

Employee Relations:

A key element to your EVP

Hearing “Employee Relations” can often conjure a negative emotion, even the thought that something has gone wrong. At Mercer, we see it differently and believe it can deliver a positive impact, contributing to greater engagement and a stronger employee value proposition (EVP).

Employee Relations (ER) is a century-old concept often still used to manage negotiations and disputes. Today it remains an integral part of HR that continues to evolve and grow in complexity. At Mercer, **we believe it’s time to reimagine ER’s structure and potential, and its effect on the company and workforce.** ER has the potential to create positive **employee experiences**, greater trust and engagement, and even nurture lifelong advocates for the organization.

An organization’s ER is a cultural undercurrent that truly reflects the company’s values and projects

them to customers, shareholders, and prospective, current and former employees. A culturally consistent ER brings multiple benefits, including employee attraction, recruitment, retention and commitment.

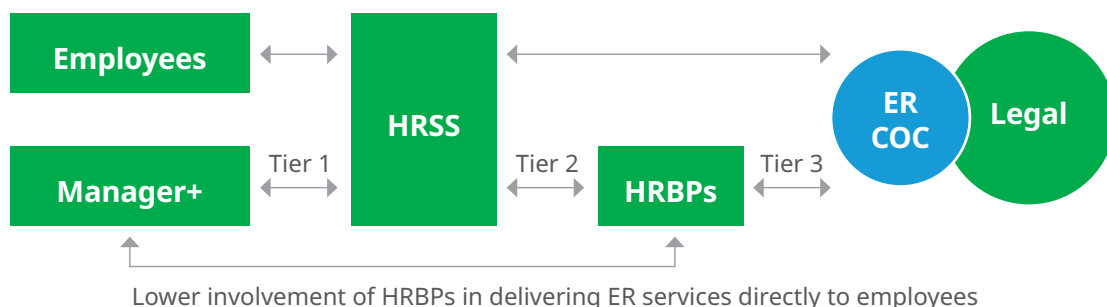
However, as the complexity of ER has grown, and in response to the rise in legal action between employers and employees, many companies have turned to outsourcing, hoping to make this process more objective, efficient and repeatable. But by going with a third-party solution, a company potentially loses the chance to create a meaningful and lasting

impact on an employee who may be going through a difficult time and need extra support and empathy.

This can be a missed opportunity. Now – perhaps more than ever – organizations need to work harder to compete in today’s challenging and evolving labor market. We believe that evaluating and revamping the ER process could be a key differentiator in this context.

Adopting a Center of Competency (COC) model can offer all the benefits of an outsourced solution while still cultivating the company’s values and delivering culturally consistent, employee-centered solutions.

Potential future state Employee Relations (ER) operating model



The Mercer approach

Mercer has a unique approach to helping its clients build comprehensive and impactful **employee experiences**. For us, it's about combining economics and empathy: we take industry and market insights, and apply analytical rigor to develop a clear view of the future outcomes for your organization and your people.

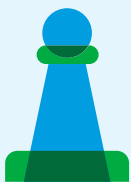
We know that the employee-employer relationship is complex and that a linear approach to ER will not successfully move the needle. If an organization focuses only on policy, forms and responses, it is missing a significant opportunity to make lasting positive impacts.

Leveraging our deep understanding of the complexities of HR, we work closely with our clients to identify the current state and the areas of opportunity. Using a multi-dimensional assessment, which includes quantitative data analysis and benchmarking using our proprietary **Operations Scanner™ tool**, combined with our agile methodology, allows us to be perfectly in step with our clients' unique needs. And importantly, our people-centered approach considers the interactions and experiences that will drive the desired organizational outcomes.



We collaborate with clients to create great employee experiences by designing processes based on interactions to ensure they are comprehensive, culturally authentic, seamless and value adding.

Our teams have the tools, deep knowledge and experience to evolve your employee listening strategy and programs. Combining over 50 years of **employee experience research** with the latest in the science of employee engagement and **change management**, our experts help deliver strategic listening programs that enhance the employee experience and drive organizational performance.



Advisory capabilities, proprietary diagnostic tools and technologies that span all aspects of employee experience, team effectiveness, leadership and culture



Our global reach includes:

130
countries

80
languages

25,000
local consultants



Senior experts who observe, listen and challenge the status quo, leveraging decades of HR and transformation experience and globally recognized thought leadership



How we help

Mercer can help you evaluate your current ER processes, then work closely with you to design and implement a sustainable and *employee-centered* solution that offers flexibility in this constantly evolving environment.

For more information, visit us online at www.mercer.com, reach out to your Mercer consultant, or [contact us](#).

Client example

Worked with a global retailer to explore ER options and streamline their HRBP model.

Mercer worked with a global retailer that was facing a common ER pitfall: their manufacturing environments were too heavily dependent on HR business partners (HRBPs) to deliver ER services. This caused tensions at both ends – inconsistent delivery of ER and general dissatisfaction among HRBPs who were being stretched too thin, wanting to focus on other services for the line executives they supported.

Outcomes of our analysis included:

- Focus groups and employee listening to best understand the complex global needs of the organization.
- Detailed time allocation analysis, down to the site-level, of how ER services were delivered (and by what roles).
- Recommendations for adjustments to the model to allow HRBPs to embrace more centralized activities and to further centralize ER services based on the client's preferred delivery methods.
- Retaining a site-presence to handle ER where necessary, but shifting the responsibility from HRBPs to dedicated ER practitioners.

Authors

Heather Frank, Senior Associate, HR Transformation, Mercer

Jonathan Gordin, Partner, HR Transformation, Mercer

Elissa Montoya, Senior Associate, HR Transformation, Mercer