

REPORT OF THE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS FORUM (ERF) 2002 EMPLOYEE SURVEY

May 2003

SUMMARY

In April 2002, the ERF conducted a study of staff attitudes in the North-East examining the key areas of employees' attitudes to their employing organisations and to their unions. The views of managers and union representatives on employee relations were also examined. In particular the findings describe a picture of the state of employee relations in the region and the extent to which partnership working is taking root. This report summarises the findings of the survey.

The survey finds much strength in the nature of employee relations in the region. Employees generally report being satisfied with their jobs and feeling committed to their employer and trade union. The North-East is seen as a very supportive environment in which to work. Employees feel supported by their organisation, their trade union and their work colleagues. Staff report high levels of job satisfaction and feel they have a great deal of involvement in how they perform their jobs. Employees report considerable willingness to go "the extra-mile" at work in terms of their willingness to make innovative suggestions to improve organisational performance. However, employees are also keenly aware of job opportunities in the wider labour market.

The general climate of employee relations in the region is viewed positively with around half of employees feeling that management and staff try to co-operate as much as possible and that unions and management work well together to make the organisation a better place to work. However, two thirds of respondents also felt that staff and management did not trust each other. Most respondents hold positive views of trade unions with two thirds reporting that employees are better off by belonging to a trade union. However, this generally positive climate for employee relations has not fully translated into partnership working in the region. Although analysis of the data clearly demonstrates that the region has considerable potential to deliver effective partnerships between organisations and their staff, there is still some way to go in achieving this.

The extent of Human Resource Management in the region is relatively well developed. Here some HR practices such as information sharing programmes, teamworking, problem solving groups and quality circles are widespread whilst other practices such as assessment centres and the use of psychological testing are relatively little used. In general the use of all HRM practices are more common with managerial and professional employees than other staff groups. The notable exception here is on-the-job training. Although teamwork is widespread there is not a lot of evidence that teams have much

autonomy to make decisions in such areas as quality or scheduling. HR managers report employees as having most involvement in quality areas and least in areas such as selecting new employees. Given the prevalence of teamworking this appears to further support the lack of autonomy in many work teams. General managers report some concerns about the flexible use of employees to meet operational requirements.

The more extensive use of human resource management practices is associated with more positive employee attitudes and behaviours and in turn with some higher levels of self-reported organisational performance.

The attitudes and behaviours of union representatives appear to be rather more like those of the “model employee” than the “disaffected militant” when we compare their attitudes to their employing organisation with the general population of employees. This would suggest that their union activity is not motivated by a sense of disloyalty to the organisation or a lack willingness to exert effort on the organisation's behalf.

The inescapable conclusion when we compare the views of managers with their employees, and where unions are recognised with their union representatives, is that managers have a rather rosier view of employee relations in general and partnership in particular.

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REPORT OF ERF 2002 SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES

1. Introduction

In April 2002, the ERF conducted a study of employee attitudes in the North-East. This report summarises the findings of the survey. The appendix provides further information about the survey sample. We mainly report the question responses in the form of tables¹.

2. Staff commitment to the organisation

Staff commitment to the organisation can have three bases, which are not necessarily mutual exclusive. Firstly, staff may have “affective” commitment, in the sense that they personally identify with the organisation. Fifty-three percent say that they are proud of their organisation, and 44 percent feel a strong sense of belonging to their employer. However, 45 percent disagree that the organisation’s problems are their own and 44 percent do not feel emotionally attached to their organisation. Secondly, staff may have a sense of commitment simply because they feel that the costs of leaving the organisation would be too great; so-called “continuance” commitment. Thus, the answers shown in table 1 suggest that a significant minority of staff feel tied to the organisation, with 48 percent agreeing that one of the few negative consequences of leaving their organisation is the scarcity of available alternatives and with 46 percent agreeing that to leave would cause too much disruption to their life. Some 39 percent of respondents feel that they have too few options to consider leaving. Thirdly, employees may experience “normative” commitment: a sense of obligation to the organisation. Thus 40 per cent agree that they owe a great deal to their organisation, and 40 percent feel that the organisation deserves their loyalty. However, the majority of employees do not necessarily feel an obligation to remain with their organisation out of a sense of duty. For example, only 25 percent say that they would feel guilty if they left the organisation now.

Table 1 - Commitment to the Organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Affective commitment</i>								
My values and this organisation’s values are very similar.	10	17	10	17	18	25	3	4.03
I feel “emotionally attached” to this organisation.	15	21	8	12	22	16	5	3.75
This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	11	18	8	23	20	16	5	3.89
I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own.	15	23	7	14	19	18	4	3.69
I feel proud of this organisation.	7	11	8	22	23	23	7	4.40
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this organisation.	10	18	9	21	21	18	5	3.97

¹ The tables report the percentage of survey respondents choosing each category. The mean score shown in the last column of the tables is the average response, taking “strongly disagree” as 1 and “strongly agree” as 7 (except for table 4 which has “no say” as 1 and “a lot of say” as 4, table 6 and 12 which has “never” as 1 and “always” as 5 and table 10 which has “very important” as 1 and “very unimportant” as 7, table 17, 18 and 23 which has “not at all” as 1 and “to a great extent” as 7 table 21, 22, 24 and 25 which has “low “ as 1 and “high” as 7, table 28 which as “not all involved” as 1 and “takes up a lot of my time” as 5).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Continuance commitment</i>								
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave this organisation right now.	10	19	10	14	18	20	8	4.04
One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	6	18	11	16	17	22	9	4.23
If I had not already put so much of myself into this organisation, I might consider working elsewhere.	8	26	14	24	14	11	4	3.56
I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.	11	22	10	18	17	15	7	3.82
<i>Normative commitment</i>								
I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	13	22	9	14	15	20	6	3.80
I owe a great deal to my organisation.	13	17	9	22	19	17	4	3.85
This organisation deserves my loyalty.	11	16	11	23	18	18	4	3.91
I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.	21	29	10	16	14	9	2	3.07

3. Perceptions of Organizational Support

Around a third (36 percent) of staff perceive their employer as caring about their well-being and opinions (37 percent) but many more staff feel that help is available from the organisation if they have a problem (58 percent) or need a special favour (58 percent).

