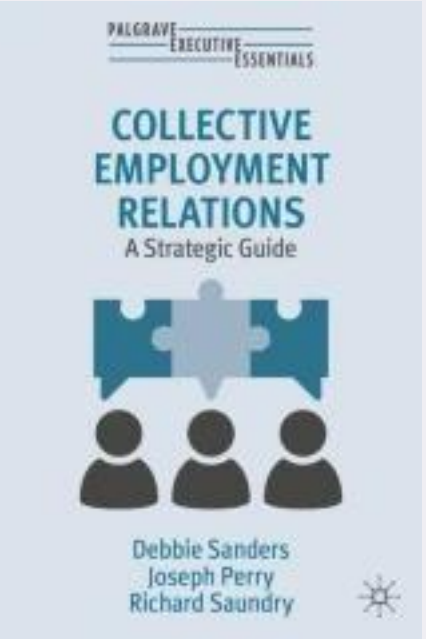
A little bit about me

- Union official in early working life
- Researcher, writer and lecturer on employment relations
- Led HR/ER teams in pharmaceuticals, energy and air traffic control
- Independent consultant specialising in developing ER strategies, improving relationships with unions, rebuilding after conflict and building ER capability
- Mediator specialising in union-management relations
- Co-authored book on Collective Employment Relations



Make Work Better

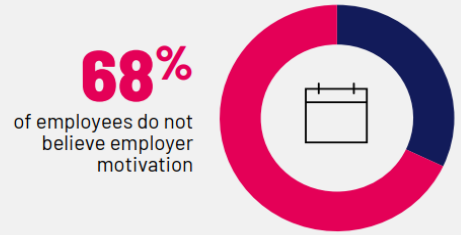
Collective voice is critical to organisations and the economy – reputation, risk, conflict

- The world of work is rapidly changing
- The ability to solve problems with worker input is more important than ever
- Union membership in decline but new forms of collective voice created

organise

Leaders and employees often on different sides of the argument

Over two thirds don't believe the reason their employer gave for spending a certain number of days in the office



Only 36 percent of respondents believe that things will be better for the next generation. In developed countries, just one in five see a better future.

The high cost of low engagement: A call to action for UK businesses

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Optimism for the future wanes

Widespread grievance is eroding trust across the board

Those with a high sense of grievance distrust all four institutions (business, government, media, and NGOs).

59%

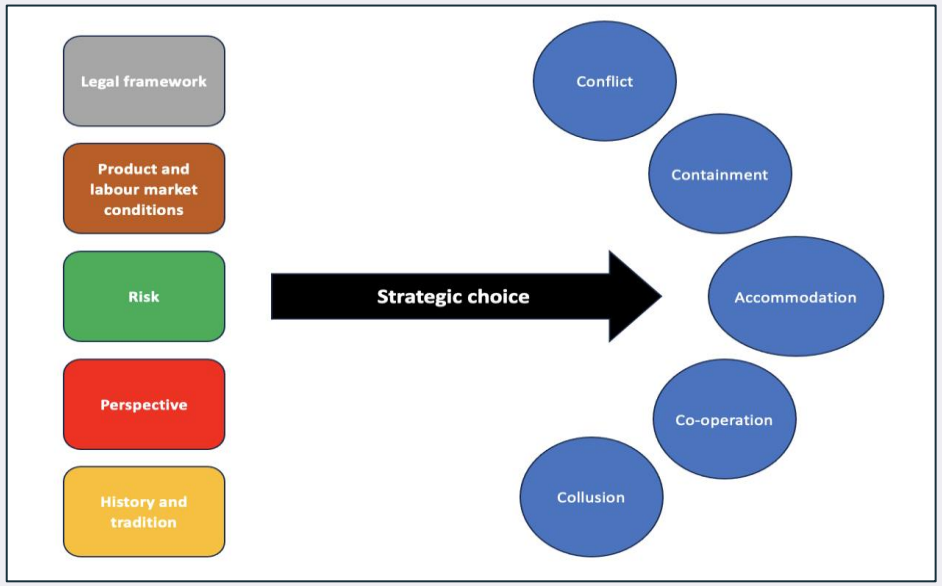
of Employers Expect Employee Activism To Increase in the Future

