself.



# EDUCATE



Your management team needs to fully grasp the risk of unionization and how best to manage it. This includes understanding union organizing strategies and trends, stakeholder roles, the NLRB election process and the preventive steps your organization should take to reduce vulnerabilities.

With ever-changing labor laws, the need for continual education and training can often be overwhelming. The **Educate Phase** addresses the need for an organizational firewall that remains effective regardless of the shifting laws and policies. This means systematic, ongoing education and training that begins at the top of the organization and extends throughout.



# ASSESS VULNERABILITIES



IRI uses sophisticated diagnostic tools to help gauge employee engagement and issues that could trigger union organizing in your workplace.

The components outlined within the **Assess Vulnerabilities Phase** are designed to help you identify weaknesses, find gaps in leadership and make proactive improvements before employees begin talking with union representatives or considering affiliation.



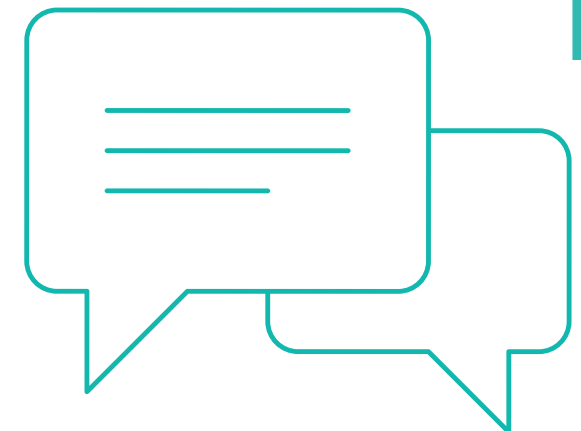
# COMMUNICATE



A strong culture of communications and regular outreach to employees and key stakeholders is critical to both preventing and managing a union organizing campaign.

The **Communicate Phase** will allow you to:

- Inform and educate employees through frequent communications
- Reach employees across the organization, 24/7
- Facilitate open dialogue, face-to-face communications, answer questions and provide reliable materials for employees
- Anticipate key issues and organizing threats with prepared documents and messaging that has already received the necessary legal review and executive approval





# DEVELOP LEADERS

Educated and informed managers are the foundation of any effective labor relations prevention program. IRI's customized training programs can help implement proven strategies to prevent and prepare for union organizing activity, including a representation election.

The **Develop Leaders Phase** will help strengthen your ranks and protect against the most common reasons employees typically vote for unions:

- Feelings of disrespect
- Perceptions of unfairness, favoritism and inconsistent application of rules, processes and discipline
- Feelings of being disengaged and not valued in the organization
- Concerns about insecurity in their jobs or roles in the organization, with little understanding of its overall goals and challenges



# ENGAGE EMPLOYEES

For employees, engagement means feeling they are an essential part of the organization and are valued and respected. Engaged employees understand an organization's mission and their role in it, enjoy productive relationships with their managers and offer their input and best efforts. They are also much less likely to support a unionization effort.

The **Engage Employees Phase** offers powerful tools to assess and maximize employee engagement in your workplace.



## READINESS IN ACTION

**WHILE NO TWO STRATEGIES ARE THE SAME, THE ACTION STEPS THAT MAINTAIN A DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE ARE RELATIVELY CONSISTENT.**

## CHAPTER THREE

# IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL READINESS CAMPAIGN

Once the Labor Relations Readiness Assessment identifies which areas need attention, it's time to take action. What your action plan looks like will differ from any other. Most importantly, you'll want to prioritize and budget to address your most vulnerable areas first.

The key word in "Positive Employee Relations" is the word positive, and focusing on that can help your company become an employer of choice. The term is bandied about, but the nitty-gritty is that an employer of choice is an organization that has a brand for being a great place to work. It is a place prospective employees are attracted to because they believe they will have an excellent employee experience. Additionally, it is a place with high employee retention because everyone there enjoys a supportive organizational culture, good relations with management, fulfilling work, and career opportunities.