Table 2 - Perceived support.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Perceived organisational support</i>								
The organisation really cares about my well being.	15	27	14	17	20	14	2	3.59
The organisation really values my opinions.	16	19	13	15	23	13	1	3.55
Help is available from the organisation when I have a problem.	7	9	10	15	25	27	6	4.49
The organisation would be willing to help if I needed a special favour.	7	9	7	20	27	26	5	4.50

4. Attitudes Towards the Job

In general there is a high level of job satisfaction amongst respondents. Most employees appear to like their jobs (table 3). In particular, 70 percent say that they like working at their organisation. This general satisfaction seems to reflect a positive response in relation to job autonomy (table 4) with 43 percent and 40 percent of respondents reporting a lot of say in decisions about the tasks they do and how much work they perform each day.

Table 3 - Job Satisfaction.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
In general, I like working here.	3	7	8	12	22	40	8	4.91
All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	6	13	12	11	20	34	5	4.49
In general, I don't like my job.	20	35	13	12	8	8	3	2.91

Table 4 - Job Autonomy

	No say	A little say	Some say	A lot of say
Determining what tasks I will perform from day to day.	17	14	27	43
Deciding how much work I have to perform each day.	21	12	26	40
Establishing rules and procedures about how my work is done.	19	22	30	29
Deciding how exceptional issues are to be dealt with.	24	22	35	20

However, this high level of job satisfaction does not necessarily translate into an intention to remain with the organisation (see table 5). Around 43 percent of respondents agree that they are always on the look out for a better job and 47 percent often think of quitting, suggesting that staff are keenly aware of the job opportunities outside their own organisation.

Table 5 – Intent to Quit.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
I often think of quitting this job.	11	24	7	12	18	18	11	3.97
I am always on the look out for a better job.	9	26	9	14	16	17	10	3.93
It is likely that I will look for another job during the next year.	16	25	7	15	11	14	12	3.71
There isn't much to be gained by staying in this job.	11	27	12	19	9	13	10	3.66
I am planning to leave this organisation for another job in the near future.	21	27	7	22	10	8	7	3.23
I expect to stay with this organisation until I retire.	19	16	6	22	8	16	12	3.81

5. Work Behaviour

We asked a series of questions designed to assess respondents' work behaviour. "Organisational citizenship behaviour" refers to those work behaviours which go beyond basic job performance and which are of value to the organisation. In table 7, we identify three categories of such behaviours: "helping" colleagues and "helping" the organisation, which involves providing discretionary help to work colleagues and seeking ways to improve the performance of the organisation in ways which go beyond essential job requirements, and "compliance". Helping colleague behaviours are the most widespread, which suggests that individuals are most likely to engage in extra-role behaviours when this will benefit those with whom they work on a day-to-day basis. Taking time to listen to colleague's problems or worries

emerges as the most common of such behaviour, suggesting that the North-East is a supportive work environment for employees.

Table 6 - Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean score
<i>Helping colleagues</i>						
Help new people to settle into the job.	7	26	27	23	18	3.19
Help others who have heavy workloads.	3	16	28	39	13	3.43
Help others who have been absent.	12	20	31	27	9	3.02
Take time to listen to work colleagues' problems or worries.	3	14	24	38	22	3.63
Help colleagues who have personal or domestic problems.	13	21	32	21	14	3.02
<i>Helping organisation</i>						
Assist your manager with his or her work.	18	15	24	29	14	3.07
Suggest ways to reduce waste.	16	28	30	20	7	2.76
Suggest ways to improve quality.	8	20	32	31	10	3.16
Make innovative suggestions to improve work procedures.	8	20	34	27	10	3.12
Volunteer for things that are not absolutely required.	15	22	35	22	6	2.82
<i>In role behaviour-compliance</i>						
Go to work even if you do not feel particularly well.	1	8	20	39	32	3.93
Perform according to your supervisor's requirements.	1	1	6	41	52	4.43
Perform all the tasks that are expected of you.	0	0	4	32	64	4.59
Put off until tomorrow things that should be done today.	38	34	23	5	1	1.98

6. Employee Relations

The responses in table 7 refer to the climate of relations between management and staff. Over half (55 percent) of all respondents agree that management and staff try to co-operate as much as possible. However, as many as 63 percent claim that staff and management distrust one another, whilst only 31 percent agree that management makes decisions in the best interests of all employees, and over a third (38 percent) agree that day to day relations between staff and management are poor. A sizeable minority of staff appears to have a rather negative view of management-staff relations.

