

# People Leaders and the Gap in Managing Employee Issues

As a tech company focused on creating safe, fair workplaces for all employees, HR Acuity surveyed nearly 800 people leaders and employee relations professionals to better understand how effectively they manage employee issues and how their actions impact employee relations, employee experience and the entire organization. Here's what we learned.

## The reality is problematic:

Half of people leaders are very confident in their ability to manage employee issues effectively. Only 2% of ER professionals agree.

Percentage in people leaders' abilities to document issues effectively and compliantly



AND **51%** of people leaders are not confident that HR will help them resolve issues

*“People aren't being treated consistently throughout the organization. That can be problematic.”*  
—CHRO

### OUR TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ There's a big gap in the perceptions of how effectively day-to-day employee issues are managed. And half of people leaders are not confident in their abilities. Poorly managed employee issues negatively impact morale, affect productivity and lead to retention issues.
- ▶ Organizations must upskill and empower people leaders to deliver consistent, informed outcomes that will build trust with employees and increase confidence in ER professionals.

## Why does it matter?

There is a critical connection between effective handling of employee issues and a positive employee experience.

Top three organizational benefits of handling employee issues effectively



*“It's very nuanced work and if you don't tend to the issues, they can make things worse.”*  
—People Leader

*“People are our greatest asset and we like to meet our employees' needs while balancing the needs of the organization.”*  
—Senior Director, Employee Relations

### OUR TAKEAWAY

- ▶ In addition to enhancing employee engagement and improving employee experience when things go wrong at work, managing issues appropriately helps create a culture of trust with employees and minimizes reputational risk.

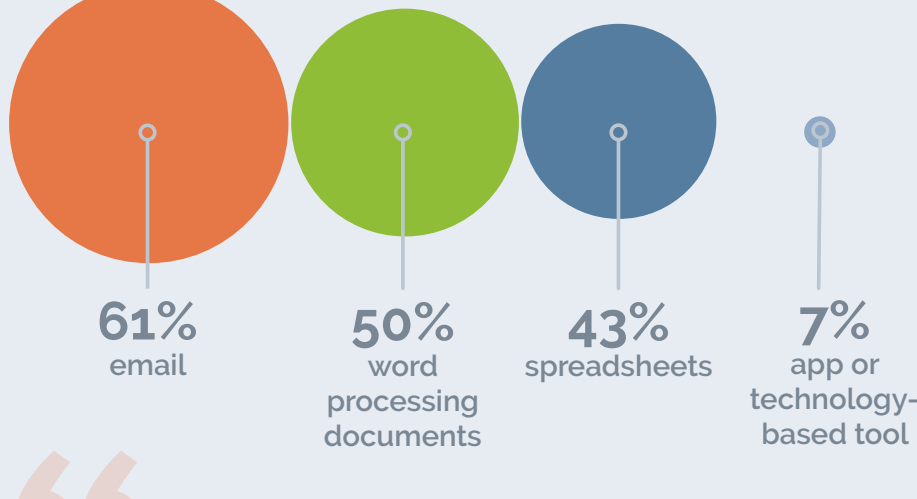
## The status quo isn't working.

Toolkits and training to help people leaders manage employee issues are not enough. Almost all rely on manual tactics to document and track issues.

**85%** of organizations provide multiple resources to help people leaders manage employee issues

**93%** of people leaders use unscalable, risky methods to document and track employee issues

Methods people leaders use to manage employee issues



*“We are using excel, email...we are all over the place manually tracking history.”*  
—Employee Relations Leader

