

The SESCO management consultants Report

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Your “Human” Resource Since 1945

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Defense of Employee Discrimination Charges: A Major Part of SESCO's Business

At SESCO, we engage in regular discussions with clients that either have internal discrimination complaints or charges filed through state agencies or the EEOC. Defending against an employee discrimination charge requires a careful, evidence-based response that demonstrates the employer's decisions were based on legitimate, nondiscriminatory reasons. An employee must show that they were subjected to discrimination based on a protected characteristic (i.e. race, disability, gender, etc.). In our experience, many times, employees are disciplined or terminated for legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons. However, charges are filed regardless of the true facts of the employment action. Employers must follow a pattern of investigation and respond professionally to the allegations.

- **Review the allegations:** Carefully examine the discrimination complaint and identify the specific conduct, employment decisions, individuals involved, and protected characteristics at issue.

- **Investigate promptly:** Conduct a fair and impartial investigation. Interview relevant employees and managers, review personnel records, and gather documents that may establish what occurred.
- **Establish legitimate reasons:** If the complaint concerns hiring, promotion, discipline, termination, pay, scheduling, or another employment action, identify the legitimate business reasons supporting the decision.
- **Gather supporting evidence:** Collect performance evaluations, disciplinary records, attendance information, policies, emails, job descriptions, compensation records, and other documentation showing that the employer followed established procedures.
- **Compare similarly situated employees:** Determine whether employees outside the protected group were treated differently under comparable circumstances. Consistent treatment can be important evidence supporting the employer's position.

- **Demonstrate consistent policies:** Show that the employer applied its workplace policies consistently and that the challenged decision was not based on race, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, or another protected characteristic.
- **Address discriminatory comments or conduct:** Investigate any alleged statements or behavior by supervisors or coworkers. Explain their

context and determine whether they were connected to the employment decision at issue.

- **Avoid retaliation:** Employees who make discrimination complaints may have legal protections against retaliation. Managers should be instructed not to punish, threaten, isolate, or otherwise retaliate against the complaining employee.
- **Preserve records:** Relevant documents, electronic communications, personnel files, and other evidence should be preserved once a complaint or potential legal claim becomes known.
- **Respond accurately:** Any response to an administrative agency or other legal authority should be factual, consistent, and supported by available evidence. Avoid exaggerated claims or statements that cannot be substantiated.
- **Consult with SESCO:** We can assess the allegations, applicable federal and state laws, procedural requirements, and available defenses. SESCO can also help prepare a formal response and advise the employer throughout an investigation or litigation.

Ultimately, an effective defense is built on **documented facts, consistent treatment, legitimate business reasons, and compliance with applicable employment laws.**

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What Leaders Need from Owners and Top Management

Strong leaders can make a significant difference in an organization—but even the best leaders cannot succeed in isolation. They need clear direction, consistent support, and the confidence of owners and top management to turn strategy into results. As owners and top management, it is your responsibility to provide your leaders with:

1. **Clarity.** They should understand the organization's priorities, what success looks like, and which decisions are most important. When expectations are unclear or constantly changing, leaders spend valuable time reacting rather than leading.
2. **Trust and Appropriate Authority.** Owners and senior executives must be willing to empower leaders to

make decisions within their areas of responsibility. Accountability without authority creates frustration and weakens leadership effectiveness.

3. **Communication and Alignment.** Leaders need honest, timely information about business performance, challenges, organizational changes, and future plans. They also need senior leadership to speak with one voice, particularly when difficult decisions are involved.
4. **Support and Development.** That means access to resources, constructive feedback, coaching, and opportunities to grow their skills. When leaders know that top management is invested in their success, they are more likely to take ownership,

address problems proactively, and develop the people around them.

The bottom line: owners and top management do not need to lead every detail. Their role is to create the conditions in which leaders can lead—providing clarity, trust, alignment, resources, and support. When those foundations are in place, leaders are better positioned to deliver the performance and culture the organization needs to thrive.

If your organization's leaders are ready to move from managing day-to-day challenges to leading with greater confidence and impact, SESCO can help. **Contact us to start a conversation about your organization's leadership needs.**

What Motivates the Gen Z Workforce?

As Generation Z continues to reshape the workforce, employers are taking a closer look at what drives this generation to engage, perform, and stay. While compensation remains important, Gen Z employees are also looking for purpose, growth, flexibility, authentic leadership, and a workplace where they feel valued and supported. For leaders, understanding these priorities can provide a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining emerging talent. Here are several key factors motivating today's Gen Z workforce—and practical considerations for employers looking to meet their expectations.

- **Purpose over perks:** Gen Z employees increasingly want to understand how their work contributes to a larger mission. A clear connection between individual responsibilities and organizational purpose can strengthen engagement and retention.
- **Growth and learning:** This generation places a high value on opportunities to build skills, take on meaningful challenges, and see

a path forward. Employers can respond with mentoring, professional development, stretch assignments, and transparent career pathways.

- **Flexibility and trust:** Gen Z tends to appreciate workplace flexibility and autonomy, but flexibility works best when paired with clear expectations and accountability. Organizations that focus on outcomes rather than constant visibility can build stronger trust.
- **Feedback and recognition:** Regular, constructive feedback matters. Gen Z employees often expect more frequent communication than traditional annual reviews provide—and recognition for contributions can reinforce both performance and commitment.
- **Authentic leadership:** Employees notice whether organizational values are reflected in day-to-day decisions. Leaders who communicate openly, listen to employees, and demonstrate authenticity can create stronger connections with a younger workforce.