Each element of the Labor Relations Readiness System can contribute to your reputation as an employer of choice and each element has specific training and tools that can help you overcome identified vulnerabilities.

Throughout this process, it's important to remember that union organizing efforts look vastly different today than they did even just pre-pandemic. Employee trust in "big labor" and belief in the idea that a union can swoop in and make good on a myriad of promises are no more. Instead, worker groups are uniting to address concerns and create a sense of belonging at the

companies they work for.

Leaders need to understand how to deepen employee engagement and develop alternate ways for employees to resolve their need for belonging. It takes a concerted leadership effort. Do your managers and supervisors understand the value of workplace belonging and how it impacts the workforce and company culture?

After you prioritize the six focus areas, understanding the action steps needed to address your most vulnerable areas can be overwhelming. There are often a variety of solutions for any given concern. At IRI, our consultants have advised hundreds of companies on planning, educating, assessing vulnerabilities, communicating, developing leaders and engaging employees. We've learned that while no two strategies are the same, the action steps that work to help maintain a direct connection between employer and employee are relatively consistent.

As you move forward with your action plan, we'll cover the fundamentals and best practices for optimizing your strategy and implementing your action plan. ■

# PLAN

## A Roadmap for Labor Readiness

In the PLAN phase, you'll want to identify the goals, determine the approach, understand your existing resources and infrastructure, and outline the actions needed to create and sustain a true state of readiness.

### LABOR RELATIONS READINESS ASSESSMENT

The comprehensive Labor Relations Readiness Assessment begins with an in-person or virtual session, asking you and your top leaders to dive deep into your organization's current state of readiness. Our unique intake process will help you not only identify your gaps and vulnerabilities, but the resulting Plan provides a full roadmap for prioritizing and taking action on identified opportunities.

### LABOR RELATIONS SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The Labor Relations Skills Assessment evaluates managers' depth and breadth of knowledge, skills and confidence when communicating with employees about the NLRA, unions, union organizing and related topics. The results of the online self-assessment and subject matter "quiz" establishes baseline understanding from which learning objectives and content can be customized for targeted leadership training and development.

### LABOR RELATIONS PLAYBOOK

IRI's Labor Relations Playbook provides customized educational, communications and campaign materials to help organizations address situations that arise during organizing campaigns. The Playbook assists leaders in identifying, preparing for and responding to potential union threats. It is designed to address the needs of various stakeholder groups including senior executives, supervisors/managers, legal counsel and human resources. The Playbook is built on a foundation of common issues and best practices, and can be customized based on the individual needs of your organization.

### ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLAN

The Election Campaign Plan includes a written and operational plan, based on a robust campaign calendar of weekly and daily meetings, outreach, activities and communication, spanning the election and post-election campaign timeline. Your plan incorporates specific objectives and action items and details the communications and messaging you need reviewed and approved prior to the filing of a petition for election.



# EDUCATE

Education Desinged to Build An Knowledge Firewall

Moving on to the EDUCATE phase means education for the C-suite, board and senior leaders, your HR team, operational leaders and employees. The knowledge needed for each of these audiences is unique, and may include the financial impact of unionization, corporate campaigns, preventive strategies, recognizing and responding, and more.

## READINESS RESPONSE TEAMS

The Readiness Response Team (RRT) is comprised of a multi-disciplinary group of leaders, trained to serve at the first sign of union activity. Education includes preparedness to address employee questions and concerns surrounding union organizing in an effort to meet their need for information. The primary role of educating and developing the RRT is to engage employees, and provide the truth, so team members trust the employer enough to discuss unionization openly.

