
Employee Attitudes to Workplace Reform

A report prepared by
Australasian Research
Strategies Pty
on behalf of contributing
members of the
Labour Ministers Council

April 1999

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FOREWORD

The achievements of the last three years — strong economic and employment growth, continuing improvement in Australia's productivity performance, historically low levels of inflation, interest rates and industrial disputes, and a more flexible labour market — have put Australia in a strong position to compete successfully in the rapidly changing global economy.

The Federal Government's *Workplace Relations Act 1996*, and reforms in some State jurisdictions which preceded it, have transformed the conduct of employee relations in Australia, putting primary responsibility for wages, conditions and work practices where it belongs — in the hands of employers and employees.

These achievements do not signal the end of the reform process. In a global environment of ever-increasing competitive pressures and in the face of continuing structural and technological change, all Governments need to continuously tailor workplace relations policies to changes in the labour market and employer or employee attitudes.

As we focus the system more on the workplace, one important consideration for policy makers is understanding the attitudes and aspirations of Australian employees. Values research is one way of answering these questions. By uncovering the values that drive public perceptions of policy, this research can guide the development of policy and communications strategies.

This report presents the findings of a 1998 values research project that explored employee attitudes to workplace reform. Australian Research Strategies Pty (ARSP) were engaged by participating governments from the Labour Ministers Council to conduct the project using Values in Strategy Assessment (VISTA™), an innovative, qualitative research program designed to assist organisations to understand and communicate more effectively with their target audience. ARSP is the sole provider of VISTA™ in Australia and has established a proven track record in conducting values research.

The findings of this report provide us with an opportunity to build new bridges between government and working Australians. Governments who understand the values held by employees can develop and implement workplace relations structures and policy more effectively. The insights presented in the report will promote widespread interest and renewed debate amongst those concerned with the future of work arrangements in Australia.

The views expressed in this report are those of ARSP. They do not necessarily represent the policies of the Labour Ministers Council collectively or of individual participating governments that commissioned the report.

HON. PETER REITH MP

Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business

April 1999

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Australasian Research Strategies is pleased to present the results of this Values in Strategy Assessment (VISTA™) study to participating members of the Labour Ministers Council. This section provides a brief introduction to the specifications of the study.

Although the most sophisticated procedures have been used to collect and analyse the information presented here, it must be remembered that values research cannot be used to predict opinion or action. This project was designed to uncover the personal emotions and values that determine the perceptions Australian workers have of the workplace, the role of government in the workplace, the role of unions in the workplace, and workplace agreements.

The principal investigator was Mark Textor, Managing Director. Assisting in all phases of research and analysis was Simon Berger, who served as Project Director. Matt Pickworth, Research Director, was involved in project preparation and final analysis.

Research and sample design

This study contains the results of in-depth one-on-one interviews with one hundred (100) adults living in either urban or rural Australia.

All respondents participating in this study were residents of Australia and at least 18 years of age. The sample was stratified by location, gender, age, views on workplace reform, occupation, job status, union membership, and workplace sector. We established quota cells as follows:

- Location
 - 14 residents of Ballarat
 - 24 residents of Brisbane
 - 14 residents of Mackay
 - 24 residents of Melbourne
 - 24 residents of Sydney
- Gender
 - 58 men
 - 42 women
- Age
 - 47 people between 16 and 34 years of age
 - 53 people aged 35 and above
- Views on workplace reform
 - 52 people who identified themselves as pro-reform
 - 48 people who identified themselves as anti-reform
- Occupation

- 29 lower blue collar
- 8 upper blue collar
- 46 lower white collar
- 17 upper white collar

- Job status
 - 77 people who were employed full time
 - 23 people who were employed part time

- Union membership
 - 33 people who were union members
 - 67 people who were not union members

- Work sector
 - 32 people who work in the public sector
 - 68 people who work in the private sector

- Business size
 - 45 people who work in small business
 - 20 people who work in big business

Research methodology

Interviews were held between 29 June and 9 July 1998, and were conducted by interviewers specifically contracted with and trained in the values laddering technique by Australasian Research Strategies/Wirthlin Worldwide.

Each interview lasted approximately one and one-half hours and used direct probing and laddering techniques to identify values underlying workers' attitudes. Potential respondents were contacted by a research firm accredited under the Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) scheme and were screened for qualification and willingness to participate in the study.

GUIDE TO VISTA™ (VALUES IN STRATEGY ASSESSMENT™)

In order to help participating members of the Labour Ministers Council understand core workplace issues, it is crucial to understand how the personal values of workers affect their perceptions and attitudes toward the workplace, governments, unions and workplace reform.

This information is not easily obtained through the use of routine interviewing techniques. Australian Research Strategies' parent company, Wirthlin Worldwide, pioneered the development of an innovative, qualitative research program to help our clients understand, communicate with, and motivate their public more effectively. This technique, Values in STrategy Assessment (VISTA™) guides the development of policy and communications strategy and, by uncovering deeper values which drive human behaviour, provides policy makers with a 'map' of the decision making process. Policy makers can then consider various perceptual strengths and weaknesses of current or future policy initiatives and speak directly to the personal values that drive the perceptions.

The fundamental premise of values based strategy or policy development is not that one persuades by reason, **but that one motivates by tapping into the emotive component of personal values.** Successful policy and communications strategies, therefore, must be built with an understanding of both the rational and the motivating emotional elements that govern the desired attitude or behaviour.

The goal of this values research study is to identify the personal values of Australian workers with respect to the workplace, government, unions and workplace reform. It is not designed to analyse perceptions held toward any one particular piece of policy or to provide a policy or communications solution for any one strategic problem. Rather, this research is designed to provide a road map of attitudes toward broad workplace issues and influences for policy makers. Because values are enduring, it is anticipated that this research will have a long 'shelf life'.

Values theory relies upon the premise that people operate on three basic levels in translating information into perceptions of workplace, government, unions and workplace reform. The three levels are: the *attribute* level; the *consequence* (functional and psychosocial) level; and the level of *personal values*.

Attributes are the adjectives that provide concrete descriptions of something. For example, the attributes that people use to describe a community might include good schools, open spaces, bike trails and parks, access to shopping and restaurants, low density housing, and consistent property values.

Consequences are the benefits or liabilities that flow from these attributes. Consequences further define the attributes by giving them greater meaning in terms

of how they affect the individual. There are two types of consequences: *functional consequences* and *psychosocial consequences*.

Functional consequences are the direct, physical benefits of an attribute. Again, using the community example, some functional consequences that flow from the attributes we described might include *opportunities to get a good education, live in a quiet, serene neighbourhood, have greater personal and family security, and enjoy their standard of living*.

Psychosocial or personal consequences are the higher level emotional benefits of an attribute. In the community example, some psychosocial consequences that might surface include *feeling safer and more secure, feeling confident, or having no worries*.

Personal values are the motivations underlying the consequences and attributes of an issue, organisation, or product. In the community example, the personal values that might motivate individuals include *security, control and freedom, concern for family and friends, sense of accomplishment, peace of mind, and happiness*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workplace

The personal values drivers behind perceptions of the workplace are **accomplishment** and **personal satisfaction**. Workers need to feel satisfied with the job they do and what they have accomplished. A worker's relationship with his or her office mates and, to a lesser extent, his or her job responsibilities provide motivation and are perceived to improve job performance.

Conversely, an incompetent management structure and poor management communications devalue a worker's feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction.

The role of government

The single biggest perceived benefit of government involvement in the workplace is the organisation and stability perceived to be inherent in the setting of guidelines and standards. Workers see policy guidelines and standards as important in maintaining economic stability. On a more personal level, this economic stability is perceived as paramount in maintaining the quality of life and personal satisfaction of living in a country with such guidelines and standards.

However, government involvement can be perceived as excessive. Workers worry that government, by overstepping the mark with regulations, can affect business profitability and create economic and employment instability, thereby affecting workers' sense of personal security and self-esteem. Similarly, if a government is perceived to blatantly take sides on industrial relations matters, workers fear outcomes that are unfair, which in turn affects their sense of self-esteem.

The role of unions

Security and self-esteem drive favourable attitudes toward unions. For many workers, the role of unions is deemed to be important in enabling workers to make more money than would otherwise be the case and to maintain their families' quality of life, thus bringing them the sense of **accomplishment** and **self-esteem**. To a lesser degree, unions are seen as a source of information, which enables workers to feel a sense of **personal security** because they are not alone.

However, by making them feel less in control over their circumstances, a union can potentially compromise a worker's sense of **freedom and independence** by:

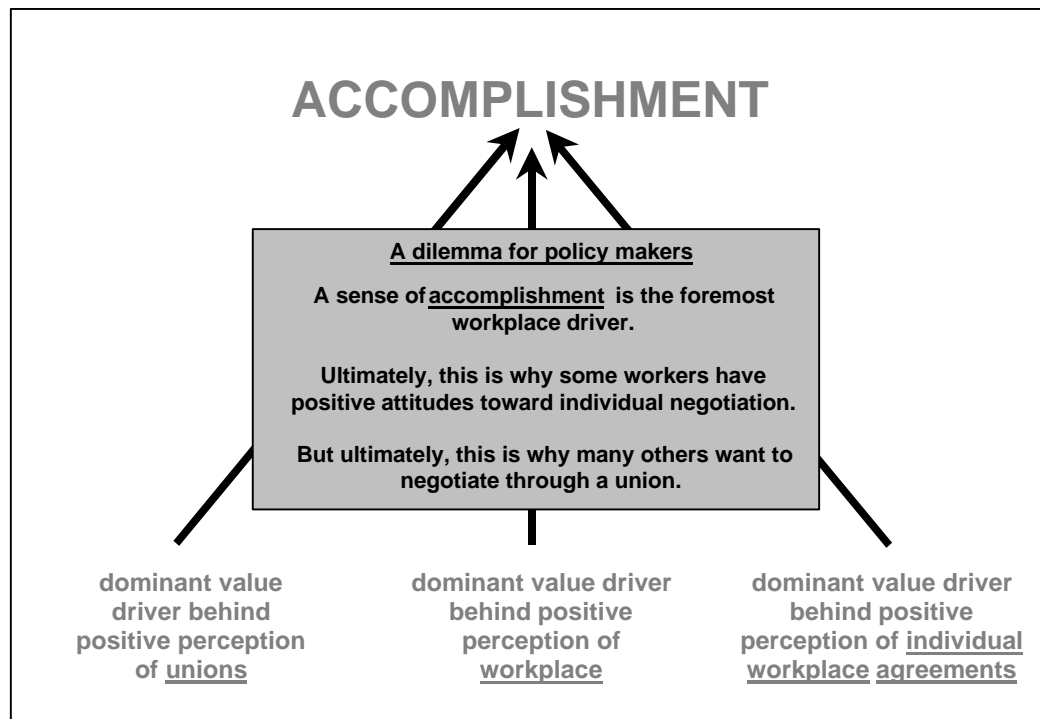
- making unreasonable demands that may affect business profitability, affect employment stability and make workers feel less in control;
 - using monopoly power to coerce employees to join a union or strike against their will.
-

Workplace agreements

The strongest driver of positive employee attitudes to the prospect of negotiating individually with their employer is the positive value of **accomplishment**. This dominant value is most often tapped through:

- a belief that by individual negotiation a worker may be able to get a better deal for themselves (make more money) and obtain more of a sense of accomplishment for doing a good job;
- allowing productive workplaces, improving company profitability and employment stability.

