

Value Practice***Handling Employee Complaint Process In-house Yields Value- Practices at OSI Industries, LLC*****Bill Lipsman*****Interviewed while Executive Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary for OSI Industries, LLC*****September 2009****Background**

OSI Industries' law department is a smaller law department, with two in-house lawyers plus the General Counsel. The company is privately held and its food service business spans the globe, with over 9,000 employees and 42 processing facilities. Around seven years ago, the General Counsel assumed responsibility for the HR function in addition to the law department.

This ACC Value Practice piece summarizes a three-prong approach implemented by the law department to process employee complaints—entirely in-house and with results described by the General Counsel as being very good.

Three-Prong Approach to Responding to Formal Complaints

The in-house team includes three key players: (1) plant human resources manager; (2) corporate human resources manager; and (3) in-house lawyer. Key responsibilities in responding to complaints include:

- *Plant HR Manager*- identifying and compiling all relevant documents and materials relating to the complaint; setting the necessary interviews.
- *Corporate HR Manager*- participating in the interview process, and providing input on the response to the questionnaire and position statement.
- *In-house lawyer*- preparing the response to the questionnaire and the position statement.

In addition to the collaborative in-house effort of the above players, the plant manager also attends any mediation sessions or hearings. The General Counsel shares that experience has shown this is an important part of the resolution process—to allow the plant manager to hear in person the complaint that is being raised.

Results

The General Counsel shares that 2/3 of the cases are dismissed. In addition, the law department generally opts for mediation as a practical vehicle to resolve and settle employee complaints.



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