Table 7 – Employee Relations Climate

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Management-employee relations</i>								
Employees and management distrust one another.	2	11	10	15	26	20	17	4.78
The relationship between employees and management is hostile.	6	29	14	14	21	10	8	3.77
Employees and management try to cooperate as much as possible.	4	11	14	15	28	25	2	4.36
Employees and management respect each other.	9	18	17	21	19	14	2	3.74
I think management makes decisions in the best interests of all employees.	10	21	22	16	17	12	2	3.50
Day-to-day relations between employees and management are poor.	5	24	19	15	15	14	9	3.87
<i>Union-management relations</i>								
Unions and management work together to make my organisation a better place to work.	6	15	10	26	26	16	2	4.07
Unions and management have respect for each other's goals.	7	18	15	30	19	10	1	3.69
In my organisation, management and unions deal with each other in an atmosphere of good faith.	7	14	15	31	22	11	1	3.84
In my organisation, unions and management generally keep their word.	9	13	14	30	19	14	1	3.84
<i>Partnership</i>								
This organisation is strongly committed to the idea that there is a "partnership" between management and employees.	7	14	15	21	22	19	3	4.07
This organisation has some way to go to achieve a fully effective "partnership" between management and employees.	2	7	7	14	21	32	18	5.15
This organisation is a "partnership" organisation.	9	20	15	27	16	10	2	3.58

As regards union-management relations (table 7 – lower half), 34 percent of respondents agree that management and unions deal with each other in good faith and keep their word and 44 percent that they work together to make the organisation a better pace to work. However, respondents were more evenly divided on whether or not unions and management respect each others' goals. With regards to partnership the general view was that organisations are not yet achieving effective partnerships with their staff in the view of the majority of employees. For example, only 28 percent of respondents agree that their organisation could be characterised as a partnership organisation.

7. General Attitudes Towards Unions

Most respondents hold positive attitudes towards unions in general, for example 45 percent agreeing that unions are a positive force in this country, 64 percent that employees are better off when they join a union, and 61 percent saying that they are glad that unions exist. Overall, there is reasonable level of endorsement of trade unionism amongst our respondents.

Table 8 - General Attitudes Towards Unions

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
Unions are a positive force in this country.	7	15	11	23	20	19	6	4.14
I am glad that unions exist.	4	7	3	25	20	30	11	4.84
People would be just as well off if there were no unions in this country.	17	30	17	22	6	5	2	2.95
Unions are an embarrassment to our society.	21	32	13	23	6	3	2	2.76
I am proud of the labour movement in this country.	5	10	9	42	13	14	7	4.17
Employees are better off when they belong to a union.	4	9	8	29	21	20	10	4.54

8. Evaluation of Unions

In terms of expected future benefits, the unions are rated most positively on the provision of a good range of membership benefits. On all other items shown in table 9, a higher proportion of respondents disagree than agree that the union's chances of winning improvements are great.

Table 9 - Perceived Effectiveness of the Union

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
The union's chances of improving my pay are great.	14.6	22	15	23	16	7	2	3.34
The union's chances of improving my physical work environment are great.	10	17	16	24	20	11	2	3.70
The union's chances of offering me job security are great.	17	25	15	28	9	5	1	3.08
The union's chances of making my job more interesting are great.	20	35	15	24	5	1	1	2.64
The union's chances of getting my organisation to operate in a better way are great.	14	23	15	25	16	6	1	3.28
The union's chances of giving me more influence over my work are great.	17	31	16	26	7	2	1	2.83
The union provides a good range of membership benefits.	8	12	8	32	20	16	4	4.08

We also asked respondents about their own priorities. These are shown in table 10. Job security emerges as the top priority followed by higher pay, the organization to operate in a better way, to have a more interesting job, better physical environment, and have more influence over work. Interestingly the area that unions are perceived as providing for most effectively, membership benefits, employees rate the least.

Table 10 - Member's Priorities

To what extent is each of the following things important to you personally?

	Very unimportant to me			Very important to me				Mean Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
To get higher pay is...	2	1	2	10	21	25	40	5.78
To have a better physical work environment is...	2	2	4	12	24	26	31	5.56
To have job security is...	2	1	1	3	8	23	63	6.34
To have a more interesting job is...	3	1	3	10	21	31	33	5.67
For the organisation to operate in a better way is...	2	0	2	10	22	27	37	5.76
To have more influence over my work is...	2	2	3	16	23	29	26	5.46
To have good membership benefits from the union is...	17	7	9	23	16	14	15	4.16

9. Union commitment and participation

Table 11 provides evidence of a reasonably high level of union commitment. For example, 41 percent agree that their values are similar to those of their union and two thirds feel that what the union stands for is important to them. However, many of the stronger, more highly affective statements, such as "I feel a strong sense of belonging to the union", "I feel proud of the union", and "I really feel as if this union's problems are my own", met with a large number of neutral responses. Most see their unions as offering support; with 68 percent agreeing that help would be available from their union if they had a problem and 44 percent think that their union cares about their well being, and 32 percent agree that their union cares about their opinions. According to our responses, 27 percent of members think of quitting their union and becoming a non-member altogether. However 80% of union members expect to remain member of their union whilst employed by their current organisation.