Because accomplishment is also a dominant driver to positive perceptions of the workplace (the goal) and in positive perceptions of unions (an alternative to individual negotiation), the importance of **accomplishment** in the acceptance of individual negotiation is central:



The main perceived drawback of workplace agreements is that if workers do not have the ability or bargaining power to adequately communicate their position in a negotiation, they may be taken advantage of and their self-esteem damaged.

Some workers also feel that the workplace dynamic may be compromised because workplace agreements are oriented to the good of the individual rather than the good of the whole. This affects morale and productivity, and diminishes satisfaction with life and security.

DETAILED FINDINGS

To better understand the emotional pathways guiding attitudes to the workplace and to union and government roles in the workplace, we employed a research technique known as laddering. Using this approach, we are able to uncover the thoughts and attitudes driving respondents' behaviour.

The protocol for this research study instructed interviewers to probe respondents' views about the workplace, the role of government in the workplace, the role of unions in the workplace, and workplace agreements. Specifically, respondents were asked to specify the positive and negative aspects of each and to articulate the positive and negative emotions underlying their rationale. Their responses to these questions provide a framework for understanding the overall positive and negative values chains behind workplace issues.

The workplace

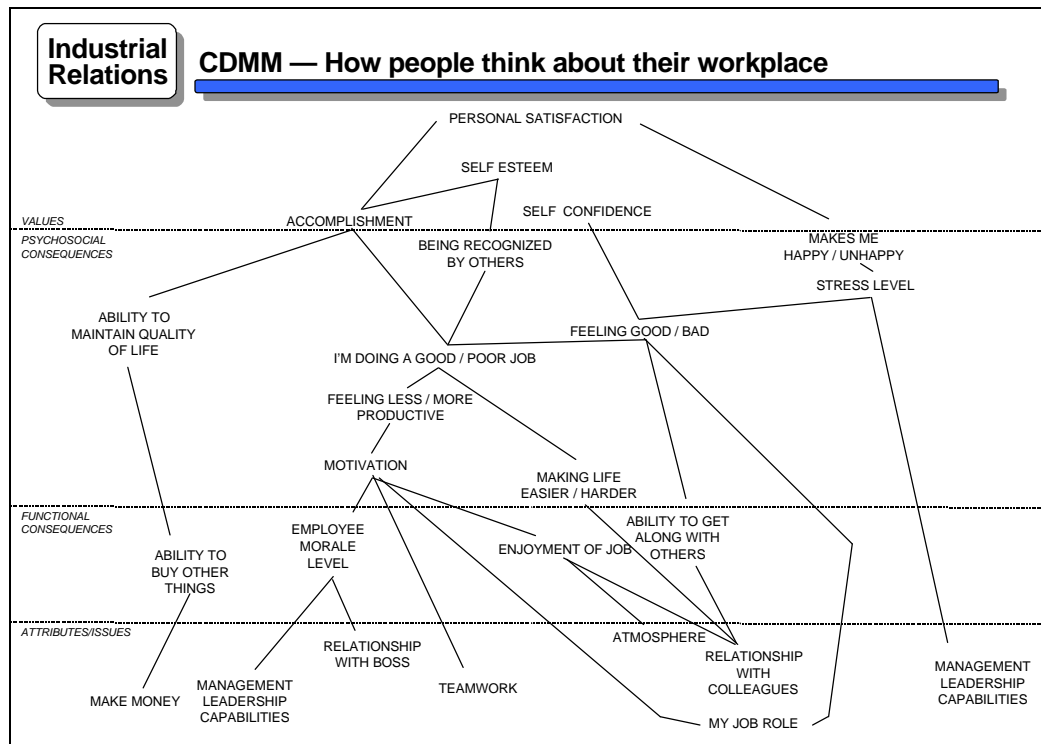
When asked to name the best and worst things about their workplace, Australians most often refer to relationships (both with colleagues and management), the effectiveness of their boss/management, the work environment/atmosphere, and compensation. Specifically, they focus on *relationships with colleagues* (18 per cent of mentions), *relationship with boss* (15 per cent of mentions), *money* (10 per cent of mentions), *management leadership capabilities* (9 per cent of mentions), *job role* (9 per cent of mentions), *work atmosphere* (6 per cent of mentions) and *teamwork* (6 per cent of mentions).

Australasian Research Strategies has developed a 'decision making map' to demonstrate how these specific issues are linked to specific workplace benefits/drawbacks. From the groundwork of aforementioned issues, the *ability to do other things*, *employee morale level*, *enjoyment of job*, and the *ability to get along with others* emerge as functional consequences.

Higher level (psychosocial consequences) benefits/drawbacks mentioned by Australian workers when they discuss the workplace include: *ability to maintain quality of life*, *doing a good/poor job*, *making life easier/harder*, *feeling more/less productive*, and *being recognised by others*.

Finally, the values that most often determine Australians' attitudes toward the workplace include *accomplishment*, *self-esteem*, *self-confidence*, and *personal satisfaction*.

The following decision making map attempts to detail the thought processes of Australian workers when thinking specifically about their workplaces. These 'links' are established by examining the frequency of mention among map elements. For example, how often was *teamwork* mentioned in conjunction with *motivation* on the job?



Using this analysis technique, it was discovered that a **personal satisfaction** perspective is the primary positive values driver for Australian workers. At the lowest, or attribute, level, they feel that their relationships with colleagues are what make the job ‘bearable’:

- “... the environment that you work in, getting along with work mates, you don't get stressed out from hassling, everyone looks after one another when you have a problem.”
- “... good community spirit, supportive environment, encouragement, positive feedback from colleagues, good team spirit.”
- “... the people I work with, enjoy their company, they're funny, happy and do their work...”

While younger respondents (16–34 years of age) are less likely to mention *relationships with co-workers* than their older counterparts, they speak far more positively about them. More than one fifth of respondents (22 per cent) over the age of 35 mention *relationships with co-workers* when thinking about the workplace, but only about half of them (59 per cent) speak positively about it. This is a stark contrast to the 83 per cent of 16 to 34 year-olds who speak positively about interaction with their colleagues.

There are also notable differences between genders when considering the workplace at the attribute level. Women are more likely to mention *relationships with co-workers* (23 per cent of mentions for women versus just 15 per cent for men) and speak more positively about them (72 per cent and 63 per cent, respectively). Men, on the other hand, focus more on their *job role* (10 per cent of

mentions for men, 6 per cent for women) and speak far more positively about it — 73 per cent of mentions are positive for men as opposed to just 40 per cent for women.

Perhaps the most interesting cut of the ‘workplace’ attribute data comes to light when comparing the responses of pro-reform and anti-reform respondents. As the table below illustrates, anti-reformers are significantly more satisfied with their *relationships with co-workers* and superiors than their pro-reform counterparts; however, they are equally pleased with their *job role*.

Attribute	Pro-reform		Anti-reform	
	<i>per cent of mentions</i>	<i>per cent positive</i>	<i>per cent of mentions</i>	<i>per cent positive</i>
Relationship with co-workers	17	59	20	75
Relationship with boss	14	29	16	50
Job role	11	64	6	60
Employee makes money	10	60	8	43

Further, pro-reform respondents speak more favourably about their compensation, despite their self-proclaimed dissatisfaction with the current status of industrial relations.

Following the attribute level mentions, the positive effect of these relationships nurtures motivation in the workforce:

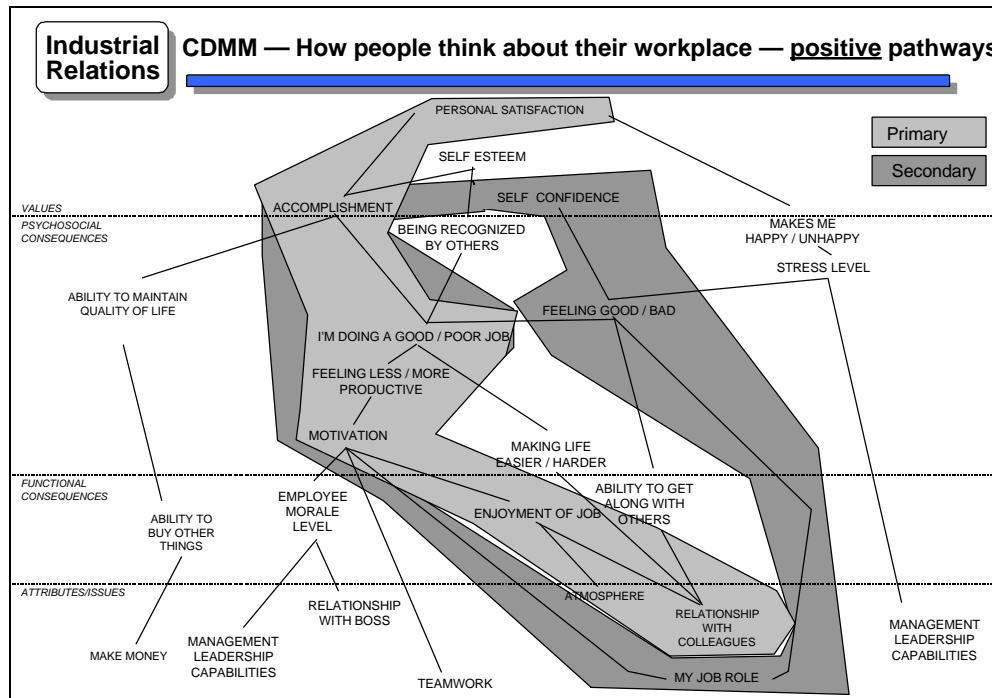
- “[I get a] far greater sense of enjoyment at work.”
- “...gives me enjoyment in my job.”
- “[My colleagues] make work enjoyable — I am quite happy to wake up every morning.”

