



Employee Relations
Technology Platform
**Emerging Business
Buyer's Guide**

HRACUITY®

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A Note From Our CEO



The role of an HR and employee relations (ER) team is ever changing, especially given today's environment. When you are a small-to-mid-sized organization in growth mode, those challenges multiply. You are now wearing multiple hats, serving as the recruiter on Monday, an HR Generalist on Tuesday and an ER Specialist Wednesday through Friday.

The stress rises if you are using a manual process, such as Excel spreadsheets, paper files or folders in your email, to document employee concerns and conduct investigations. The way you handle these concerns not only impacts your workforce, but it can affect your organization's reputation and brand. Without technology and a centralized process, the risk of misplacing critical information rises, and it becomes seemingly difficult to ensure that all employees are treated fairly.

That is why we created this Buyer's Guide. We aim to offer both guidance on how to select the right software, as well as strategies for managing employee issues in today's new world of work. After all, the tools we use and the strategies we employ are all a means to a larger end — creating positive, fair work environments for our most valued asset: our employees.

While you may be thinking that you are not big enough to justify a tech spend on ER software, the truth of the matter is, if a potential lawsuit arises down the road, the amount of money and time spent working with legal to sift through Excel spreadsheets, old documents and emails will outweigh the investment you could be making today.

Technology that offers insightful data and analytics will help you prepare for the future. HR Acuity provides all the tools and best practices you need to handle employee issues, proactively manage escalating trends and address harassment and discriminatory concerns. This prevents costly litigation and promotes brand preservation as you grow in headcount.

Our Buyer's Guide will give you the knowledge and confidence you need to make the best decisions for your organization. I will also offer tips to inspire your journey and elevate the way your organization thinks about employee relations.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me directly or anyone on our team. We are employee relations experts, and we understand the challenges you are facing today. We are here to help.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deb J. Muller'.

Deb J. Muller

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Why Do I Need an Employee Relations Technology Platform Now?

A single employee issue can easily cost you time, legal fees, damages — and even worse, your company's reputation. Using a technology platform with built-in intelligence helps you identify, track and investigate employee issues quickly and accurately, document and manage employee cases and uncover trends to make informed decisions. It is imperative to find a platform that is purpose-built to handle ER concerns and investigations, in addition to reporting capabilities and templates to guide a best practice approach.

In other words, the right employee relations technology can offer valuable insights that help you do what you're already doing manually, but more easily and accurately. The tricky part is finding the right solution that can address your growing company's unique needs.

Key Takeaway

Employee relations requires a unique approach, specialized technology and a dose of innovation. Just like you'd go to a trained specialist for your health — the same idea applies to your employees.

[Learn more here](#)



What are My Options for Employee Relations Software?

At the most basic level, you need a way to methodically and efficiently track, investigate and analyze issues. While there are many solutions designed to accomplish this goal, understanding how each one works will help you identify the one that's right for your organization.

Let's look at the different systems used today.



Key Takeaway

Think about a few examples in your day-to-day experiences where an ER technology solution would be valuable. For example:

Reporting to Senior Leaders

The right employee relations software can help you be predictive with your data and tell a story about your culture and business-related issues. Using an ER technology solution, you can integrate both internal events, like a holiday party or sales meeting, and external events, like #MeToo or a recent election. Plus, by delving into certain trends and spikes, you can validate your ROI for creating a new policy.

Basic Systems

Basic approaches to managing employee relations are just that: basic. They include tools like spreadsheets, email and shared drives — and are often the first go-to methods for emerging businesses. Word of caution: while inexpensive and readily available, basic systems like these come with challenges and lack the powerful insights you need to ensure compliance and provide visibility into ongoing trends.

Documentation

While the skillset required for these simple systems are fairly basic, your employee relations data is anything but. There are limitations to the type of information that you can store (e.g., Excel doesn't allow attachments). Plus, cases are often scattered in different places and entered differently by each team member, making it difficult to retrieve and preserve data.