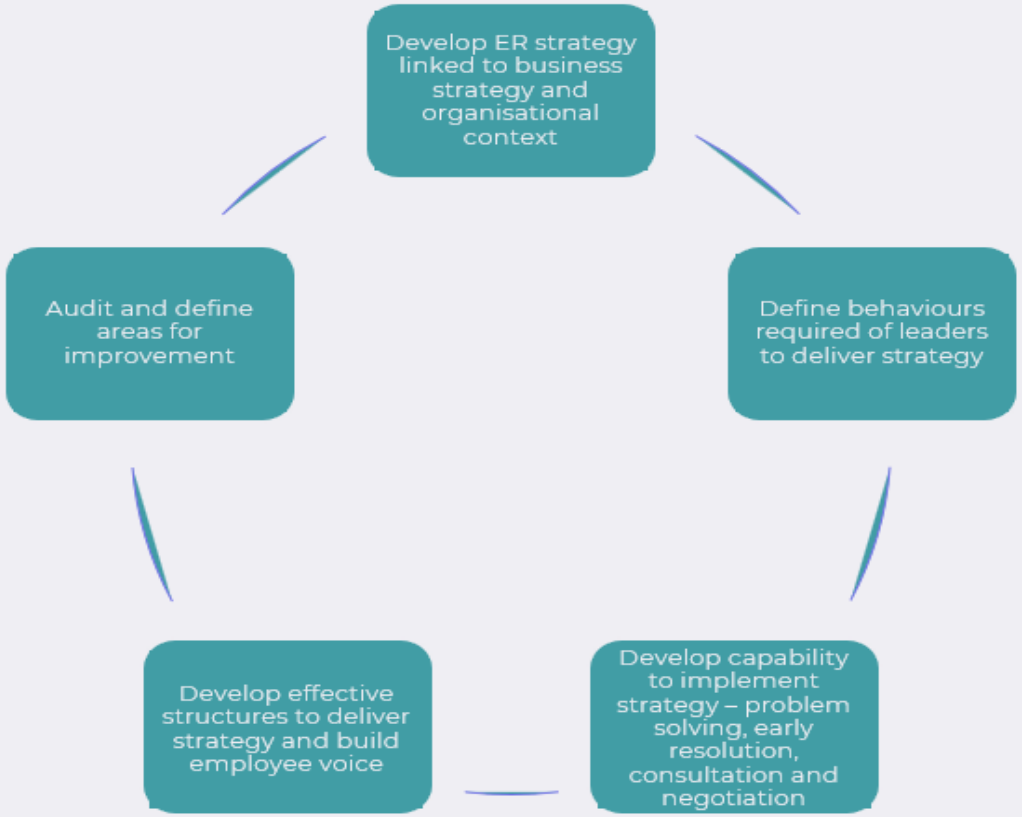
Herbert Smith Freehills Report on the Future of Work 2023

Make Work Better

Take a strategic approach

- Positive ER/IR is about the effective management of change, risk and uncertainty
- It is also about building healthy cultures and finding creative solutions, building trust and making agreements