While *enjoy my job* is the most mentioned functional consequence by both age groups (16-34 and 35+), younger workers are more inclined (55 per cent) to mention that they do not enjoy their job and older workers (64 per cent) that they do enjoy their job. Men (70 per cent positive vs. 42 per cent for women), anti-reformers (62 per cent positive vs. 44 per cent for pro-reformers), and employees in the public sector (67 per cent positive vs. 50 per cent for large private company employees and just 40 per cent for small private company employees) also feel more positively toward their jobs than do their counterparts.

Enjoyment of the job, in turn, keeps workers motivated and more interested in *doing their job well*. The most frequently mentioned result of a job well done is *recognition by others*:

- “...more drive to improve yourself to work better, good feeling, keep wanting to work.”
- “...motivates me to fulfil my role more than satisfactorily...”
- “I feel I've done something worthwhile, that is recognised, whether that be in dollars and/or verbal acknowledgment.”

It is this motivation to do a good job and be recognised by others that ultimately taps into the primary values driver of **personal satisfaction** for Australian workers:



One specific example of this dominant pathway underlying positive feelings about the workplace would be:

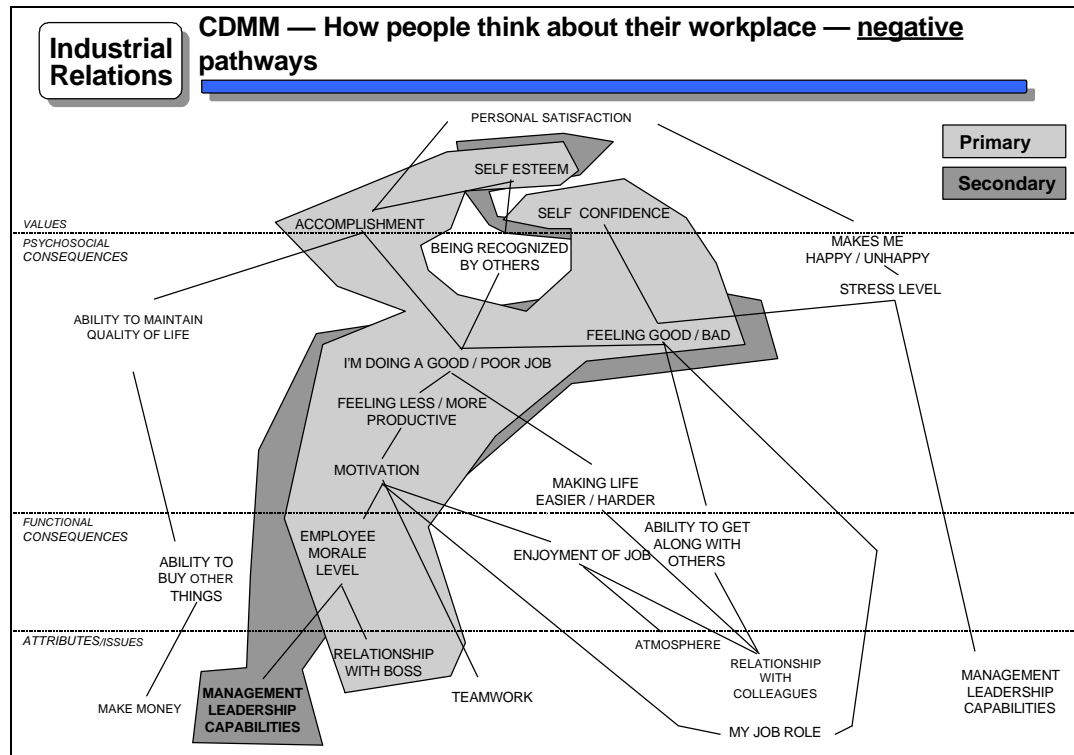
At my workplace, we have a great staff, people you work with are fun, they have a good time. You can get along with them and trust them. People there don't hassle you, they're like friends rather than co-workers. Working with that kind of people keeps me motivated on a daily basis and make me feel like I've done my best at the end of the day. I walk away from the job feeling satisfied.

On the other side of the coin, a poor relationship with management tends to be the key to negative feelings about the workplace.

- “...bad management. If you can't approach management where do you go? Do you hit your head against a brick wall?”

A bad *relationship with one's boss* lowers employee morale, and, as a consequence, productivity suffers. The decrease in productivity lessens

employees' sense of accomplishment, and ultimately lowers their *self-confidence* and *self-esteem*. Hence, lowered **self-confidence** and lowered **self-esteem** are the negative values drivers for workers in regard to their workplace.



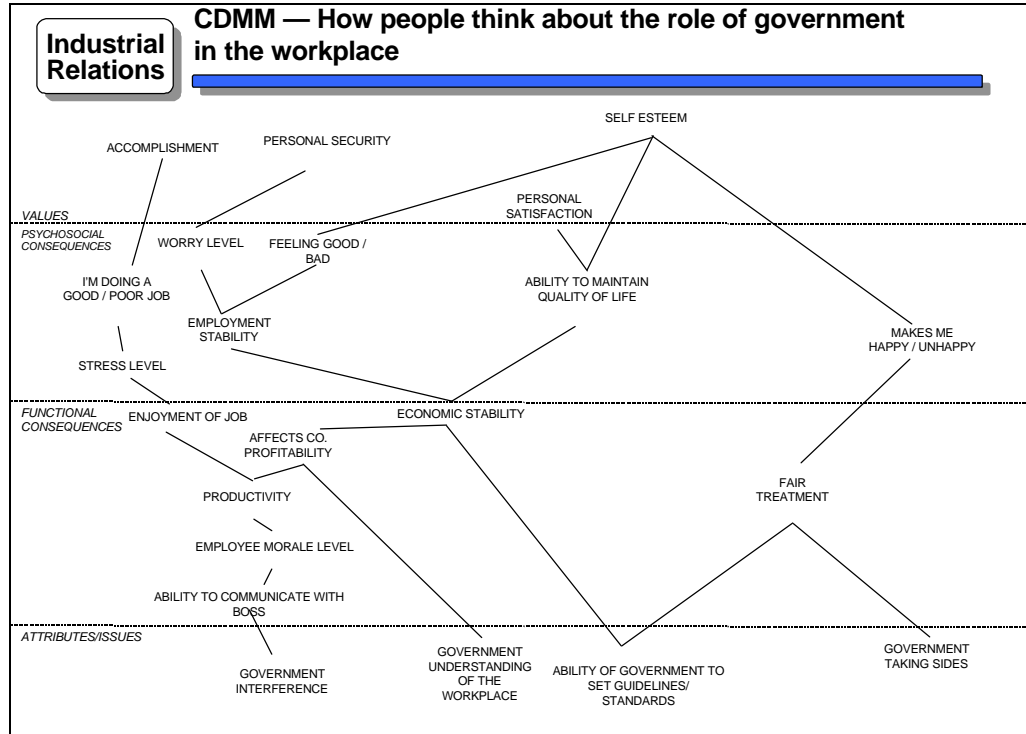
An example of this negative pathway might be:

We have poor management. They don't involve us in setting goals for the company. If management doesn't have the confidence in us to ask our opinion, how are we supposed to have confidence in them? And since we don't have confidence in our bosses, our people just don't work as hard as they might for someone they did have confidence in. I don't have any sense of achievement.

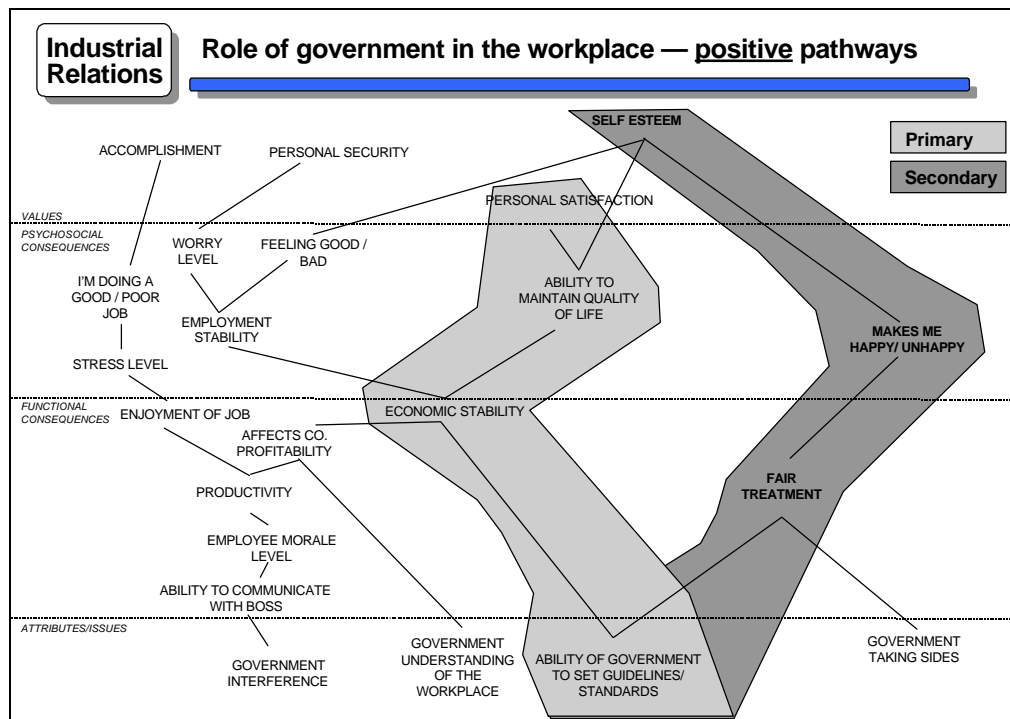
The roots of the negative workplace values ladder are anchored in *relationship with boss* and *management leadership capabilities* at the attribute level. Younger people (44 per cent positive mentions), men (44 per cent positive mentions), anti-reform respondents (50 per cent positive mentions) and employees of small business (50 per cent positive mentions) all have a notably more positive description of their relationships with superiors than their counterparts. When asked to describe their management's leadership capabilities, the subgroups also gave widely varying responses. Again, younger respondents, males and anti-reformers have a more positive impression of their management's skills (although still overwhelmingly negative), but in this case large business employees view the issue more positively than their small business counterparts.

