

**BSBLDR502 Lead and manage effective
workplace relationships**

Learning Guide

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BSBLDR502 Lead and manage effective workplace relationships

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to lead and manage effective workplace relationships.

It applies to individuals in leadership or management who have a prominent role in establishing and managing processes and procedures to support workplace relationships taking into account the organisation's values, goals and cultural diversity.

At this level work will normally be carried out within complex and diverse methods and procedures, which require the exercise of considerable discretion and judgement, using a range of problem solving and decision making strategies.

Elements of competency

There are 4 “elements of competency” in this unit. Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

They are:

1. Manage ideas and information
2. Establish systems to develop trust and confidence
3. Manage the development and maintenance of networks and relationships
4. Manage difficulties to achieve positive outcomes

Evidence of Competency

In order to demonstrate your competency, you will need to provide evidence. This is the Performance Evidence for the unit:

Evidence of the ability to:

- develop and/or implement processes to manage ideas and information including:
 - communicating information to support others to achieve work responsibilities
 - facilitating employees' contributions to consultation on work issues
 - providing feedback on the outcomes of consultations
 - resolution of issues raised or referral to relevant personnel
- establish and/or implement policies to ensure that the organisation's cultural diversity and ethical values are adhered to
- provide leadership through own behaviour including:
 - professional conduct that promotes trust with internal and external contacts
 - adjusting own interpersonal communication style to meet the organisation's cultural diversity and ethical environment
- plan for, and manage, the use of networks to support identifiable outcomes for the team and the organisation

- develop and/or implement processes and systems to manage difficulties including:
 - identifying and resolving conflicts and other difficulties according to organisational policies and procedures
 - planning how to address difficulties
 - providing guidance, counselling and support to assist co-workers in resolving their work difficulties.

Focus of this unit



This unit focuses on establishing and managing processes and procedures to support workplace relations. The objective is to ensure that there is clarity and commitment throughout the organisation in relation to its values and goals and that systems are in place to achieve them. This involves analysing and communicating information, establishing systems to develop and maintain effective working relationships and networks, and implementing strategies to overcome difficulties.

There is a considerable element of legislative compliance that is implicit in the management of workplace relations. For this reason, it is a good idea to use legislative requirements as the basis on which to build policies and procedures. Once the legislative structure is clarified, policies, procedures and processes can be designed to provide a framework for effective work relationships that take into account the organisation's values and goals.

Workplace relations



Workplace relations is the current preferred name for what used to be called “industrial relations”. It is more appropriate in Australia to use this term because many workplaces are not industries.

A historical perspective

To put this subject into perspective, we should take a look back at the history of employer/employee relationships.

Originally, most societies operated under a feudal system. The society was predominantly agricultural. Those who owned the land were at the top of the hierarchy. They were the aristocrats. Those who worked the land were at the bottom of the hierarchy. They were the peasants. A feudal lord issued directives and the peasants had no choice but to obey.

Those with a trade had a higher social standing than peasants. Last names often indicated their trade: blacksmith, cooper, miller etc. Their structure was similarly rigid. Young boys would be “indentured” to a tradesman as an apprentice. They would usually move away from their own family and live with the tradesman, who was their “master”.

The industrial revolution changed the face of society. Men, women and children moved to towns to work in factories. However, the “master/servant” social structure was so deeply ingrained that it also applied to the employer/employee relationship. Child labour and appalling working conditions often resulted.

The union movement grew up as a reaction to the exploitation of workers. Individually, workers had no power to improve their pay and working conditions but collectively they had the power to withdraw their labour. Socially, the result was an adversarial attitude. Employees saw the employer as an enemy they had to fight, and vice versa.

The current perspective

We now recognise the importance of a participative approach to workplace relations. Even 20 years ago, a manager could issue instructions and expect them to be obeyed without question. The workplace was autocratic. These days the workplace needs to be more democratic.



“Autocracy” - a system of government by one person with absolute power
“Democracy” - control of an organisation or group by the majority of its members

The modern workplace is completely different from the past. Competition is global and fierce. Technology is changing the way we live and work – and will continue to change. The success of an organisation now depends on the minds rather than the muscles of their work force.

Expectations have also changed. People expect to be treated with respect, regardless of their type of work or level in the chain of command. Workers are aware that they have rights and legal avenues if their rights are violated.

In order for an organisation to survive and thrive in the current climate, they need to make the best use possible of their main resource – the intelligence, knowledge, skills and motivation of their workforce. This will give the organisation the flexibility it needs to change and grow.

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