CHAPTER 13

Developing a Positive Labour Relations Climate

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# Assessing the labour relations climate

A positive labour climate potentially exists when there is a positive correlation between employee commitment and union commitment. This potentially occurs when union members are committed to both employers and the union. A positive labour relations climate illustrates are relationship between the employer and the union where there is a willingness to respond helpfully and constructively in working together.

Table 13.1 summarizes the items describing this definition of labour relations climate. You might wish to respond to the questions in the table.

**Table 13.1 – Positive Labour Relations Climate**

The following questions are recommended for measuring a labour relations climate. Why not see if this instrument would summarize some of your experiences with an organization you have worked with.

Think of an organization you worked well with (or did not work well with) and use the instrument below to assess the labour relations climate. Did the organization that you worked well in have a more positive labour relations climate?

1. Do you feel that parties keep their word and the problems are dealt with in a fair manner?

Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Fairly Often Very Often

2. How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?

Not at all A Little A Fair Amount Quite A Bit A Great Deal

3. How well does your leaders involve members in solving problems of mutual interest?

Not at all A Little Moderately Mostly Fully

4 . I have enough confidence and respect for my leaders and I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so?

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly

Disagree Agree

5. Regardless of how much formal authority my leader has, I support his/her efforts and will use my capabilities to help solve problems in my work?

None Small Moderate High Very High

6. Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances my leader would "bail me out," at his/her expense?

None Small Moderate High Very High

7. Would you characterize your working relationship between the union and management?

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly

Disagree Agree

The labour relations relationship is defined by five factors: *fairness, union-management consultation, mutual regard, member support,* and *union legitimacy* in a working relationship. *Fairness* is illustrated when parties feel that parties keep their word and that work conditions are fair and that problems are grievances are dealt with. *Union-management consultation* illustrates the sincere efforts to solve common problems when management seeks input of union members and employees and where there are problem solving committees to address problems of mutual interest. *Mutual regard* is the mutual respect that one person has for the capabilities of other people and is not an indication of personal friendship or liking. Mutual support illustrates the support for your leader and union legitimacy is a measure of the health of the relationship between the union and management.

**Task**

After assessing the labour relations climate in different experiences, ask yourself what made the climate more healthy or positive in one experience over another. Review the chapter and identify some initiatives that might be helpful in improving the labour relations climate.