Government's role in the workplace

Next, respondents were asked to assess their perceptions of government in the workplace. As the decision making map below illustrates, the attributes mentioned include *ability of government to set guidelines* (38 per cent of mentions), *government taking sides* (13 per cent), *government understanding of the workplace* (13 per cent), and *government interference* (12 per cent).



The primary positive values ladder with regard to government's role in the workplace (below) stems from the *ability of government to set guidelines and standards*.



Workers are comforted by the knowledge that government can be the unbiased final authority on all workplace issues, with the power to overturn rulings of management, corporations and unions.

- *“If issues can't be resolved internally, government's got the power, got the people, got the authorisation to get involved and investigate problems.”*
- *“[Government is] subjective to issues and persons and policies — having a body not connected to either group gives a greater feasibility for justice to both sides.”*

This *ability to set standards* is viewed extremely positively across all demographic groups. In fact, the only demographic differences of note at the attribute level appear when examining the government *taking sides/not taking sides*. Pro-reformers (and public servants), not surprisingly, tend to view the idea of government involvement in the workplace more favourably than any other subgroup.

However, the government's power to set decent standards for wages and safety, among other issues, is comforting to workers generally and reassures them that economic stability in Australia will continue.

- *“...overall it helps Australia's economy, keeps jobs safer...”*
- *“It's for the benefit of Australians, so everybody will earn more and spend more.”*

Both *economic stability* (in the primary positive ladder) and *treatment of employees* (in the secondary positive ladder) elicit differing opinions from our key subgroups. For example, while economic stability is mentioned by roughly one fifth of all respondents, a majority of men (85 per cent) view it in its positive sense in comparison to just over half of women (57 per cent). Further, as the table below illustrates, there is no general consensus across any demographic that the government's role in the workplace will lead to economic stability:

Characteristic	per cent positive	Characteristic	per cent positive	Difference
16 to 34	85	35+	57	18
Men	65	Women	80	15
Pro-reform	71	Anti-reform	70	1
Small business	100	Large business	64	36

An analysis of *treatment of employees* shows even more drastic demographic differences:

Characteristic	per cent positive	Characteristic	per cent positive	Difference
16 to 34	36	35+	100	64
Men	38	Women	78	40
Pro-reform	55	Anti-reform	67	12
Small business	67	Large business	50	17

However, it is the *stable Australian economy* that leads to a belief that workers will be able to maintain their quality of life.

- “*Australians can maintain their standard of living.*”
- “*I can buy things, go places, live a good lifestyle.*”

Interestingly, it is the small business employee — the employee who would be most affected by an economic downturn — who is least likely to mention economic stability (just 8 per cent of mentions) as a function of government in the workplace. In comparison, both large business and public sector employees mention economic stability 23 per cent of the time.

Finally, the ability to maintain (or improve) their quality of life gives Australian workers a sense of **self-satisfaction** or **personal satisfaction**.

- “[*I feel*] *contentment—everything is fair and equal.*”
- “*...fulfilment and satisfaction— making the most of life.*”

Again, after having respondents discuss the characteristics that they found to be legitimate or desirable with regard to government’s role in the workplace, we explored the illegitimate and undesirable characteristics as well. We found that government, in a positive light, is perceived to be the unbiased ‘fatherly’ setter of rules and settler of disputes. However, in a negative light, government is sometimes perceived as an uninformed, and/or biased, meddler in workplace affairs.

As illustrated by the map on the following page, negative ladders stem from these three characteristics. The primary negative values ladder actually encompasses two items at the attribute level — government meddling in workplace issues without *understanding the workplace*:

- “[*Government is*] *making decisions in the industry without knowing that it would cause trouble — being overzealous, they think they know everything half the time.*”

- *“...they (government) are not experts and they sometimes set guidelines and rules that are not appropriate.”*

...and taking sides:

- *“[Government] lose[s] sight of its role as government and take[s] sides — either one or the other — employer or employee. Won't be perceived as being fair or as working in interest of all parties...”*

At the functional consequence level, economic stability, affects company profitability, and unfair treatment appear on the primary negative ladder.

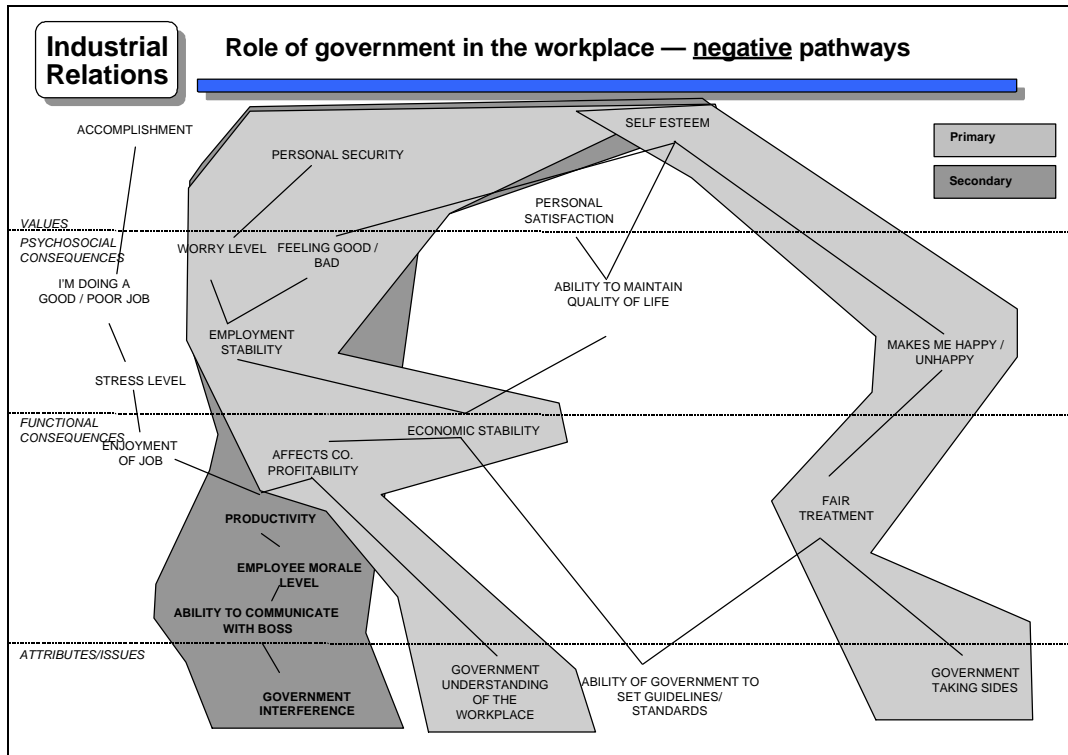
- *“...business wouldn't grow...company could go broke...”*
- *“It doesn't come across as being fair in the scheme of things, government needs to find some middle ground in order to be seen as fair from workers'/employers' points of view.”*

Overall concern for the company and country at the functional consequence level translates into concern for self at the psychosocial consequence level. Lower profitability and less economic stability lead to concerns about employment security, more worry and feeling bad.

- *“No job security...fear of losing my job.”*
- *“Confusion and fear you don't know what will happen, uncertainty.”*
- *“Become negative and cynical...demoralised, withdrawn.”*

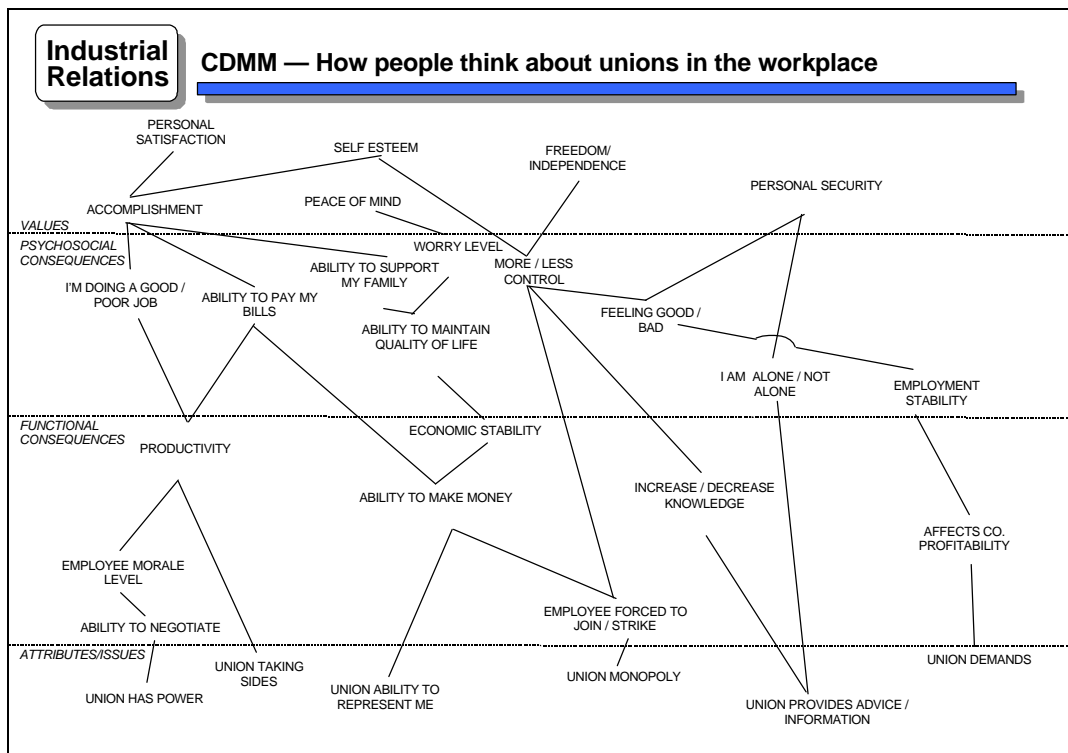
Younger workers are more optimistic that they will stay employed (63 per cent positive mentions vs. 31 per cent for 35+ respondents) and are less likely to mention that they worry (63 per cent vs. 43 per cent) about job related issues than their older co-workers. This circumstance holds true for men and pro-reformers as well.

Finally, and logically, these negative psychosocial consequences feed into lessened **personal security** and lowered **self-esteem**, further strengthening the idea that one's job is a sizeable portion of what defines oneself. If things on the job are going well, positive personal values drivers (personal satisfaction) are tapped and if things are not going well, the opposite is true.



Unions' role in the workplace

Thirdly, respondents were probed on their feelings about unions in the workplace (note: quotas were established to provide an adequate representation of both union members and non-union members). When asked about the role of unions in the workplace, attributes mentioned by respondents included the ability of a union to *represent its members* (28 per cent of mentions), *powerful* (16 per cent), *providing advice/information* (13 per cent), *taking sides* (7 per cent), *demanding* (6 per cent), and *monopolistic* (3 per cent).



