



Labor-Management Resource Center

Characteristics of Successful Labor-Management Committees

The success of labor-management committees is based on the quality of the relationship that exists between the parties. Observations of numerous committees over the years have helped identify four characteristics found in successful labor-management committee relationships:

1. Sincerity
2. Persistence
3. Patience
4. Consideration

The **first** of these is **sincerity**. Honesty and genuineness — as compared with lying, deception, back-stabbing and “end runs”— are basic elements of successful committees. Saying one thing while doing another is a common indicator of insincerity. Truthfulness and the ability to stand by one’s word are marks of sincerity that is essential for the success of labor-management committees.

A **second** characteristic is **persistence**. As with all successful relationships, joint committees require ongoing, diligent attention. New committees often begin with a rush of enthusiasm, then die out. Maintaining a committee is hard work, and successful committees “keep at it.” Parties that remain committed to the labor-management committee process, over the long haul, find that as their relationship matures, they are able to successfully handle more difficult and complex issues.



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Characteristics of Successful Labor-Management Committees (continued)

The **third** characteristic is **patience** with committee members. There may be times when committee members believe that members are moving too slow, too quickly, not at all, or in the “wrong” direction. A degree of tolerance is often found among successful committees; latitude is provided for various “indiscretions.” Mistakes and set backs will occur. Patient members of successful committees acknowledge this. They ask for and grant forgiveness when appropriate and, in doing so, move the business of the committee onward.

The **fourth** “relationship hallmark” found among successful labor-management committees is **consideration**. Genuine recognition and care for the other party’s needs and welfare are the ultimate basis for building a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Consideration reflects a willingness to look beyond possible short-term gains. Successful committees weigh the impact of how an issue is handled on the long-term relationship between the parties.