## LABOR RELATIONS TRAINING FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

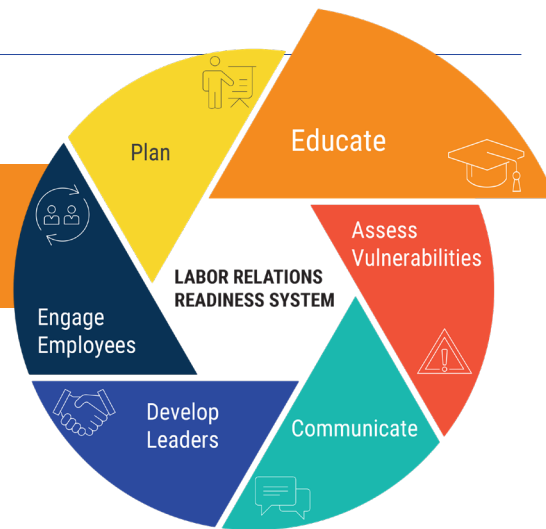
IRI can work with you to identify a team of Human Resource professionals suited to Employee Advocates training. Employee Advocates help complement management's messaging, and enhance employee understanding of their rights under the law. The Employee Advocate role does not replace the direct relationship between management and employees, but instead provides employees with an additional resource for questions and information.

## UNIONPROOF CERTIFICATION

Educate your HR team with [UnionProof Certification](#), a self-paced online course, complete with 6 units of 24 comprehensive lessons. Each of the lessons - from The History of Unions and the NLRB to How Unions Organize - provides one hour of SHRM recertification credit. When your HR professionals get certified, they'll have the ability to support your organization in the event of any labor relations challenges.

## EMPLOYEE RIGHTS EDUCATION

An effective labor relations strategy includes outreach and communications to help employees make an informed decision on unionization. IRI works together with employers to use internal resources to educate employees about the organization's position on unionization, authorization cards and employee rights.



## NEW HIRE ORIENTATION MATERIALS

Orientation is an ideal time for an organization to communicate key aspects of its culture and mission, including its philosophy on remaining union-free. In this educational step, evaluate and update the labor relations component of your [orientation programs](#). You may need to develop new materials with education about employee rights and facts about unions and union organizing. Consider management orientation materials also include guidelines on communicating with employees about unions, unionization and the role of managers in helping maintain a union-free work environment.

## TRAINING & EDUCATION VIDEOS

Employers today are closing the employee education gap with [video](#), rapidly moving to digital distribution. Video for employees has eclipsed many other mediums, and for good reason. Video can help your company stay union-free for the simple reason that retention rates increase by 65% when information is delivered through video. Employees are more likely to watch videos for information updates and training than to read emails and documents.

### Video Education For Employees

Video is an effective and engaging visual resource to concisely communicate complex labor and business literacy topics to a broad employee audience. Consider using short, animated videos to educate employees and managers about the NLRA.

### Video Behavior Modeling for Managers

Video can demonstrate common union-related scenarios to educate your managers on how to communicate important information about unions and union tactics. Consider the use of 3-5 minute video vignettes help supervisors and managers recognize and respond in similar situations and provide consistency within training teams that may be conducting multiple sessions with hundreds of participants.

### Train-The-Trainer

Consider educating your teams with Train-the-Trainer modules for employee and manager education that can be used by training teams, complete with instructor-led video and online tools.

## ELEARNING

Implementing the right custom [eLearning strategy](#) to promote learning behaviors has become a business imperative for maintaining high productivity, employee retention, filling the leadership pipeline, protecting brand reputation, and enabling people to acquire new knowledge and skills to maximize potential. eLearning answers the question of how to continuously deliver consistent learning opportunities for improved compliance, productivity, career advancement, technical and social skills development, and a myriad of other topics like labor unions and leadership.

# ASSESS VULNERABILITIES

An ongoing effort, the ASSESS VULNERABILITIES phase includes not only true assessments but social listening, digital media monitoring and company-wide, site-specific analysis of the data gathered with recommendations for action steps.

## UNION VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

A skilled [union vulnerability assessment](#) will identify key vulnerabilities and assesses the likelihood that an organization will be the target of a unionizing campaign. Using a custom discussion guide, interviews with executives, managers and supervisors based on their level of engagement and communication with direct reports and frontline employees, these confidential interviews provide critical insight. This captures employee opinion and perspective regarding the organization's leaders, culture, policies and practices, and can capture information about possible union activity.