Table 11 - Attitudes Towards the Unions.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Union commitment</i>								
What the union stands for is important to me.	2	7	5	20	23	31	12	4.96
I feel "emotionally attached" to the union.	12	28	10	26	14	7	5	3.42
My values and the union's values are very similar.	5	15	12	28	19	17	5	4.13
The union has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	10	25	14	25	15	9	4	3.50
I really feel as if the union's problems are my own.	11	27	12	28	13	7	3	3.35
I feel a strong sense of belonging to the union.	8	24	12	26	16	9	5	3.64
I feel proud of the union.	7	17	13	33	16	9	4	3.77
I feel very little loyalty to the union	9	22	16	24	14	12	3	3.61
<i>Perceived union support</i>								
The union really cares about my well-being.	6	11	13	26	25	16	3	4.09
The union really values my opinions	7	15	11	35	18	11	3	3.86
Help is available from the union when I have a problem.	3	7	5	17	27	33	8	5.05
The union would be willing to help if I needed a special favour.	5	9	7	42	19	16	4	4.36
<i>Union quit</i>								
As long as I work here, I plan to be a union member.	5	5	3	9	6	39	35	5.62
I expect that I will be a member of the union for the foreseeable future.	4	4	2	7	7	42	35	5.73
I sometimes think about leaving the union.	30	27	5	11	12	10	5	2.95
It is likely that I will leave the union during the next year.	41	34	6	12	1	2	3	2.17

Of those respondents who said that they were union members, 79 percent said that they had never held a union position, 5 percent said that they currently held such a position, whilst another 16 percent said that they had done so in the past.

Table 12 reviews members' participation in their union. We may divide the various forms of participation into three broad categories: "activist activity", which includes those relatively demanding activities which are usually the preserve of a small group of union activists, "rank and file activity", which includes less demanding forms of participation which are usually more widely indulged in, and "representing fellow members", an activist form of participation which is concerned specifically with helping fellow members deal with their problems. As can be seen from table 12, the rank and file activities are, not surprisingly, more common, with 28 percent of members saying that they often or always read the union journal or magazine. The activist forms of participation are the least common, with 30 percent saying that they never attend union meetings and 80 percent saying that they have never volunteered to stand for union office.

Table 12 - Union Participation.

Think about how you behave in relation to the union and your work colleagues. When the opportunity arises, how often do you do each of the following?

	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean score
Attend union meetings and information sessions.	30	27	17	14	12	2.51
Attend events or functions that are not required but that help show union strength.	61	17	12	7	3	1.74
Speak well of the union to others.	25	30	23	15	8	2.50
Volunteer for union-related activities (e.g. serve on committees).	80	8	6	4	2	1.41
Distribute union information to others.	66	15	9	6	4	1.68
Give up time to help others who have union or non-union related problems.	56	20	13	8	4	1.84
Assist others with their duties.	42	20	18	16	4	2.18
Help new union members to learn the ropes at work and in the union.	56	19	13	9	4	1.85
Encourage work colleagues to join the union.	47	17	16	9	10	2.16
Read a union journal or magazine.	24	26	22	16	12	2.65
Vote in union elections.	19	14	17	17	33	3.30

10. Organisation and Union: Competing Loyalties?

To what extent does loyalty to the union imply disloyalty to the organisation? In this section, we explore this question, drawing on our further analysis of the survey data. Rather than present the full technical details, we provide an overview of the findings. This analysis is conducted for all union members only – non-union members are excluded from this analysis.

We compiled a summary measure of commitment to the “organisation” and to the union by averaging the scores on the first six questions in table 1 for affective commitment to the organisation, and the first 8 questions in table 11 for commitment to the union. If commitment to one implies lack of commitment to the other, we might expect to see a negative correlation between these two measures. In fact, this is not so. There is a positive correlation between commitment to the organisation and to the union for all union members (Pearson correlation = 0.523). This suggests that for respondents, loyalty to the union does not necessarily imply disloyalty to the organisation: if anything the two loyalties go together.

We explored this further by categorising respondents according to their pattern of commitment. We divided the sample at the mid-point of each of the commitment scales, giving us four categories of staff (table 13). Those with high commitment to both organisation and their union may be said to show dual loyalty. This group accounts for only 16 percent of union members

surveyed. Those who show low commitment to both organisation and union, who we might refer to as the “dual disaffecteds”, account for 37 percent of members, whilst 30 percent show unilaterally high commitment to the organisation, and 17 percent to their union. Given this pattern it would seem employers and unions have some way to go in winning employee commitment and building effective partnership relationships. A particular concern is that the “partnership” group are the smallest and the “dual disaffecteds” the most common in our survey.

Table 14 - Organisation and Union Loyalties

	Commitment to:		All union members, Percent.
	Their union	Their organisation	
Dual disaffecteds	Low	Low	37
Organisation loyalists	Low	High	30
Union loyalists	High	Low	17
Dual loyalists	High	High	16

11. HR Practices

In this section we report the findings on the nature of the HR practices used by organizations in our survey. We asked HR managers about the percentage of **jobs** (table 15) and percentage of **employees** (table 16) that are covered by a range of HR practices in two categories:

- a) Managerial and professional jobs of comparable status
- b) Other jobs – including routine administrative, clerical, secretarial, skilled and unskilled manual, sales jobs, etc.

The average (mean) percentage is shown in both tables. Three points are noteworthy from these findings. Firstly, some practices such as performance appraisal, induction training, on-the-job training, and information sharing is widespread and adopted for the majority of employee groups in the organization. Secondly, with the exception of on-the-job training and trade union recognition, it is the managerial and professional groups that are covered by these practices to a greater extent than other employees. Thirdly, some HR practices such as assessment centres, psychological testing, job security agreements, and skills based pay are relatively little used by the organizations in our sample.