The primary positive values ladder for the role of unions in the workplace stems from their ability to represent members.

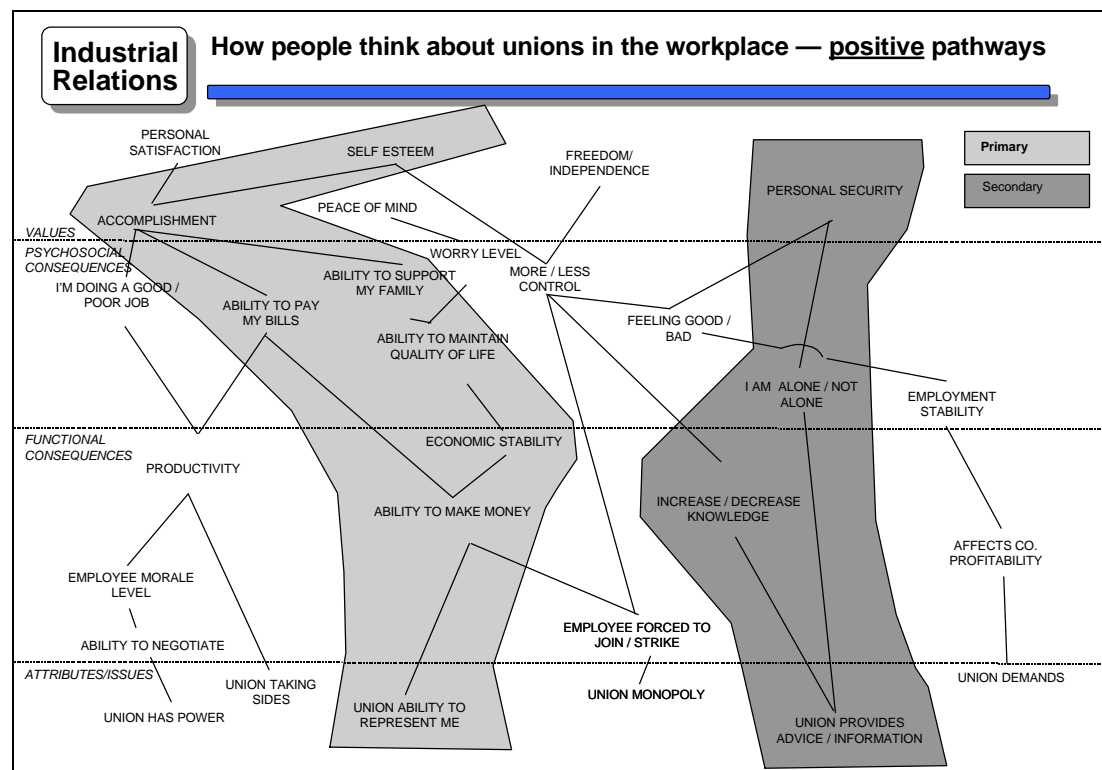
- “The union is there for you, they are there to give you advice and information, they can get legal advice for you, they are there to represent you.”
- “[The unions are] making sure employees are aware of their rights...”

While both subgroups are largely supportive of unions, older respondents tend to be a bit less supportive than younger respondents.

Attribute	16 - 34		35+	
	per cent of mentions	per cent positive	per cent of mentions	per cent positive
Stands up/doesn't stand up for employees	33	63	22	63
Has power/has too much power	21	93	12	78

As the table demonstrates, older respondents are less likely to mention that unions stand up for employees and also less likely to mention union power in a positive way.

The idea that the union will represent employees is perceived as allowing workers to make a better income than would otherwise be the case, hence providing *economic stability*.



This economic stability is the precursor to a number of psychosocial consequences such as *maintain quality of life, ability to pay my bills and ability to support my family*:

- “*People will be able to live, so people won't end up in the streets — it lifts up the life standards.*”
- “[*People can*] *pay bills, feed and clothe themselves.*”
- “*It would affect me financially, help me take care of my family better.*”

It is from these primarily financially focussed psychosocial consequences that the values of **accomplishment** and **self-esteem** emerge.

- “*...sense of worth, you know the job you are doing is valued by someone.*”
- “*...sense of self worth in terms of looking after my family...*”

Interestingly, men are more likely to progress up the values ladder to **accomplishment** (14 per cent compared to 12 per cent) and women are more likely to ladder up to **self-esteem** (25 per cent compared to 20 per cent).

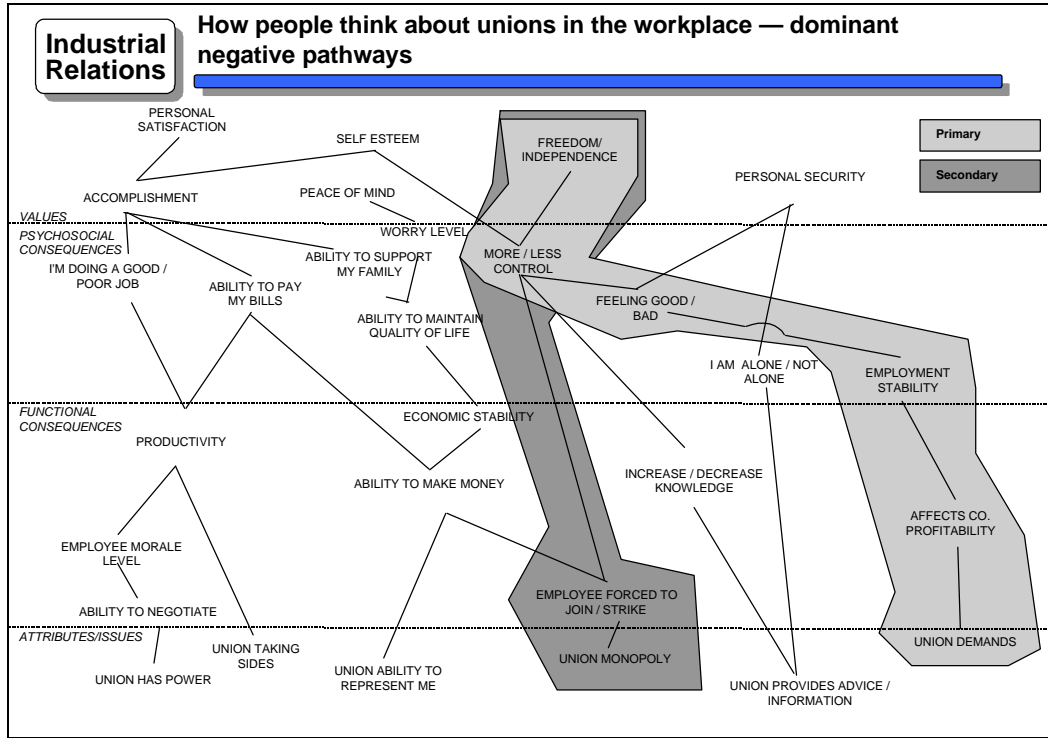
The primary negative pathway for how people think about unions in the workplace stems from *union demands*. Unions are the double-edged sword that, in one instance, protects the individual worker and, in the other, is a threat to the productivity of Australian industry.

- “*...overpowering, if they are making unreasonable demands from the employers they put employer in tough spot, make business more difficult to be operated.*”
- “[*Unions*] *place unreasonable demands on employers — employers should still have rights as well.*”
- “*...after the wharf dispute, unions can hold Australia to ransom.*”

These unreasonable demands are perceived to have a negative effect on business and consequently *affect company profitability*. As seen in the primary negative ladder for government's role in the workplace, reduced company profitability is, for workers, a precursor to concern for employment stability and feeling bad. At this point, however, the similarities end. Unlike government, unions tap into a sense of *less control* for workers.

- “*I feel like I am compromising myself, doing something that I don't believe in.*”
- “*...not so much of a team player, just been used as a chess piece, I feel no control.*”

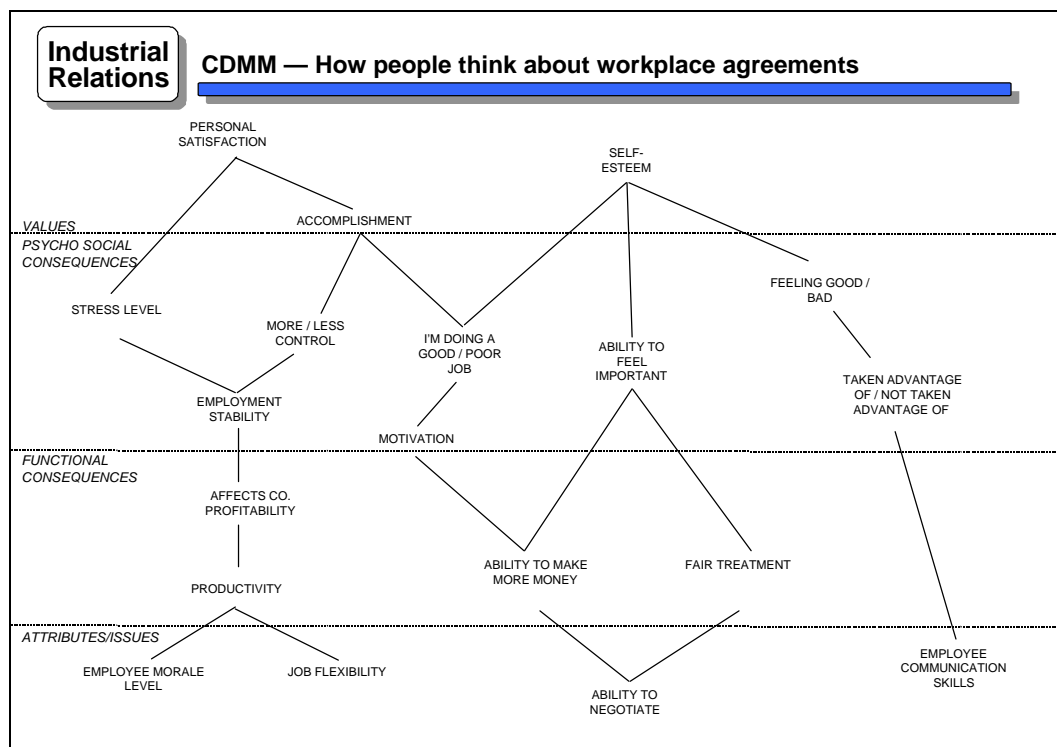
- “We don't get any say — the union didn't give us any choice — work or go home.”



