

Interest-based bargaining: A better way to bargain

Enterprise bargaining in Australia typically involves a transactional process where a union issues an employer with a log of claims and the employer returning serve with its response, which is followed by adversarial, concessional bargaining until an end point is reached.

In many cases, this transactional process creates collateral damage and a deterioration in relationships which can take years to overcome.

However, unlike most business transactions where the value is in the transaction, in the workplace the real value is derived from the quality of the ongoing relationship, and the shared commitment to success of the enterprise through an understanding of shared interests and the mutual value of co- operation.

Interest-based bargaining represents a fundamentally different approach. It constructs an enterprise agreement around the business plan and the organisation's values, rather than simply responding to a log of claims. Interest-based bargaining focusses on the solution, not the problem.

Interest-based bargaining ensures that:

- Relationships are strengthened not damaged;
- Employee engagement is improved, providing a platform for willingness to give discretionary effort;
- Issues that are not 'EA issues' but which inhibit productivity and efficiency are identified and resolved;
- Corporate sustainability is enhanced through the collaborative process and the value proposition emerging.

What it involves

- more than \$15 billion in coal chain infrastructure and other works completed ahead of schedule, and under budget, with no lost time due to industrial disputes and an exemplary safety record;

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