Table 15

PERCENTAGE OF JOBS THAT...	Of managerial and professional jobs	Of other jobs (e.g. admin, clerical, secretarial, manual, & sales)
have a formal job description.	75	67
involve a sequence of two or more interviews before recruitment.	76	43
involve a formal psychological selection test before recruitment.	42	25
involve a formal "assessment centre" (a planned programme of interviews, tests, and exercises) before recruitment.	31	16
have a formal induction programme for new recruits.	93	96
are normally (in more than half the cases) filled by internal promotion from within the organization rather than by recruiting from outside.	43	37
Involve on-the-job training.	81	92
involve off-the job training, arranged and financed by the organization.	68	55
are filled by agency temporaries or subcontractors rather than by direct employees.	2	7
are covered by a formal HR planning system, for example involving an attempt to formally forecast numbers required and/or available supply.	42	44
are covered by a formal job evaluation system, designed to rank or grade jobs according to job size or job evaluation factors.	29	36

Table 16

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES THAT...	Of managers & professionals	Of other staff (e.g. admin, clerical, secretarial, manual, & sales)
are covered by a regular (e.g. annual or 6-monthly) formal performance appraisal.	77	59
have pay increases or bonuses determined by this performance appraisal.	36	15
are paid on a piece-rate or commission basis.	1	5
are included in a profit sharing scheme.	20	15
are covered by a bonus scheme based on the performance of the establishment or organization as a whole.	27	23
are covered by a bonus scheme based on the performance of the work group, department or team.	10	8
are eligible to receive pay increases based on the completion of certified training programmes (i.e. skills-based pay).	5	7
are provided with private health insurance.	46	21
have their terms and conditions determined by collective bargaining with a recognized trade union or staff association.	29	65
are actually members of a trade union or staff association.	18	53
are employed on a fixed term/temporary contract.	1	7
normally work fewer than 20 hours per week.	0	7
are involved in regular quality circles or similar problem solving groups discussing quality and/or workflow issues.	42	30
are covered by an information-sharing programme (e.g. employee newsletter or briefings).	89	89
are asked to complete an employee attitude survey on a regular basis (e.g. annually).	43	43
are covered by a written guarantee of job security or no compulsory redundancies.	8	8

We asked some further questions about the nature of teamworking, continuous improvement and job involvement. The results are shown in tables 17 and 18. Teamworking and CI practices seem to be fairly common in general. For example, only 12 percent of organisations have no teamworking and a quarter report no employees making suggestions on how improvements can be made. However, although teamwork may be widespread, over half (55 percent) of organisations give little autonomy to those working in teams. In terms of job involvement employees have the highest levels of involvement in the quality area e.g. nearly three-quarters (74 percent) are reported as being involved in quality control. In contrast employees have least involvement in technology/equipment investment decisions and in selecting new employees. Thirty nine percent are reported as having no involvement at all in hiring decisions. Given the prevalence of teamworking this is perhaps a little surprising.

Table 17 - Teamwork and Continuous Improvement

	Not at all		To some extent			To a great extent		Mean
Work mainly as part of a team, sharing responsibility for a range of tasks.	0	6	6	37	19	19	14	4.81
Rotate jobs within their work group.	8	17	8	29	27	8	4	3.88
Work in self-directed or autonomous teams (i.e. responsible for scheduling and quality decisions without direct supervision).	19	21	15	33	10	2	0	2.98
Meet on a regular basis in small groups to discuss quality or production/service delivery problems.	10	17	17	19	15	14	8	3.85
Receive training in group problem solving techniques.	21	12	27	19	12	8	2	3.19
Receive training aimed at making them multi-skilled.	4	8	12	27	29	14	8	4.40
Put forward suggestions to management for improved production/service operations, quality improvement or waste reduction.	4	6	15	40	21	8	6	4.15
Regularly perform beyond the formal requirements of their jobs.	0	10	8	39	19	25	0	4.42

Table 18 - Job Involvement

	Not at all		To some extent			To a great extent		Mean
The planning and scheduling of their work.	6	15	25	37	12	6	0	3.50
The design of their jobs.	8	27	25	23	15	2	0	3.17
Quality control.	6	15	6	23	35	8	8	4.20
Improvements in production or service delivery methods.	4	12	21	21	29	10	4	4.04
Developing new products or services.	15	33	23	19	8	2	0	2.78
Investments in new equipment or technology.	33	25	15	19	6	2	0	2.46
The selection of new employees.	39	17	10	20	10	6	9	2.61
Changes in their terms and conditions of employment.	15	6	21	27	14	14	4	3.73

12. People Management Values

We asked HR managers about some of their underpinning values in people management. Here we find HR managers reporting high levels of encouraging of employees to expect long term employment (only 5 percent of HR managers disagreed with this statement); that employees are committed to the values of the establishment; and that changes are rarely introduced without consultation or discussion with employees first. Only 14 percent report those managers are opposed to union recognition. However, more (32 percent) would prefer to deal directly with employees rather than go through a trade union. Nearly a third of managers thought that given the chance, employees would take unfair advantage of management.

Table 19

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
We encourage most employees to expect long-term employment here.	1	4	0	21	12	42	21	5.52
Employees here are fully committed to the values of this establishment.	0	4	8	14	27	44	4	5.12
Given the chance, employees at this establishment sometimes try to take unfair advantage of management.	2	17	12	21	35	8	6	4.14
Most decisions at this workplace are made without consulting employees.	15	27	21	10	14	8	6	3.25
Those at the top are best placed to make decisions concerning this establishment.	2	15	12	29	25	15	2	4.13
We do not introduce any significant changes here without first discussing them with our employees.	12	44	8	4	15	12	6	3.25
We would rather consult directly with our employees than deal with a trade union or staff association.	4	35	10	21	10	8	14	3.75
In general, managers here are opposed to union recognition.	20	35	12	21	2	4	8	2.94

13. Employee Relations – HR Views

The responses in table 20 refer to the climate of relations between management and staff. Over three-quarters (77 percent) of all respondents agree that management and staff try to co-operate as much as possible. However, as many as 44 percent claim that staff and management distrust one another, whilst only 24 percent disagree that management makes decisions in the best interests of all employees, and 14 percent agree that day to day relations between staff and management are poor.