## ISSUE, IDENTIFICATION AND IMPROVEMENT (I<sup>3</sup>)

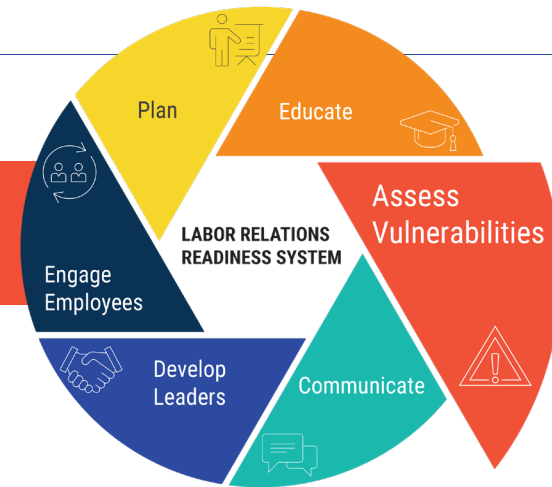
This process captures the concerns and key issues of employees in their own words, enabling management to quickly assess areas of concern, identify operational improvement opportunities and determine training needs, while at the same time highlighting best practices and areas that are working well. The process encourages employees to point to issues they perceive as making their work easier or harder, identifying both "Driving Forces" and "Restraining Forces."

## CORPORATE CAMPAIGN VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Union-led corporate campaigns involve a series of attacks on an organization with tactics deployed as part of a coordinated effort to pressure management into yielding to union demands. A Corporate Campaign Vulnerability Assessment will help you identify existing and potential vulnerabilities a union could leverage in a campaign designed to undermine the organization's reputation. This assessment measures your organization's ability to mitigate potential attacks and respond effectively.

## DIGITAL MEDIA MONITORING

This assessment tool provides an ongoing window of insight into what is being said about your organization in paid, earned and owned media channels for your industry, competitors, legal and regulatory developments, and unions or labor groups. With this type of ongoing assessment, your organization is empowered to act quickly.



# COMMUNICATE

In the COMMUNICATE phase, we build on expected and trusted channels to include a multi-media strategy that reaches every stakeholder where they are.

## COMMUNICATIONS ASSESSMENT

Begin with a [Communications Assessment](#) to evaluate your organization's ability to communicate critical messages to internal and external stakeholders. The assessment examines existing communication channels and identifies opportunities for improved messaging and additional channels to advance the organization's employee relations' goals and improve engagement within the organization and broader community.

## GENERAL EDUCATION & AWARENESS

A well-thought out communication strategy includes elected officials, community leaders, customers, your executive team, management and employees, as well as customized team and workgroup development and media training for public-facing leaders.

## CUSTOM & PRE-PRODUCED VIDEO AND WEBSITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Choose budget-friendly "off-the-shelf" video or [full custom video production](#) to deliver powerful labor relations and employee engagement messages. Build a [campaign-ready website](#), provide resources for leaders and even your [Readiness Response Team with custom websites](#). Communicating during a campaign can include a pre-produced union-specific website.

## PRINT & GRAPHIC DESIGN

Don't neglect old-school methods of communicating, but ask your designers what additional tools can be used to connect your offline communications with your online messages. Combining the two can build powerful connections to the information you need employees to hear.

## INTERNAL NEWSLETTERS

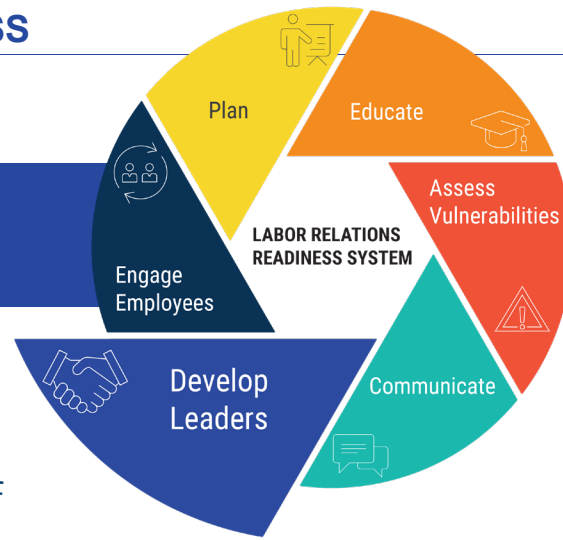
Consider a custom e-newsletter for leaders that highlights issues of importance to the organization, including industry news and trends as well as union activity and organizing. Newsletters can also feature a leadership development series and communications guidance for leaders.