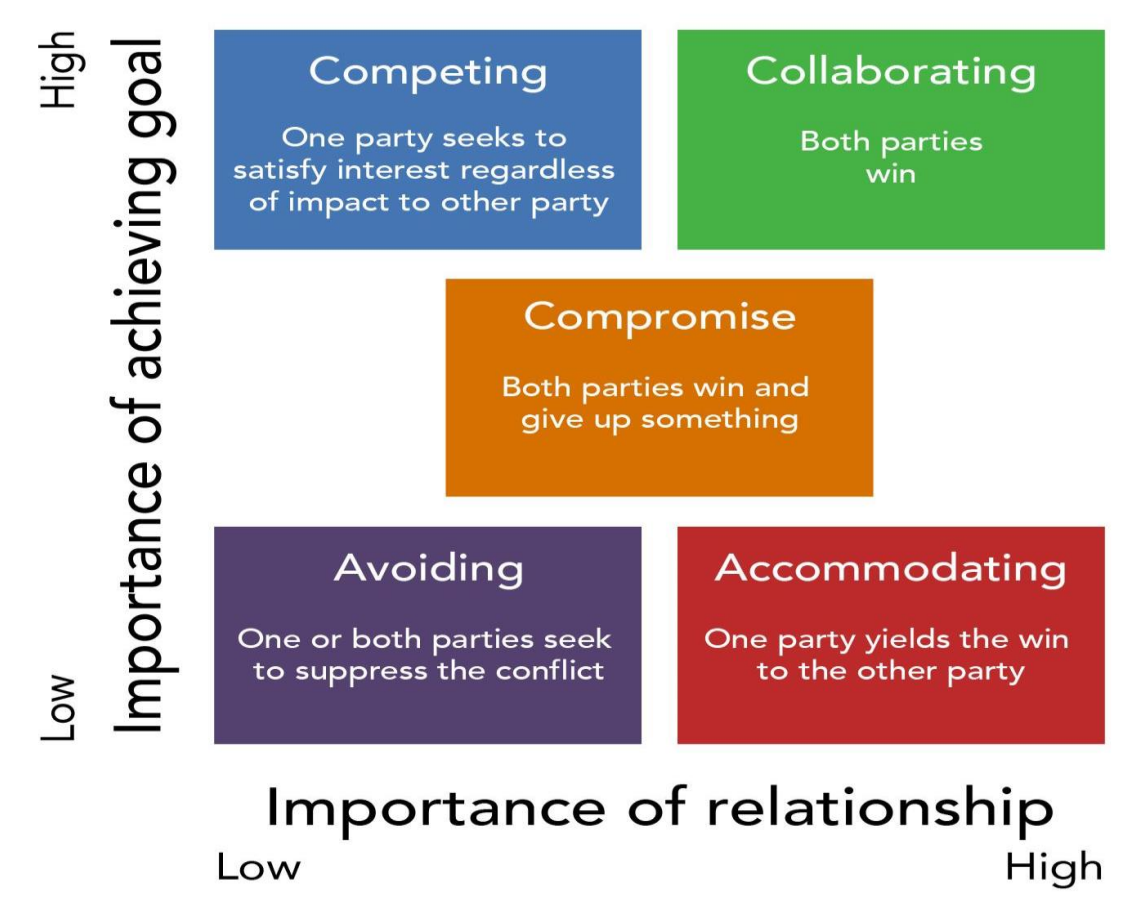


Make Work Better

Bringing it all to life

- Clear strategy and alignment of leaders
- Build capability of managers and unions reps – problem solving is a critical skill. Who needs to know what?
- Guiding principles to give clarity to all the parties
- Meeting principles so your meetings are constructive
- Clear organisational structures so risks are managed
- Take a joined-up approach to collective voice
- Check its working – audit and review

Strategic choice affects style and approach



Dimension	Adversarial bargaining	Collaborative negotiation
Assumption	Fixed pie; Win-Lose	Expanding pie; Win-Win
Focus	Winning position	Satisfying mutual interests
Emphasis	Outcome	Relationship and outcome
Information sharing	Strategic and selective	Open and sharing
Tactics	Hard-nosed, aggressive, dominating	Probing, listening, brainstorming

Make Work Better

Skills in negotiation

Taking a position creates tension and conflict

Ego plays a big part and becomes a barrier to change

Solutions exist in the details and therefore it is essential to be able to understand the nuances

Listening, understanding and connecting on a personal level are critical

- Active listening skills
- Observational skills including body language, gestures, tone, voice
- Questioning skills – closed, open, supplementary, probing, hypothetical
- Curiosity
- Understanding and empathy
- Respect and recognition
- Inclusivity
- Build trust which is needed to make agreements and resolve conflict

Make Work Better

Questions?

Make Work Better