With regards to partnership (the bottom of table 20) the general view was that organisations were well on the way to effective partnership with their employees. For example, 77 percent of respondents agree that their organisation could be characterised as a partnership organisation.

As regards union-management relations (table 20 – middle), 81 percent of respondents agree that management and unions deal with each other in good faith and keep their word and 72 percent that they work together to make the organisation a better place to work. The inescapable conclusion when we compare the views of managers with their employees and stewards' views of employee relations is that they have a rather rosier picture.

Table 20

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Management-employee relations</i>								
Employees and management distrust one another.	2	14	28	10	18	26	4	4.20
The relationship between employees and management is hostile.	0	2	10	10	12	41	26	5.57
Employees and management try to co-operate as much as possible.	0	2	6	16	26	41	10	5.27
Employees and management respect each other.	0	2	20	18	24	37	0	4.75
I think management makes decisions in the best interests of all employees.	0	8	16	18	12	43	4	4.78
<i>Union-management relations</i>								
Unions and management work together to make my organisation a better place to work.	0	3	14	11	19	42	11	5.17
Unions and management have respect for each other's goals.	0	3	11	17	28	33	8	5.03
In my organisation, management and unions deal with each other in an atmosphere of good faith.	0	0	6	14	28	45	8	5.36
In my organisation, unions and management generally keep their word.	0	0	3	14	17	58	8	5.55
Day-to-day relations between employees and management are poor.	2	8	4	12	4	49	22	5.41
<i>Partnership</i>								
This organisation is strongly committed to the idea that there is a "partnership" between management and employees.	0	2	12	10	22	37	18	5.33
This organisation has some way to go to achieve a fully effective "partnership" between management and employees.	16	45	26	2	6	2	4	2.58
This organisation is a "partnership" organisation.	0	28	10	18	32	12	2	3.96

14. Organisational Performance

We asked the managerial respondents - both HR and general managers - for their views on a range of performance measures for their organisation. We asked in a comparative format. Firstly, we asked how well managers perceived their organisation performed in comparison to others in their industry/sector and secondly, in comparison to their own internal benchmarks of good performance. The results are shown below for HR managers in tables 21 and 22, and in tables 24 and 25 for general managers. Managers generally appear most satisfied with organisational performance in areas such as quality, customer satisfaction, health and safety and labour turnover. In contrast organizational performance in financial performance, communication, and employee job satisfaction is rated most negatively. In general the views of HR managers and general managers were closely aligned on performance ratings.

Table 21 - Industry/Sector Performance HR Managers

COMPARED TO OTHERS DOING SIMILAR KINDS OF WORK...		Low	Medium	High	Mean			
the cost of producing our products, services and/or programmes is...	6	12	21	39	12	6	6	3.79
the quality of our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	2	0	15	21	27	35	5.75
productivity per employee at this establishment is...	2	0	10	31	29	19	10	4.81
the level of customer/client satisfaction with our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	0	8	15	23	33	21	5.44
the development of new products, services and/or programmes is...	0	2	8	31	31	19	10	4.87
the overall financial performance of this establishment is...	2	4	8	37	25	21	4	4.58
the health and safety record at this establishment is...	0	0	6	14	23	37	21	5.54
the job satisfaction of most employees in this establishment is...	2	0	12	37	40	10	0	4.42
the level of employee absence at this establishment is...	6	6	12	29	25	15	8	4.38
the level of labour turnover at this establishment is...	2	4	6	14	15	29	31	5.46
our ability to recruit qualified employees is...	2	2	4	33	19	31	10	4.96
the effectiveness of communication within this establishment is...	4	6	10	31	35	12	4	4.37
the job security of employees within this establishment is...	0	8	0	29	14	31	19	5.17

Table 22 - Industry/Sector Performance HR Managers

COMPARED TO WHAT I WOULD LIKE IT TO BE...		Low	Medium	High	Mean			
the cost of producing our products, services and/or programmes is...	8	16	18	28	18	8	4	3.72
the quality of our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	4	14	20	16	20	26	5.12
productivity per employee at this establishment is...	4	6	12	32	28	12	6	4.34
the level of customer/client satisfaction with our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	6	10	26	14	22	22	5.02
the development of new products, services and/or programmes is...	4	2	12	40	14	16	12	4.54
the overall financial performance of this establishment is...	4	10	22	32	12	12	8	4.06
the health and safety record at this establishment is...	0	0	14	18	18	26	24	5.28
the job satisfaction of most employees in this establishment is...	0	4	30	34	12	14	6	4.20
the level of employee absence at this establishment is...	4	12	114	22	20	16	12	4.38
the level of labour turnover at this establishment is...	2	0	12	32	16	14	24	4.98
our ability to recruit qualified employees is...	6	2	12	28	26	16	10	4.54
the effectiveness of communication within this establishment is...	4	18	10	28	16	12	12	4.18
the job security of employees within this establishment is...	2	8	4	36	16	16	18	4.76

General Managers

In the surveys of senior general managers we concentrated on organisational strategy and organisational performance as well as some specific aspects of human resource management with this group.