Scalability becomes arduous, if not impossible, and the lack of consistency can put your organization at risk.

Investigation

While collaboration software like Google Sheets, SharePoint and shared drives can help facilitate sharing data, they pose compliance, privacy and/or ethical risks to the organization when it comes to security, confidentiality and the ability to maintain anonymity. Access is managed by the individual and it's hard to block permissions, which makes it easy for confidential information to be shared with the wrong people.

Reporting and Analytics

Basic systems can report on simple matters, like the date a case was opened or closed — but it's what happens between those dates that reveals vital information about what's going on internally. Limited search and reporting functionalities will prevent you from tracking by people, cases or issues.

If you can't record the dots, you can't connect them. Missing, inaccessible or lost data makes it nearly impossible to spot trends and detect patterns of behavior that you need to proactively manage.

Key Takeaway

Basic systems are simple but come with major limitations:

- They don't address the "how"
- There is no consistency among investigators
- They don't connect the dots
- They don't address employee experience

Dedicated Employee Relations Technology Platforms

A number of technology solutions exist to address employee relations, but they are not necessarily purpose-built for the real-life complexities inherent in employee relations. A dedicated solution should not only let you document every aspect of an issue, but it should also help to systematically guide you through an investigation process to help you get to the root causes of an issue. Ideally, your dedicated employee relations solution should also support best practices for permissions and reporting while maintaining confidentiality.

Managing employee relations cases isn't always easy. Rarely do employee issues follow a set formula or straight path. The right solution will reveal what's going on in your organization through a process that is user-friendly, drives greater buy-in and creates the analytics that leadership in your organization needs to see. With a dedicated technology platform, you have key data at your fingertips to answer organizational questions and drive strategic decisions that will continue to help your company grow.



Making the Business Case

Employee relations technology is an investment that pays dividends right away — and it's important that your organization's key decision-makers understand not only the value of the platform but also the risk of not making the investment, especially as you grow.

To help you make your case to stakeholders, we partnered with Forrester Consulting to uncover qualitative and quantitative benefits of employee relations technology. The fact is, things like brand reputation, brand advocacy, employee experience and productivity are all directly correlated with a strong employee relations function.

Explaining the Value & Need

As a main user of employee relations technology, you may find yourself focusing on the many software features, process improvements and time savings that impact your day-to-day, but remember, when selling the value to your stakeholders, they need the big picture. Direct your conversation to what it means for them and the value it brings to the organization — things like ROI, ease of use and implementation, connectivity and reducing organizational risk.

Put yourselves in your stakeholders' shoes: How does an employee relations technology platform help them achieve their goals, address frustrations and ultimately make the organization a better place to work?

Key Takeaway

Employee relations technology helps organizations deliver an average 520% ROI (or more). HR Acuity offers an [ROI calculator](#) that can give you an exact value for your organization.

Selling to Your Stakeholders

Before you make your case, it's important that you know your audience. Each stakeholder will have different pain points and goals that motivate their decisions.

CEO/C-Suite

Primary Concerns:

- Reputational risk
- Data
- #MeToo
- Culture
- Employee experience
- Communication with the Board

Key Benefits of Employee Relations Technology:

- Relevant analytics can be woven into strategy to ensure greater organizational effectiveness
- Employee insights and trends can help improve and direct culture
- Employee alignment around mission, vision and values
- A better workplace and more engaged workforce

General Counsel

Primary Concerns:

- Protecting the company's reputation
- Analyzing risk and consulting with leaders across the organization on ways to address it
- Maintaining an ethical culture

Chief Human Resources Officer / Chief People Officer

Primary Concerns:

- Surprise or scandal that could shine a bad light on HR or the company
- Lack of employee trust in their HR department
- Lack of insights to inform strategic talent decisions
- Having the wrong information altogether

Key Benefits of Employee Relations Technology:

- Relevant analytics can be woven into strategy to help the HR department more effectively support company goals
- Employee insights and trends can help improve and direct culture

Note: Aligning employees with your company mission, vision and values requires employee behavioral data, not simply engagement data or employee sentiments.