## INTERNAL PODCASTS

For industries where team members are often on the go, such as trucking or healthcare, [an internal podcast](#) can help you communicate vital information in a way that's respectful of employees' time.

# DEVELOP LEADERS

In the DEVELOP LEADERS phase, it's time to create understanding that maintaining a direct connection with employees is part of their job.



## LABOR COMPETENCY/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The proactive, technology-enabled Labor Competency Assessment evaluates individual leaders on critical labor management skills (e.g., meeting facilitation, conflict management, interpersonal skills) to ensure they are equipped to create an environment in which employees do not need third-party representation. The process provides an individual participant with a report that summarizes strengths and development needs and pinpoints labor competencies/behaviors that require development/improvement. A complete organization-wide Leadership Development Needs Assessment is also available by aggregating the results of individual managers.

## LEAD ACADEMY & A BETTER LEADER

Our [LEAD Academy](#) and Advanced LEAD modules have been used to train hundreds of leaders. Delivered in 4-hour segments to groups of 12-25 in a workshop (in person or synchronous online), rather than a lecture setting, segments can be offered one at a time, two per day or configured to meet your unique leadership development needs.

Offering over 3 years of online leadership development training [A Better Leader](#) creates alignment among leadership teams. Each month, up to a year in advance, you'll schedule a single focus topic such as Intentional Conversations, Managing Change, Implicit Bias and more. Deploy the video, interactive quiz, downloadable take away and "Dig A Little Deeper" expert video to help create an environment where unions are necessary, supported by leaders people love.

## MANAGEMENT FUNDAMENTALS COACHING

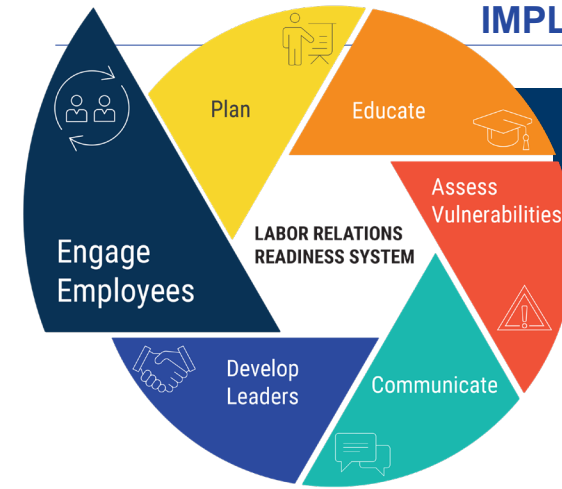
Help your managers and supervisors recognize specific triggers that undermine their effectiveness. Begin with a series of assessments to collect data and provide feedback to help subjects support business relationships and goals, then summarize the results in a confidential Self-Insight and Development Executive Report.

## PRESENTATION SKILLS FOR LEADERS

When a company faces a crisis of communication, like a union organizing drive, [presentation skills of leaders](#) can be crucial to the end result. The time for your leaders to improve their presentation skills is now, before those skills are needed.

# ENGAGE EMPLOYEES

When we are ready to tell the company's story through the experiences of employees, we've reached the ENGAGE EMPLOYEES phase. In this phase, it's time to communicate that maintaining direct connections is everyone's job.



## EMPLOYEE ADVISORY GROUPS

One of the most effective tools to promote engagement and manage difficult issues, [Employee Advisory Groups \(EAG\)](#) provide focused, non-binding employee input. Proven "safety valves" for employee concerns and frustrations, EAGs are created to reflect the various functions in the organization. EAG members can effectively help guide organizational decision-making, improve problem solving, solicit ideas and anticipate the effects of management's decisions on employees.