15. Operating Environment and Strategy

We asked respondents about the competitive nature of the operating environment and the nature of their competitive strategy. Tables 23, 24 and 25 below report the findings. We have discussed the performance measures above. On competitive strategy it is interesting to note the low rating given to the competitive nature of the operating environment and relatively low rating given to entrepreneurial orientation. Many organisations appear to have difficulty obtaining sufficient funds.

Table 23 - Competitive Strategy

TO WHAT EXTENT...	Not at all					To a great extent		Mean
does your establishment have difficulty obtaining sufficient funds to produce its products and/or services?	5	5	12	12	19	24	24	5.02
does your establishment have easy access to resources for growth and expansion?	2	21	19	24	26	2	5	3.76
do other establishments attempt to capture your customers/clients?	19	41	12	2	7	7	12	3.07
does your establishment operate in a competitive environment?	45	26	7	5	0	7	10	2.48
does your establishment have a strong entrepreneurial orientation?	7	14	17	36	14	2	10	3.80
is the strategy of your establishment to develop new products and/or services?	0	14	17	12	29	21	7	4.76
is the strategy of your establishment to provide unique products and/or services?	2	10	21	19	4	7	7	4.50
is the strategy of your establishment to provide low cost products and/or services?	9	12	19	24	21	14	0	3.79
is the strategy of your establishment to seek out new clients or markets for your products and/or services?	10	5	17	7	21	26	14	4.62

Organisational Performance

We asked the managerial respondents about the range of performance measures for their organisation. We asked in a comparative form – how well managers perceived their organisation performed in comparison to others in their industry/sector and in comparison to their own internal benchmarks of good performance. The results are shown below for general managers. Managers generally appear most satisfied with organisational performance in areas such as quality, customer satisfaction, health and safety and labour turnover. In contrast financial performance, absence levels, and the ability to recruit qualified employees are the areas where managers are least satisfied with establishment performance.

Table 24 - Industry/Sector Performance

COMPARED TO OTHERS DOING SIMILAR KIND OR WORK...	Low		Medium			High		Mean
the cost of producing our products, services and/or programmes is...	5	7	24	41	12	12	0	3.83
the quality of our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	0	0	7	31	41	21	5.76
productivity per employee at this establishment is...	0	2	5	41	29	19	5	4.71
the level of customer/client satisfaction with our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	2	2	7	41	33	14	5.42
the development of new products, services and/or programmes is...	2	10	19	19	33	14	2	4.23
the overall financial performance of this establishment is...	2	7	10	31	17	26	7	4.60
the health and safety record at this establishment is...	0	0	7	12	21	45	14	5.48
the job satisfaction of most employees in this establishment is...	0	5	10	29	43	14	0	4.52
the level of employee absence at this establishment is...	5	5	17	26	21	17	10	4.43
the level of labour turnover at this establishment is...	5	0	5	14	14	38	24	5.43
our ability to recruit qualified employees is...	0	10	12	36	21	12	10	4.43
the effectiveness of communication within this establishment is...	0	5	12	31	36	14	2	4.50
the job security of employees within this establishment is...	0	2	2	19	48	19	10	5.07

Table 25 - Industry/Sector Performance

COMPARED TO WHAT I WOULD LIKE IT TO BE...	Low		Medium			High		Mean
the cost of producing our products, services and/or programmes is...	7	19	29	26	12	7	0	3.38
the quality of our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	2	7	17	29	31	14	5.21
Productivity per employee at this establishment is...	0	2	19	38	24	10	7	4.40
the level of customer/client satisfaction with our products, services and/or programmes is...	0	0	17	21	36	10	17	4.88
the development of new products, services and/or programmes is...	7	7	24	21	21	10	10	4.10
the overall financial performance of this establishment is...	10	12	14	17	21	17	10	4.17
the health and safety record at this establishment is...	0	2	7	26	19	26	19	5.17
the job satisfaction of most employees in this establishment is...	2	7	17	36	21	5	12	4.29
the level of employee absence at this establishment is...	5	19	14	17	19	19	7	4.12
the level of labour turnover at this establishment is...	2	2	10	29	21	14	22	4.93
our ability to recruit qualified employees is...	0	12	17	31	12	14	13	4.42
the effectiveness of communication within this establishment is...	0	7	26	31	17	17	2	4.17
the job security of employees within this establishment is...	2	5	7	29	24	21	12	4.79

16. HR Issues

We asked general managers about the extent to which people management issues were considered important in their establishments and their perceptions about the flexibility of the workforce. Tables 26 and 27 report these findings. Managers generally report people management issues as being seen as very important in the organisation but that the employees were not as flexible a resource as they would like. For example, 30 percent of managers disagreed with the statement the employees could be transferred flexibly across jobs.

Table 26 - General Beliefs About People Management

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
The senior management in this establishment gives a high priority to people-management issues.	0	0	10	2	14	55	19	5.71
The senior management in this establishment regard employees as less valuable assets than other resources.	0	5	2	5	5	43	41	6.00
The senior management believe that people management strategies and practices strongly contribute to the performance of this establishment.	0	0	5	0	7	41	48	6.26
The senior management in this establishment give a high priority to the welfare of employees.	0	0	0	5	14	53	29	6.04
The senior management believe that employee development and motivation are critical to the effectiveness of this establishment.	0	0	2	2	14	48	33	6.07

Table 27 - Workforce Flexibility

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
In general, employees in this establishment willingly take on new tasks and challenges.	0	12	10	10	26	41	2	4.80
In general, employees in this establishment have the necessary skills and competencies to perform a range of different jobs here.	0	5	10	10	31	43	2	5.05
In general, employees in this establishment can be transferred quite flexibly across a range of jobs.	2	14	14	5	41	24	0	4.38

17. Union Representatives

In those organisations where unions were recognised we also asked union representatives to complete surveys. The following section reports their views. In general we asked union representatives the same questions as employees with some additional questions on how they spend their time, what union activities they get involved with, and their intention to quit union office. In this section we report the specific questions asked of union representatives only and for comparative purposes questions on IR climate and partnership. The

full details of the union representative survey are available from the ERF on request. Here we would note that union representatives appear more like the “model employee” rather than the “disaffected militant” when we compare their attitudes to the organisation with the general population of employees. Their union activity is not motivated by a sense of disloyalty to the organisation or a lack of willingness to exert effort on the organisations behalf.

