



This is a regular look at recent news in the world of mediation, focusing in particular on the workplace and throwing in some of my own views for good measure. This edition features a couple of articles on success stories following mediation being implemented in two very different organisations. There is also an article relating to some interesting research looking at the growth of formal HR processes compared to the adoption of mediation.

Marc Reid

Mediation success in two very different large organisations

It's great to hear of case studies where mediation has been introduced successfully into companies. These articles focus on two organisations, the multinational food services company Aramark Ireland (click [here](#)) and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (click [here](#)). There are valuable 'lessons learned' in both cases. The IPCC points to the importance of early union involvement and also the difficulty of relying purely on internal mediators. The Aramark case has 4 very interesting 'keys for success' including commitment and involvement of the top management team and regular communication including quarterly training for managers on informal approaches to managing workplace complaints.

Want to share a thought or make an enquiry? We'll be glad to hear from you:

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Research shows underuse of mediation early in dispute



Research led by Professor Stephen Wood, employment relations expert at the University of

Leicester (click [here](#)) has shown how employers are failing to adopt mediation in the early stages of workplace disputes although it could help avoid more formal procedures. The study analyses the 2004 and 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Surveys (WERS) and demonstrates there has been no reduction in formalisation. Whilst it is good to see that formal HR processes are now in place in most workplaces, what we are not yet seeing is a similar adoption of informal processes. Use of mediation is growing as the study shows but organisations are still too quick to jump into the formal process rather than consider mediation early on when it has the most chance of success.

ACAS Early Conciliation Second Quarter Update

Early Conciliation (EC) was introduced on 6 April and recent statistics from ACAS give us results for April-September 2014 (click [here](#)). So with 6 months of data we are now starting to see how EC is working. The figures seem encouraging. In terms of take up only 10% rejected using EC. Perhaps even more positive is that only 24% of disputes have progressed on to a Tribunal Claim and already nearly a quarter of those have been settled before the Tribunal with more settlements likely. So early indications appear positive; of course what we need now is a process that really is 'early' where disputes are resolved before they even get to ACAS!

Dear Jeremy....

theguardian I like to use a wide range of sources and this next article comes from The Guardian's agony uncle page (click [here](#)). 'Dear Jeremy' gives advice to an employee. It's a typical scenario of a new team member struggling to cope with a difficult colleague. Jeremy has some sensible suggestions but falls into the trap of making assumptions about the aggressive colleague: "he may have felt threatened by your arrival". At no point does Jeremy suggest opening up a conversation with the colleague and advises that if the employee's manager will do nothing he has "little choice but to move on." Somewhat extreme. Only in the comments does a sensible reader suggest mediation!

'Conflict Management Skills for HR Professionals' Wargrave, 19th March. One day workshop giving HR the tools, skills and framework to address and resolve employee conflicts. For more information click [here](#).

Neighbours, everybody needs good neighbours...

In this article entitled "Neighbour Nightmares Make Life a Misery" (click [here](#)) AOL have picked out a series of neighbour dispute cases which have been left to carry on for some time. Admittedly all of these cases border on the extreme, from outrageous extensions, massive trees and fences to the couple who ended up with a court order to pay their neighbours £600,000 for harassment. Yet they are all salutary lessons. It would be interesting to know how each of these began. Probably the spark was something small. They all show the extremes that disputes can reach if issues are not dealt with early on. So the lesson? Even if something seems minor, make sure you discuss and resolve it to avoid it escalating.

Every Mediator should do community mediation

This is the subject of my most recent blog (click [here](#)), and one that stimulated a lot of agreement with my three main points.



- 1) Great way for a mediator to develop skills.
- 2) Community mediation services need good mediators
- 3) There are many despairing neighbours who need help from mediators.

So all you mediators out there, think about community mediation. You're needed!

Website: www.mediation4.co.uk