In collaboration with a skilled consultant, your organization can develop and establish an EAG, including member selection, orientation and hands-on outcome-oriented training. Effective field-tested methods will ensure that the EAG is set up and sustained efficiently and effectively.

## AD HOC PROBLEM SOLVING TEAMS

Ad Hoc Problem Solving Teams take into account the full range of work groups and departments involved in a particular service or product. With an emphasis on teamwork and work flow, these teams give employees an important voice in resolving issues, as well as the ability to address any concerns unions might exploit.

## TARGETED TEXTING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Consider crafting [targeted online campaigns](#) that engage employees on their preferred platforms, promote key messages, and encourage transparent dialogue.

## EMPLOYER BRAND

An [employer branding strategy](#) allows your organization to control the narrative and change the dialogue surrounding the company to ensure that an authentic and consistent message is shared across multiple platforms. At its most basic, employer branding is how you position your company to employees, candidates and the community. In effect, you're engaging employees in telling your company's story, expressing its values and differentiating you from competitors.

**CONSIDER  
MODERNIZATION  
AND INNOVATION AS  
VITAL ELEMENTS OF  
YOUR SUSTAINABLE  
APPROACH TO  
READINESS.**

## CHAPTER FOUR

# ENSURING SUSTAINABLE READINESS

A crucial element of readiness is understanding at all levels that this is not a one-and-done exercise. Your organization's ability to conduct a full range of labor relations operations is an ongoing effort. By conducting an assessment of your current state of readiness, you're creating a framework for a best-in-class strategy that can be sustained over time.

As you prioritize the activities in this eBook, think in terms of 3 cycles. In Cycle One, you'll want to address preparedness, including vulnerability assessment and planning. In the Cycle Two, you'll need to educate and communicate with all stakeholders. Finally, in Cycle Three, you'll want to focus on developing your leaders and engaging all employees in your positive employee relations strategy. These cycles should follow one another perpetually to support your state of readiness.

Structuring your approach to readiness in this way can help your organization avoid personnel gaps within your RRT or other key roles, as well as maintaining the resources you need over longer periods of time. By keeping readiness top-of-mind, leadership has greater visibility and can forecast a state of readiness. Prioritizing also allows for allocation of budget and resources based on a true strategic approach.

Consider modernization and innovation as vital elements of your sustainable approach to readiness, as there will undoubtedly be changes in legislation, social media platforms, technology, communication, and even internal shifts that will



require agility and a strategy that can support change.

To sustain readiness, be sure to think through how this effort fits into the overall operations of your company. What availability is there to support Labor Relations Readiness on an ongoing basis? What communications are necessary to ensure this initiative is embraced at all levels? While you may be working with your highly skilled IRI Consultants team to execute on your strategy, for true sustainability, you'll need buy-in from a wide sub-section of participants, company-wide.

As you can see, the IRI Labor Relations Readiness System is designed to support your company's position in the marketplace as an employer of choice. Not only does this model help you create "wow" moments for your employees, but it improves the long-term effectiveness of your readiness strategy. ■

GETTING STARTED

# ASSESS YOUR NEEDS

From getting C-suite buy-in to building your Readiness Response Team, there's no better diagnostic tool than IRI's Labor Relations Readiness System. Now that you've got the basics down, it's time to dig in and take action. Together, we'll take the advanced steps needed to craft your strategy, define your unique approach and address sustainable readiness. Let's get started.

**IRI**  
CONSULTANTS

## THE LABOR RELATIONS READINESS SYSTEM

GET A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF YOUR ABILITY TO RESPOND TO A LABOR EVENT, PRIORITIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILD AN ORGANIZATIONAL FIREWALL.

**GET STARTED**



313.965.0350



[iriconsultants.com](http://iriconsultants.com)



[/company/iri-consultants/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/iri-consultants/)