The functional and psychosocial consequences for the *union's role in the workplace* primary negative values ladder are nearly identical with those for government's role in the workplace. Both incorporate worker concern for company profitability, employment stability and feeling bad. However, where government taps into **personal security** and **self-esteem** values drivers, unions tap into an entirely different set of drivers — (lack of) **freedom/independence**.

Workplace agreements

The fourth and final probe explored people's thoughts and feelings toward workplace agreements. Items appearing at the attribute level include the *ability to negotiate* (33 per cent of all mentions), *employee morale level* (17 per cent), *employee communications skills* (17 per cent), and *job flexibility* (12 per cent).



The primary positive ladder for workplace agreements begins with the *ability to negotiate*. This ability to negotiate gives employees a sense that they are able to control their own fate to some extent. As we will see in the negative ladder, nearly all employees feel that they are not as good at negotiating as they would like to be or feel they should be. However, they are still pleased that they have the capability to negotiate on their own behalf.

- *“I can speak up on behalf of myself, it's up to me and nobody else to what sort of pay I get, I know what I am getting, tell the boss what I want, what I think I am worth, gives me the ability to negotiate.”*
- *“You are responsible for your own situation — it's between you and your employer, you have both agreed to it, it's up to you both to honour the agreement.”*
- *“Ability to negotiate on behalf of your self — ability to get rid of middle man. Giving me opportunity to negotiate my own conditions, salary, laptop computers, etc.”*

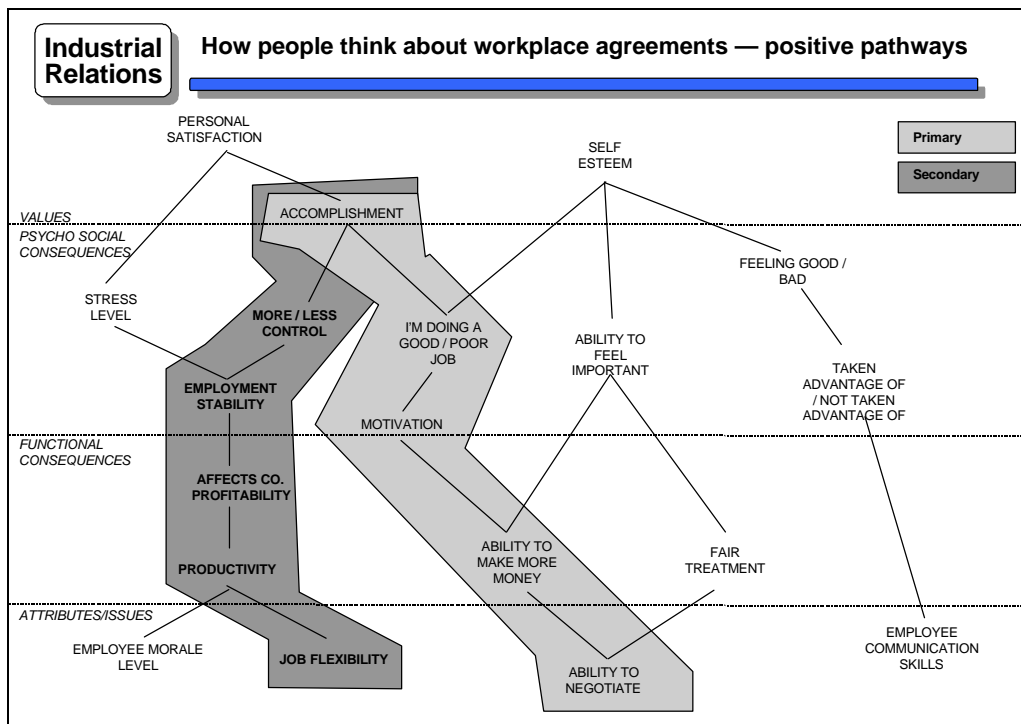
This ability to have input to personal compensation decisions opens an opportunity for *more money*.

- *“...get what you deserve, for the job you've done, not because of your age/experience — the more you put in the more you get out — do your best and you will be rewarded for it.”*

- “It will increase your pay. In the process of talking about and discussing what I expect. I expect more for what I'm doing.”

As was illustrated earlier, the ability to make more money is a prime motivating force behind doing a good job. This ‘good job,’ in the case of the positive workplace agreements values ladder, leads to a feeling of **accomplishment** at the values level.

- “...achievement, you've done a good day's work for a good day's pay.”
- “Personally, I would feel that I have achieved better in life.”

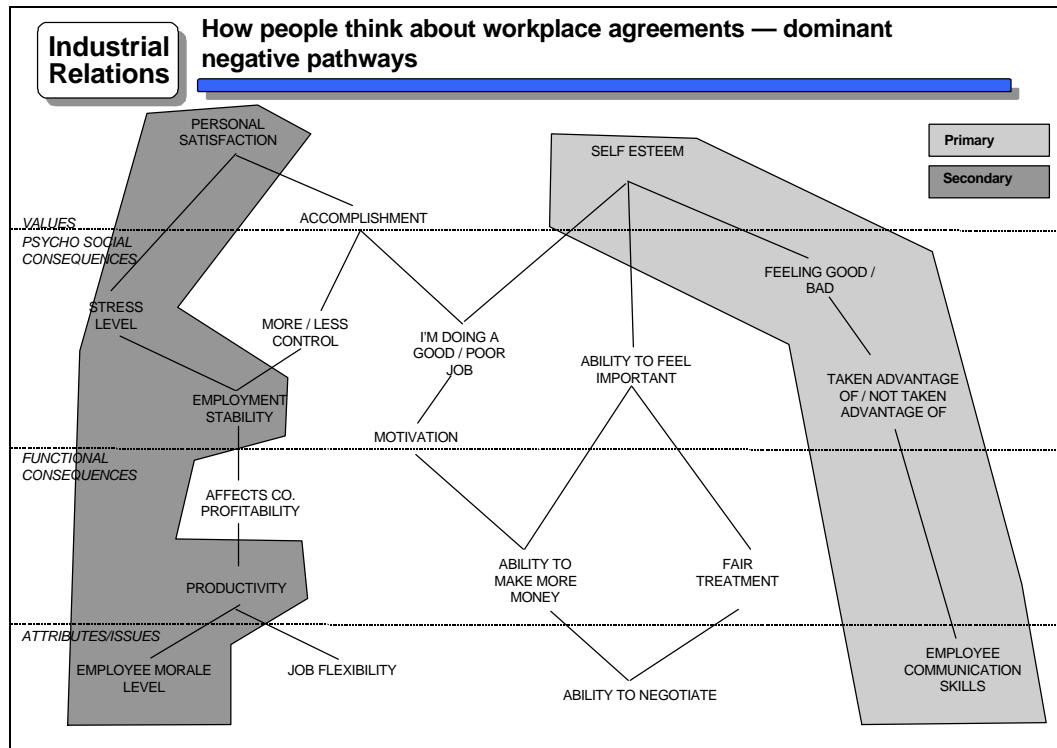


The primary negative workplace agreements values ladder is extremely direct. In fact it moves from the attribute level (*employee communication skills*) to the psychosocial consequence level (*not taken advantage of*).

- “...lack of negotiating skill, I wouldn't be able to negotiate because I would not know how to ... I'd feel inferior if there is a suit and tie.”
- “If you're not very articulate, you can't fight for what you want, you have to go along with whatever's given to you at the renegotiations each year.”
- “[I'm] not good at negotiating — intimidated by my boss.”

Communication skills, although mentioned by a significant portion of respondents, are almost invariably mentioned in a negative light (that is, inability to negotiate properly). This inability to communicate leads to the sense that workers are *being taken advantage of* and subsequently there are *bad feelings*.

- *“I feel I got a raw deal — my employer didn't do the right thing by me.”*
- *“Management is taking advantage of people that don't know any better — I would feel used... like management has shafted me.”*
- *“Manipulation by management. If agreement isn't fair, or you don't understand it, management can manipulate your life, pay and conditions.”*



These factors culminate in a negative impact on worker **self-esteem**. This impact is not so much a fear of being sacked, per se, as trepidation about the act of having to argue your self worth every year.

- *“I have to worry about it every year — my wife's going to hassle me about why I didn't ask for more money.... It's a stressful process.”*
- *“When I can't negotiate (properly), I feel inadequate.”*

If it were possible to ‘demystify’ or ‘un-demonise’ the workplace agreement process, there is real potential for a wider employee acceptance of it.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Note

This qualitative research was undertaken prior to the VISTA™ study; and thus was primarily designed to construct hypotheses, to discover and explore creative leads and develop strategic insights. While reading this report it should be kept in mind that it was not designed to quantitatively define the marketplace.

Methodology

Ten focus group discussions were held in Melbourne (4), Dubbo (2), Brisbane (2) and Mackay (2) between 2 June and 9 June, 1998.

Each focus group contained 7-10 adult, working Australians. The groups were recruited in such a way as to ensure there was a reasonable representation of particular occupational groupings. We therefore recruited and conducted specific focus groups among the following audiences:

- 2 groups part time workers (75% women, 25% men);
- 3 groups full time white collar;
- 3 groups full time blue collar; and
- 2 groups union members only.

In addition, each focus group participant fitted the following criteria:

- half aged 18-34 and half aged 35-60;
- not part of any group actively trying to influence the government;
- not part of (at present or in past) nor having any family member belonging to a profession which might give an unusual insight into social issues (marketing, public relations, advertising, media, politics, teaching and in this case, banking); and
- not employed by, a member or strong supporter of, any political party.

This topline report was written with two objectives in mind:

- to provide feedback and an interim report;
- to construct a grid of the key responses and issues to emerge from the groups, in both the negative and positive 'playing fields' on key workplace relations issues;
 - this grid and the preliminary understanding it provides are vitally important steps for Australasian Research Strategies Pty (ARSP) staff in developing our VISTA™ interviewing protocol.

The focus groups were moderated by Simon Berger, Project Director ARSP, and Dr Michael Sexton, consultant to ARSP. This topline report was written by Mark Textor, Managing Director ARSP, and Simon Berger. Any questions relating to this topline report should be directed to either Mark or Simon at (02) 6257-5847.

Introduction

For many workers, the issues of industrial relations and workplace relations reform are not necessarily salient ones. These people have given little thought to the role of trade unions or the government in the workplace, or how any policy change has affected, or could affect, their workplace in the future.