We asked representatives about how many hours per week they have spent on union or related matters. Union representatives spend, on average, 7.26 working hours and 4.58 hours outside of work on union activities. The main union activities of representatives are “service” orientated behaviours towards the membership, meetings and negotiations, with recruiting receiving the least attention from representatives.

Table 28 - Union Representative Activities

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU INVOLVED IN...	Not at all involved		Takes up a lot of my time			Mean
meeting with members individually.	7	23	39	16	16	3.10
meeting with member’s in-groups.	12	39	35	11	4	2.54
meeting with other union representatives.	12	25	40	16	7	2.81
meeting with full-time union officials.	25	53	16	7	0	2.05
discussing and negotiating with management on collective issues.	14	16	33	26	11	3.03
discussing and negotiating with management on individual cases.	12	44	25	16	4	2.54
recruiting new members at my workplace.	26	44	25	5	0	2.08
recruiting new members in other workplaces.	86	12	2	0	0	1.15
attending union committee meetings outside this organization.	47	32	18	2	2	1.79
participating in union activities outside this workplace.	40	35	23	0	2	1.88

We asked about the intention to quit as union representatives. Table 29 reports the findings. In general we find very little intention to leave union office.

Table 29 - Intent to Quit

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
As long as I work here, I plan to be a union representative.	70	16	7	7	0	0	0	1.51
I expect that I will continue to be a union representative for the foreseeable future.	72	19	4	5	0	0	0	1.42
I sometimes think about quitting as a union representative.	46	26	7	4	9	9	0	2.29
It is likely that I will resign as union representative during the next year.	77	14	2	5	0	0	2	1.45

Employee Relations

The responses in table 30 refer to union representatives' views on the climate of relations between management and staff. 47 percent of union reps agree that management and staff try to co-operate as much as possible. However, only 24 percent claim that staff and management distrust one another, but 72 percent disagree that management makes decisions in the best interests of all employees, and 49 percent agree that day to day relations between staff and management are poor.

With regards to partnership (the bottom of table 30) the general view was that organisations were some way towards partnership. For example, only 25 percent of respondents agree that their organisation could be characterised as a partnership organisation.

As regards union-management relations (table 30 – middle), 54 percent of respondents agree that management and unions deal with each other in good faith and keep their word and 62 percent that they work together to make the organisation a better place to work. 58 percent say that unions and management respect each other's goals.

Table 30

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
<i>Management-employee relations</i>								
Employees and management distrust one another.	28	28	16	5	11	11	2	2.80
The relationship between employees and management is hostile.	18	14	21	5	14	25	4	3.72
Employees and management try to co-operate as much as possible.	5	16	14	18	26	21	0	4.07
Employees and management respect each other.	16	19	19	14	19	12	0	3.39
I think management makes decisions in the best interests of all employees.	12	44	16	11	9	7	2	2.88
Day-to-day relations between employees and management are poor.	12	21	16	12	14	23	2	3.70
<i>Union-management relations</i>								
Unions and management work together to make my organisation a better place to work.	7	9	12	11	37	25	0	4.35
Unions and management have respect for each other's goals.	7	14	16	5	35	23	0	4.16
In my organisation, management and unions deal with each other in an atmosphere of good faith.	9	12	12	12	26	28	0	4.19
In my organisation, unions and management generally keep their word.	9	11	9	16	30	25	2	4.28
<i>Partnership</i>								
This organisation is strongly committed to the idea that there is a "partnership" between management and employees.	12	9	14	21	21	19	4	4.01
This organisation has some way to go to achieve a fully effective "partnership" between management and employees.	25	49	11	5	2	7	2	2.38
This organisation is a "partnership" organisation.	12	23	9	32	12	9	4	3.49

Appendix 1

Table A.1 -- Characteristics of Employee Survey Respondents

	Number of respondents
<u>Job</u>	
Manager	142
Professional	187
Technician	45
Clerical/Secretarial	163
Craftsperson	83
Personal/Protective Service	35
Sales	17
Operator	152
Other	28
Not specified	2
<u>Qualifications</u>	
NVQ	81
GCE O	202
CGE A	74
HND/C	87
Prof. Cal	111
BA/BSC	110
Postcard	83
No cal	91
Other	14
Not spec	1
<u>Hours</u>	
Full time	787
Part time	66
Missing	1
<u>Contract</u>	
Temp	38
Permanent	815
Missing	1
<u>Age</u>	
Mean age (years)	39.53
<u>Tenure</u>	
Mean (years)	
Organisation	10.72
Union	16.23
<u>Gender</u>	
Male	493
Female	360
Not specified	1
<u>Marital status</u>	
Married or living as married	631
Single,	155
Separated, divorced, widowed	67
Not specified	1