Key Benefits of Employee Relations Technology:

- Analytics that inform risk management strategies and protect the brand
- Information that can be used to improve ongoing development and communication of workplace policies
- Insight into employee relations issues that might otherwise remain hidden

What are the Important Features and Functionality for My Organization?

Leverage this checklist to help evaluate the right software for your employee relations team.

Conducting Investigations

- ☐ Embedded best practice tips, workflows and tools for employee relations and investigations
- ☐ Guided interview templates because what you ask is the key to what you are told
- ☐ Features designed to help your organization protect privilege, when needed
- ☐ Ability to designate involved parties as complainants, subjects and witnesses
- ☐ Auto-generated investigation close-out reports that adhere to EEOC recommendations
- ☐ Role-based permissions ensuring confidentiality and eliminating the perception of retaliation
- ☐ Governed approval and review process

Guided Employee Relations Workflows

- ☐ Centralized repository for all documentation and evidence
- ☐ Easy and seamless collaboration with team members
- ☐ Configurable letter and communication templates
- ☐ Electronic records of documentation receipt
- ☐ Scheduled tasks to keep cases current and on track
- ☐ Ability to upload documents, regardless of file type
- ☐ Document library for easy access to most frequently used policies

Accessing Analytics & Insights

- ☐ Readily accessible predefined reports and dashboards
- ☐ Ability to track issues and trends by type, action, owner, severity, status, etc.
- ☐ User-friendly report creation
- ☐ Multi-field search, save and schedule capabilities
- ☐ Permission-based reporting and dashboards

Permissions, Security & Confidentiality

- ☐ Role-based permissions following employee relations best practices
- ☐ Compliance with GDPR
- ☐ Single Sign On (SSO)
- ☐ Multi-factor authentication
- ☐ Attorney-Client privilege
- ☐ Employee can submit issue anonymously via webform

Training/Support

- ☐ Training focused on navigation and adoption
- ☐ Live support team available 24 hours per day, Monday-Friday to answer questions
- ☐ 24/7 Support Center with employee relations articles and videos

Integrating With Other Solutions

- ☐ Seamless integration with HRIS
- ☐ Legacy system data integration to maintain historical information
- ☐ Integration with ticket management solutions and hotlines

Key Takeaway

After you create your must haves, break them down:

Do you understand which technology platforms meet these needs? Do you understand the difference between the solutions available? Have you explained the value and need to your key stakeholders?

We would love to help you evaluate the right employee relations software for your organization!

Contact us at info@hracuity.com to learn more.

Summary

We hope you find our Buyer's Guide resourceful as you are beginning to evaluate the right employee relations technology software for your organization. The HR Acuity team is #AllIn when it comes to employee relations, and we are here to help answer any questions you have about HR Acuity, managing employee issues and inspiring your organization to think differently about employee relations as you are gearing up for growth. Please feel free to reach out to us, we would be happy to partner with you!

Resources

- ▶ [HR Acuity Buyer's Checklist](#)
- ▶ [Forrester ROI Calculator](#)
- ▶ [HR Acuity at a Glance](#)
- ▶ [Blog: Importance of a Specialized Technology](#)

Let's continue to elevate employee relations! Connect with us on social media and reach out to us with any questions:

Contact us/request a demo >

www.hracuity.com/demo

Protect Your Reputation and Build a Better Workplace With HR Acuity.



www.hracuity.com

About HR Acuity

While you can't prevent every employee relations issue, you can change how you respond. HR Acuity is the only technology platform specifically built for employee relations and investigations management. HR Acuity's SaaS technology empowers you with built-in intelligence, templates and reporting so you can conduct best practice, fair investigations; uncover trends and patterns through forward-looking data and analytics; and provide trusted, consistent experiences for your people.

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