For many of these people and for other workers who support the current government's direction, there is little reason to fear change. Those who are open to the idea of change tend to have one or more of the following in common:

- the relationship with their boss is normally not an antagonistic one;
- the organisation they work in is most often a small one where they can 'sort out the issues themselves';
- they usually take pride in their work, and are frustrated by the idea that those who do not take the same pride in their work can be given the same remuneration;
- they are normally confident in their own ability and believe that their employer will value their work such that it is reflected, and will continue to be reflected, in their wages and conditions;
- they might perceive a vested interest in, or take pride in seeing their employer do well;
- they might place an importance on productivity, so that their company and their nation's economy does not fall behind;
- they might recognise that the activities of some unions can be counter productive for their workplace or workplaces generally;
- they often have an empathy with the plight of small business, and a belief that regulatory burdens should be eased for them;
- there is often a strong sense of individualism, and fears that it could be suppressed if they were to belong to a union in which they would be 'just another number'.

There are, however, a significant minority of workers who have a strongly 'pro-union' orientation, or deep seated suspicion of reform and of the current government's approach to workplace relations. These workers tend to have some of the following attitudes or circumstances in common:

- they tend to come from large organisations where management is distant;
 - they tend to be in blue collar or unskilled occupations;
-

- they tend to be older workers;
- the fact that they are older or less skilled often culminates in a fear that if they lose their current job they could remain permanently unemployed;
- they are often people who have a ‘rocky’ relationship with, or suspicion of their boss and therefore fear ‘retribution’ if their employer is given more power over workplace relations;
- sometimes they fault their ‘gift of the gab’, and express fears about their ability to negotiate on their own;
- they are often concerned about their ability to fend for themselves, without a union, which convinces them that they would be worse off with enterprise bargaining;
- for them, belonging to a union provides a sense of security — that the union will stop them going backwards, or at least provide them with some recourse if they ever did;
- while certain aspects of trade unionism concern them, they often consider it to be the lesser of two evils;
- often union membership is something that defines them, being a part of their value system, which is often passed down from their family;
- for some, unionism is ‘Australian’ — part of our heritage: for others, it is an integral part of their working life/their parents’ working life in an overseas country of origin;
- often there is a sense of solace gained and purpose fulfilled through ‘solidarity’; and
- as with those people in favour of reform, an issue of fairness often drives their opinion – that a ‘slick’ co-worker, who possesses good verbal skills could unfairly ‘hoodwink’ or ‘brown nose’ their way towards more pay.

For those without strong leanings on workplace relations issues, there often emerge some critical divides in their philosophical approach to workplace relations issues:

- What is worse for team morale — the fact that a slack worker can earn the same as themselves, or the fact that a ‘brown nose’ can earn more? Is the resentment caused by equality outweighed by the suspicion caused by competition?
 -
 - What is more important — limiting the rights of the big bosses in big corporations, or enhancing the rights of small business owners?
-

- Which is worse — being subjected to the pressure of negotiation, or surrendering their free will as members of a union?
- Is it important whether their boss makes a profit? Or is that just another sign that he is using employees for his own advantage?
- Does a changing world represent risk or opportunity?
- Are employees confident in their ability to negotiate on their own behalf?

In the following pages we summarise some of these thoughts in positive and negative grids. In the next phase of the research we will pursue these creative leads and construct hierarchical road maps.

The workplace

<i>What makes a good workplace?</i>	<i>What makes a bad workplace?</i>
<p data-bbox="318 243 704 275">Relationship with co-workers</p> <ul data-bbox="318 285 698 569" style="list-style-type: none">• Friendly• Teamwork• Sharing the load• Cooperation• Good working relationships• Friendly atmosphere• Motivated people <p data-bbox="318 611 794 642">Relationship with boss/management</p> <ul data-bbox="318 653 833 1860" style="list-style-type: none">• Mutual trust between management and staff• Good management (pride in achievements of company)• Clear idea of what is expected• Encouraging employees to contribute ideas and reward employee for that• A boss and staff that listen• <u>Not</u> the ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentality• Approachable management. ‘Door’s open’• Trust in employer• Open management. Opportunities for input• Team meetings — having a say• Seeing employer improving work area and conditions• Seeing fairness between employees (no favouritism)• Boss loyal to workers and vice versa• Clear goals/future directions• Workable, friendly rapport between management and staff• Expectations reasonable• Respect• Appreciation. Thanks for a good job• Being given exactly the details needed to do the work• A boss with people skills/‘on our wave length’ <p data-bbox="318 2007 571 2039">Pay and conditions</p>	<p data-bbox="862 243 1252 275">Relationship with co-workers</p> <ul data-bbox="862 285 1317 642" style="list-style-type: none">• Shirking. People not ‘pulling their weight’• Lack of communication• Human conflict• No cooperation• No sense of ‘team’• Unreliable people• Lack of trust• No social interaction <p data-bbox="862 684 1341 716">Relationship with boss/management</p> <ul data-bbox="862 726 1391 1703" style="list-style-type: none">• Management who show no flexibility or appreciation• Greedy boss (in it for himself)• Dictatorship style management• Workers treated like ‘numbers’ — opinions not respected• Distant management/‘Door not open’• Young ‘whizkid’ boss/Think they know everything• A ‘watchdog’ attitude• Lack of direction• Lack of feedback/appreciation/thanks for a job well done• Boss displaying favouritism — rewarding ‘brown noses’• Inflexible boss• ‘Stressful’ boss• Boss not approachable• No communications with work people and bosses. Heads of departments that have no understanding of what the staff’s needs are/Stress with time• Lack of care for workers• Unreasonable expectations <p data-bbox="862 1745 1357 1818">Job insecurity (<i>concerns particularly prevalent among union members</i>)</p> <ul data-bbox="862 1829 1373 1902" style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertainty about future job prospects• No reward for loyalty <p data-bbox="862 2007 1115 2039">Pay and conditions</p>

- Flexibility for the work, flexible hours
- Flexibility in role procedure, though still performance-based
- Adequate pay for work
- Fair and reasonable remuneration for a job well done
- Fair and equal opportunity
- Salary rises in accordance to skills
- Incentive to do better

Working conditions

- Safety. Variety of work
- Equipment (safe)
- Clean safe environment
- Safe and modern working conditions
- Comfortable surroundings; eg. air conditioning, ergonomic work station, good lighting, seating
- User friendly computer software
- Good working conditions; that is, premises/equipment
- Clean/healthy environment. Good people to work with
- Good location

- Poor pay
- Infrequent pay increases
- Being mistreated; that is, ‘doing a lot more than you were employed to do and not getting extra money or position upgrading’
- Lack of fairness between different employees
- Favouritism

Working conditions

- Unsafe workplace
- Poor lighting
- Harassment of any sort
- Unsafe machinery
- Not having equal conditions
- Stress, meeting deadlines
- No individuality — just staff member
- Bad work techniques/systems
- Poor working equipment
- Feeling discriminated against, whether by being female or of European background
- Bad location
- Petty disputes
- Over-unionised

Job satisfaction

- Stress
- Unrealistic timeframes for jobs/ disjointed
- Repetitious work
- Lack of job satisfaction due to poor wages and/or poor conditions
- No incentive to do better

Workplace relations/industrial relations reform

What are the positive aspects of workplace reform?

Australia

- Increased productivity. Keep up with the world
- Flexibility towards changing technological and economic environment. Keep up with the times

Benefits for business

- Increased productivity — economic benefits/economic security
- Firm more productive, so my job more secure
- Employer less hamstrung by bad employees. Cleaning out dead wood
- Better for small business

Fairness

- Other employees accountable —cannot shirk their duties and pass the buck to others.
- Incentive — ‘Why shouldn’t I get the same as someone else if I do better?’
- Feel as though remuneration is fair — ‘If I get an increase it’s because I’ve earned it’

Workplace relations

- Share of profits should result in better performance and stable staff. People happier
- Happier because workplace fairer. ‘If I work harder, I get more.’ No resentment of shirkers

Individuality/freedom

- People having to take on more responsibility for their work
- Voluntary unionism.
- Working hours flexibility
- Income up to individual. Compensation as a result of performance

Pay and conditions

What are the negative aspects of workplace reform?

Fairness

- Can allow a ‘brown nose’ to get ahead
- Disadvantage those unable to negotiate well/who do not have the ‘gift of the gab’

Power imbalance/lack of control

- Less power for workers
- Too much power to big business
- Disadvantage older people or unskilled (who have less bargaining power)
- Employer benefits mostly
- Dishonesty about benchmarks. Workers ‘hoodwinked’
- Rule breaking, shortcuts. Fewer safeguards

Workplace relations

- Increased competition, as opposed to teamwork. No trust
- It individualises and divides the workers in the workplace
- Because of change people are insecure
- Poor service. More waiting
- Lack of consideration (company profits higher priority than customer needs)

Pay and conditions

- Loss of wages/conditions
- More part time. More stress on mind.
- Having not enough staff to go around and not enough hours to complete your duties. Too many cut backs, longer delays in services. People at the top company make more money
- More control for the employer (contracts)

Workload/stress

- Unrealistic expectations/workload
- Less flexibility in hours of work

Companies can demand more than work from employees

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business earns more money, therefore employees see bonuses• Work contracts. Able to negotiate individual contracts/conditions• Giving people choices/options• Ability to supposedly earn more• Readily accessible, user-friendly• People are more accountable. Roles are more descriptive• More training• Safer• Better equipment to work with	<p>Job security/peace of mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased pressure• Redundancy• Easier to hire and fire or downsize. Job insecurity (redundancy)• A lot of materials to read (legal type contracts — Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs))• Hard to get a foot in there (lack of experience in industry)• Pressure/stress• There's more stress to perform — 'benchmarks'
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Strong union presence in workplace

Positive aspects of a strong union presence/a unionised workplace

Power/control

- Control over how much work you can handle at one time and good working condition and pay
- Employer can't treat employees as they wish
- Negotiate fair agreements for workers
Clear rules
- Collective bartering for improvements in conditions/wages
- Someone to 'bat' for me
- Watchdog big business
- Backup for the worker

Tangible benefits

- Safer workplace. Better safety conditions
- Hours of work
- Reasonable shifts
- Reasonable wages
(but usually it is a case of 'with the union, we are less likely to go backwards')

Security/peace of mind

- Someone else who knows your rights speaking up for you, if you're the type of person who isn't into speaking up
- Safety in numbers
- Feeling secure
- If you do not have the 'gift of the gab', you can't negotiate well — need union
- Do not have to worry about negotiating every year

Workplace relations

- Someone to bargain/negotiate for employees
- Unity. Feeling of team. 'All in together'. Solidarity

Bad aspects of a strong union presence/a unionised workplace

Ulterior motives

- Union sometimes has its own agenda
- Political interests by union or issues considered not essential

Too heavy-handed

- Sometimes too militant/heavy-handed
- Bully tactics

Disruption

- Strikes (secondary boycotts)
- Strike at the drop of a hat

Lack of control or coercion/compulsion

- They do not always make the right decision for you
- Maybe the union will try to cause a stir without real cause, but you would have to go along with it
- You have to back them up even if the situation doesn't concern your job
- Unable to work if you're not in the union

Pay and conditions

- Fear of loss of pay if strike action occurs
- Never helped me
- Only concern is to be asked to go out on strike when I feel it is not necessary to do so, do not agree with tactics. To have a choice
- No flexibility (upwards)
- Personally — waste of money/fees

Free-riders

- Non-union members get same benefits

Harm to business/economy

- Lack of productivity
- Small business can't get rid of bad

<p>Personal values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'In the blood'• Unions part of value system• 'I <u>belong</u> to a union — that's who I am'• Unions are part of Australian/family heritage	<p>workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diminish productivity. Hold Australia back• Put business (and therefore jobs) at risk
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Non-unionised workplaces

What are the positive aspects of a non-unionised workplace?