- **Well-being and belonging:** Compensation remains important, but so do psychological safety, inclusive workplace cultures, and sustainable workloads. Employees are more likely to thrive when they feel respected, supported, and able to bring their perspectives to work.

Turn Insight Into Action: Understanding what motivates Gen Z is only the first step. Our HR consulting team helps organizations translate workforce trends into practical talent strategies—from employee engagement and leadership development to retention and culture initiatives. **Contact SESCO to build a workplace strategy that attracts, develops, and keeps the talent your organization needs for the future.**

The Little Red Hen Story

by J.W. Lawson Sr.
Written and Published in 1970

Once upon a time there was a Little Red Hen who scratched about and uncovered some grains of wheat. She called her barnyard neighbors who were playing and having fun and said, "If we work together and plant this wheat we will have some fine bread to eat. Who will help me plant the wheat?"

"Not I," said the Cow. "Not I," said the Duck. "Not I," said the Goose. "Not I," said the Pig. "Then I will," said the Little Red Hen and so she went to work.

After the wheat started growing, the ground turned dry and there was no rain in sight. "Who will help me water the wheat?" said the Little Red Hen.

"Taking vacation," said the Pig. "I'm tired," said the Goose. "I'm busy," said the Duck. "Then I will," said the Little Red Hen and so she went to work.

The wheat grew tall and ripened into golden grain. "Who will help me reap the wheat?" asked the Little Red Hen.

"To much work," said the Cow. "I'm off duty this week," said the Duck. "Out of my classification," said the Pig. "I'd lose my benefits," said the Goose.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen and so she went to work.

When it came time to grind the flour, no one wanted to work. So the Hen

ground the flour, working long, hard hours.

When it came time to bake the bread, "That's overtime for me," said the Cow. "I've never learned how," said the Duck. "If I'm the only one helping, that's discriminatory," said the Goose. The Little Red Hen again offered, but none of her neighbors showed up.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen and so she went to work. She baked five loaves of fine bread and proudly held them up for her neighbors to see what she had accomplished.

"I'm hungry," said the Cow. "I want some," said the Pig. "I demand my share," said the Goose. "Give me mine," said the Duck.

"No," said the Little Red Hen. "I worked long and hard to make these five loaves myself and I deserve to eat them."

"EXCESS," cried the Cow. "UNFAIR," screamed the Duck. "SELFISH," screamed the Goose. "GREEDY," grunted the Pig.

And they hurriedly painted picket signs and marched around the Little Red Hen singing, "Selfish, unfair, we want our share."

When the farmer came to investigate the commotion, he said, "You must not

be greedy, Little Red Hen. Your neighbors are hungry. You owe them some bread."

"But – but – but, I worked hard and have earned the bread!" said the Little Red Hen.

"Exactly," the wise farmer said. "That is the wonderful free enterprise system; anybody can earn as much as they want. You should be happy to have this freedom. However, you must give four loaves to your neighbors."

And they all lived happily ever after. Including the Little Red Hen, who smiled and smiled and clucked, "I am grateful, I am grateful."

BUT HER NEIGHBORS WONDERED WHY SHE NEVER BAKED ANY MORE BREAD AND WHY THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY TO EAT THEMSELVES.

Special Thanks to New SESCO Clients!

Anchor Auto Group
North Smithfield, RI

Blakemore Construction Corporation
Rockville, VA

Providence Academy
Johnson City, TN

SESCO Client Feedback

"I'm writing to extend my thanks for the assistance you provided with our HR situation. Your perspective was both insightful and practical, and it has given me greater clarity in approaching this matter. Your willingness to share your expertise and experience means a great deal to me, and I value the time you took to guide me. I'm confident that your suggestions will help me make more informed decisions moving forward. Thank you again for your thoughtful input." ~ **Erin Braber, Project Manager - R&G Springs Co. - Elgin, IL**

"Jamie, thank you so much for joining us and helping lead such an exciting and invigorating conversation. I appreciate all that you and SESCO do for NFDA and its members!" ~ **Matthew Arthur-Gray, Ed.D., VP Operations & Org Effectiveness - National Funeral Directors Association - Brookfield, WI**

(Feedback regarding employee handbook review) "Ya'll are amazing! I appreciate you and look forward to the next steps." ~ **Beth D. Rhinehart, CCE, IOM, MBA, President & CEO - Bristol Chamber - Bristol, TN**



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2026 SESCO Webinar Series (Part 3)

- September 15: Termination Done Right: Defensible Documentation & Reducing Legal Risk
- September 22: Bridging the Generational Divide: Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce
- October 6: The Human Side of Leadership: Essential Skills for Today's Managers
- October 20: Communicating with Impact: The Leadership Skill That Changes Everything
- November 3: Leading Through Change: Strategies for HR & Organizational Leaders

Tuition:

\$65.00 per person, per webinar

Tuition includes a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and live recording emailed to registered individuals.

The Zoom information will be sent to each participant one week prior to the webinar.

Schedule:

Every Other Tuesday, beginning March 10, 2026 - November 3, 2026

1:00 pm-2:30 pm EST

To register for SESCO's 2026 Webinars, please visit our Webinar Store at www.sescomgt.com.

For more information or registration, contact tonya@sescomgt.com.