### OUR TAKEAWAYS

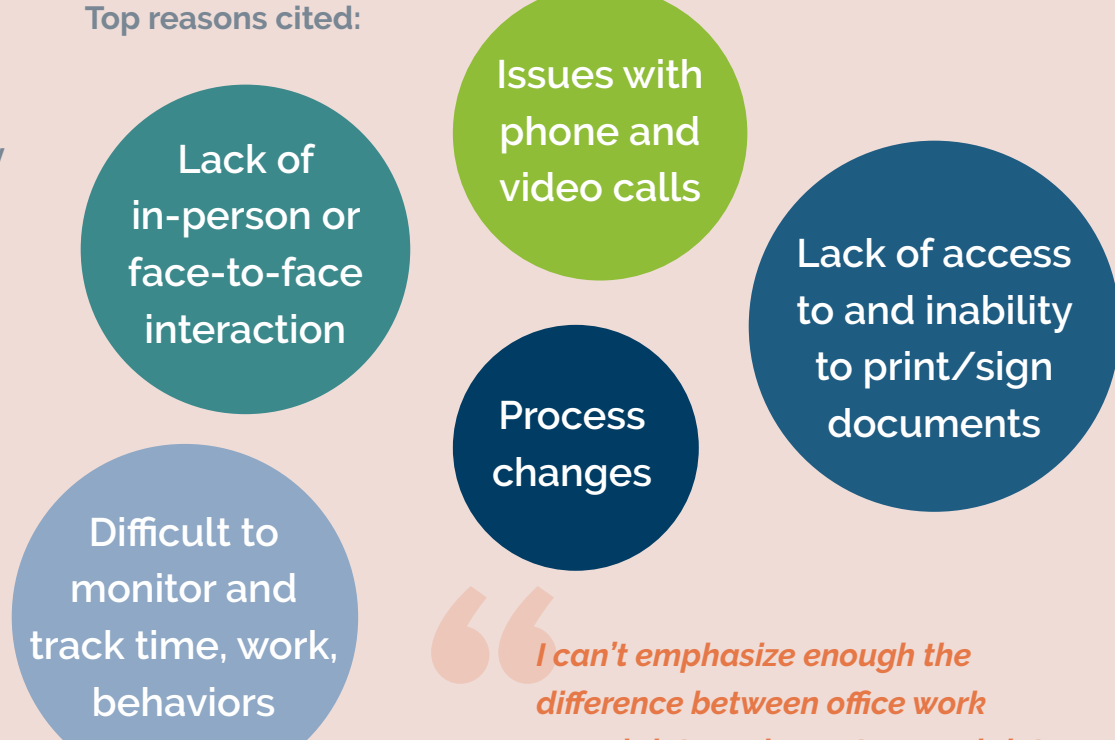
- ▶ Training programs, toolkits, templates and self-serve portals designed to help people leaders manage employee issues can add value but are time-consuming to maintain, are not always readily available when issues arise and are often forgotten about and unused.
- ▶ Inefficient manual methods to track employee issues often result in incomplete and inconsistent documentation that exposes organizations to risk. People leaders need easy-to-use, modern technology that streamlines the process, fits into their workflow, secures confidential information and provides real-time guidance to address employee issues with consistency.

## The challenge is getting worse.

People leaders find managing employee issues in remote and hybrid environments much more challenging compared to managing in-person.

**65%** of people leaders say managing issues remotely is much more challenging

Top reasons cited:



*“I can't emphasize enough the difference between office work complaints and remote complaints.”*  
—People Leader

### OUR TAKEAWAY

- ▶ People leaders need tools to help them manage issues regardless of their work environment. The need for tools that offer built-in process and insights into employee behavior becomes even more important when people leaders are managing remote employees.

## But there is good news!

When people leaders use tech-based tools to manage employee issues, ER's confidence in their abilities jumps over 20 points.



### OUR TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Modern tools that provide easy access to employee history and offers people leaders guidance at every stage are needed to strengthen people leaders' abilities to appropriately manage employee issues, with minimal assistance from ER professionals who are often stretched thin.
- ▶ As ER professionals grow confident that issues are handled fairly, consistently and compliantly, they will be able to focus on more complex allegations, escalated issues that require their expertise and proactive employee relations strategies.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

As the direct connection between an organization and its employees, people leaders can make or break employee experience. How they manage to employee issues affects employee engagement, morale and trust in the organization. However, people leaders are not equipped to handle these day-to-day issues effectively. Remote and hybrid work environments compound this problem, creating additional management challenges.

Technology that offers built-in guidance and easy collaboration with ER/HR are scarce and underutilized—yet vital to empower people leaders and ensure consistent, fair experiences for employees. Implementing modern tech that delivers comprehensive visibility to identify behavior patterns, highlight policy and training needs and expose potential bias is a necessity to proactively manage employee relations and mitigate risk.

### RESPONDENTS

662 People leaders in HR Acuity Manager Survey  
126 Employee relations leaders in the Fifth Annual HR Acuity Employee Relations Benchmark Study

Data collection period: February 23 - April 5, 2021

HR Acuity is the only technology platform specifically built for employee relations and investigations management, helping organizations protect their reputations and build better workplaces.

We empower clients with built-in intelligence, templates and reporting so they can fairly and appropriately manage employee relations issues, uncover trends and patterns through forward-looking data and analytics, and provide trusted, consistent experiences for their people.