Workplace relations (all employees at the same level)

- No 'us' and 'them' mentality
- Employers and employee can sort out their own workplace problems without others striking
- Likelihood of less conflict between management and labour
- All employees at the same level
- Management has greater flexibility in determining conditions of employment
- Makes for better, more direct communication between employer and employee. Deal directly with employer, no middle man
- No individual union pressure, therefore more productivity (better environment all round)
- No need for obstruction in smaller work environments

Freedom/individuality

- You're not forced to make a decision with the majority
- Not being forced to pay union fees
- Do not have to do what others do (strike, stop work, etc)
- Individuality
- Work is more productive
- Contracts for individuals
- 'Only have your boss to answer to. Do what you are told and do the work'
- No individual union pressure, therefore more productivity (better environment all round)
- No added role/responsibility to other union members

Pay and conditions

- Flexibility
- Productivity would increase if rewards-based incentivising continued
- Job contract for certain time

What are the concerns about a non-unionised workplace?

Workplace relations (all employees at the same level)

- Free for all
- Scattered ideals
- Too much pressure put on the staff, resulting in loss of time and money
- Big sites disjointed
- Those with the 'gift of the gab' or 'brown noses'

Loss of power, rights or security

- Lack of/no protection for/overlooking employee rights
- Lack of security
- Staff may not have any say in their jobs
- Employers have rights to pick on those who stand up to them
- Employees can make it hard for someone they do not like or who is 'too old or unskilled to get another job'
- People have no input into where the company may be heading
- Not being able to fight your case with your employer
- Employees need to seek alternative (unattainable) means of redress
- Workers treated badly/taken advantage of by employer
- Fairness in dismissal situations. Management's right to hire/fire
- Equality in workplace; that is, discrimination
- The employer may have too much influence and may be more likely to abuse this power without threat of action against them. Management has free reign

Pay and conditions

- Poor conditions
- Inequitable pay and conditions for employees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No union fees/dues • Easier • Bonuses for deserving staff • Ability to go to heads of departments and work out differences and compensation issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tea breaks, longer work time, less money • Poorly functioning equipment • Unsafe conditions • No rules or regulations • Safety • Workers' fears. Dangerous workplace environment • Boss may have too much influence and get away with sub-standard conditions • Workers losing out • 'Put up with it or move on' <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have to rely on oneself to read and understand an AWA (which is a legal document) • Complexity — it's <u>easier</u> with the union • Would lose identity — 'What I believe in' (would lose its meaning)
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Enterprise bargaining/workplace agreements

What are the positive aspects of enterprise bargaining?

Freedom/individuality

- ‘If I get more or less, it depends on me — I am responsible for my situation’
- Speak on your own behalf
- Everybody’s different. Need flexibility. Not constrained by ‘mob’

Fairness

- ‘Why shouldn’t I get more if I do a better job?’
- ‘If people all get paid the same, there’s no incentive for people to pull their weight — why should I get lumped with someone else’s work because they want to slack off?’

Pay and conditions

- Better work, more pay
- Flexibility — ‘If I need to be away at a certain time I can give a little here and take a little there’

Workplace relations

- It is better for morale if everyone has an incentive to give their best. That way, no one will resent the fact that some work while others shirk

What are the negative aspects of enterprise bargaining?

Security

- Bad for old workers as they know and the boss knows that they do not have any other options. They have to take what the boss is prepared to give as they can’t get a job elsewhere
- Bad for unskilled workers (for the same reason)
- Bad for people with poor negotiation skills — poor English/shy people/inarticulate people
- Constant concern about renegotiation every year. No certainty. No ability to plan. Not in control. Pressure

Pay and conditions

- Less pay, worse conditions (*see above*)

Workplace relations

- The ‘brown nose’ or ‘whiz kid’ gets ahead (unfairly)
- Suspicion about who is getting what — ‘Is he getting more than me because he’s a better negotiator?’ — Bitterness, resentment. Disharmony in the workplace

Legitimate/desirable role for government

Legitimate/desirable role for government in workplace relations

Setting standards

- To provide/reinforce existing guidelines, laws etc
- Set basic standards
- The Government is used to getting the best guidelines in industrial relations as it used to employ the largest number of staff
- Set guidelines for industrial relations. Positive and fair attitude to unions and employers
- Health and safety standards
- Ensure fair pay for a fair day's work. Minimum wage in blue collar jobs
- Ensure safety standards are maintained
- Fairness/protection for workers in big industries or organisations

Mediator/overseer

- Arbitration
- To back up/enforce current working conditions
- Mediator/fairness
- Honesty/fairness/balance
- Regulate in conjunction with both employers and unions
- Governing body in charge of all industrial relations
- Should be unbiased
- Investigate complaints or substandard conditions
- Oversee all running of businesses remains fair and not balanced in anyone's favour
- Oversee, make sure sub-contractors are paid
- To discuss with all parties the types of laws (employers, employees, and unions)
- Environmental issues
- Health issues
- Funding for agencies set-up for industrial relations

Illegitimate/undesirable role for government in workplace relations

Over-insistence on 'reform' or 'anti union'

- Dissolving of relations by not upgrading salary structures and performance accord with Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Massive sackings of workers/companies
- Bullying of unions. Overpowering unions by force
- Being partisan in disputes. Not to be one-sided
- To show preference to a stronger side when all they care about is money
- Wharf situation. The MUA 'debacle'
- To be 'dictating' industrial situations
- Political/election conformed decisions/action
- Taking sides with employers
- Their view demanded and overriding all other views

Over-involvement in workplace/ employer and employee situations

- 'To put their nose in somewhere where they do not know what they are doing'. To make decision on areas they are not fully aware of in that industry
- Unreasonable regulations
- Go where they do not belong
- Overbalancing 'the equation'
- 'Try to keep its distance from union dispute'
- Not letting boss and employee sort it out between themselves
- Unreasonable unfair dismissal laws
- To tell the worker and company what to do, and dictate to them
- Over-regulation
- To involve themselves where they are not needed/wanted

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final say via Industrial Court, presided over via a variety of advocates• Discrimination cases• To ensure essential services are maintained and to protect Australia's economy• Pull the <u>unions</u> into line if they go too far• To provide for jobs, backing of jobs/projects, infrastructure• To <u>encourage</u> better working conditions• <u>Maintain</u> and encourage personal development of guidelines in workplace• <u>Negotiation</u> with union and workplace to reach satisfactory resolution	
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Legitimate/desirable role for unions

<i>Legitimate/desirable role for unions in workplace relations</i>	<i>Illegitimate/undesirable role for unions in workplace relations</i>
<p>Educate/inform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide educated, correct advice• Advise and give information• Explain to employees their rights <p>Safety issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring safety in occupational health• Quality control• Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) representatives• Provide guidelines to tackle safety issues/quality control <p>To fight for the fair rights or stand up against big/powerful employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People are paid just wages• Job security• Safety of all employees. Security of tenure• Strength. Being able to fight for your rights. Someone to back you up• To keep it <u>safe</u>. Fair trading for those in lower social workshop situations• To negotiate with company head on behalf of their workers, over conditions and wages• Negotiation process• To be the workers' bargaining agent in relation to AWAs and/or Certified Agreements (CAs)• To see things are worked out fairly for the workers• To protect the right of all employees in whatever position they are in <p>Be fair/reasonable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidelines that are reasonable for both companies and workers• Employee rights — only where they have not infringed upon employers' rights <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To genuinely represent the interests of	<p>No regard for employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To make unreasonable demands• Lack of understanding of employers rights• Bulldog tactics. Industry bullying and threats for unreasonable demands <p>Harm Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holding the country to ransom• 'Kill' productivity. Allow Australia to fall behind• Harm business• Put jobs at risk by harming business <p>Pettiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To bully people into fighting for pedantic issues• Frivolous <p>Small companies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overzealous unions by badgering a small company into bankruptcy• Giving the small businessman a hard time <p>Compulsion/coercion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closed shop• To try to take over the management role. Heavying/hounding non-union members• Contracts (not be involved)• Join or do not work• Compulsory joining fee• Compulsory walkouts/boycotts• To dictate what workers should do• To coerce workers to join a union against their will• To come to employees about a concern and insist they need to go further with that concern <p>Playing politics</p>

<p>employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To genuinely seek and negotiate settlement of disputes• To work with management in achieving reasonable balance between management objectives and employees' rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To pursue '<i>political</i>' interests above industrial relations interests. '<i>Rabble-rousing</i>' employees• Use unions for own political ends <p>Disrupt industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unwarranted industry disruption• If you do not want to strike you should not have to <p>Ignore members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For unions to get on side with employers more than employees• Go against employees' demands
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Unfair dismissal laws

<p><i>What are the positive aspects of less strict unfair dismissal laws?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If it is easier to fire, it might be more appealing for business to hire, so more jobs• Keeps people 'on their toes', so productivity up• Allows a fair boss to get rid of trouble makers or 'bludgers'• Fair go for <u>small</u> business	<p><i>What are the negative aspects of less strict unfair dismissal laws?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can lead to discrimination against older workers• Takes away scrutiny. A 'check' on a bad boss's power/whim• Does not give people a 'fair go'• Takes away security• Takes away 'second chance'• Could increase unemployment if boss can fire people 'willy nilly'
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