

Got a beef?

Jay Jones, who works in procurement for the 737 Fuselage & Wing Assembly team, is a resolution advocate. That means he's completed the required rigorous training that allows him to perform mediation duties when Alternative Dispute Resolution cases arise. The ADR program recently marked its 10th anniversary.

JIM COLEY PHOTO



Fix it!

10 years of Alternative Dispute Resolution at Boeing yield surprising results

By GEOFF POTTER

A Boeing process to resolve disputes between employees and managers quickly and amicably is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Boeing encourages people to use the process, known as Alternative Dispute Resolution, because it has many benefits, including quicker resolution of issues, reduced costs, fewer employee complaints to external agencies and improved morale.

The goal of the ADR program is to resolve workplace disputes in a fair, calm, professional and timely way—and improve dialog between employees and management. Since the four-step process was introduced at Boeing in 1998, ADR has resolved hundreds of disputes. The vast majority of them—89 percent—are settled quickly, by the end of the second step. What's more, over the past five years, a whopping 93 percent of those providing feedback—including employees and managers—said they would use the program again to resolve a workplace dispute.

The confidential program is available throughout the United States for all nonunion employees and all managers not at the executive level.

Many kinds of issues can be resolved through ADR (see box on Page 37 for a more complete list), but they tend to begin when employees believe that a manager has made an unfair decision, or Boeing policies and procedures were not applied properly.

HOW IT WORKS

How exactly does ADR work?

Let's say you have a problem. Maybe you feel you weren't treated fairly, or a company policy was not applied properly. Maybe you've received a Corrective Action Memo, been suspended without pay, or didn't receive the salary adjustment you feel you deserve.

First, meet with your manager or Human Resources generalist to discuss the issue and the rationale for the action or decision. If that discussion doesn't resolve your dispute, you can request ADR services to suggest a remedy.

If you decide to use ADR, you simply contact one of Boeing's four ADR case managers within 30 calendar days of the incident or decision that initiated the problem—or within 30 days after actively working all other means of resolution with management. First, complete the Intro-

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– Spencer Dunn, Boeing Global Diversity & Employee Rights, Alternative Dispute Resolution lead

duction to ADR Course (#TR011223), available via the TotalAccess site on the Boeing intranet. Then, simply submit a request form. The case manager determines whether the issue is eligible for the ADR process.

It’s important to note that ADR is completely voluntary. You can stop it at any time, and you should feel free to use it without fear: You and any witnesses are protected from retaliation of any kind for participating in the process. Further, the confidentiality of everyone involved is protected as much as possible; information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.

The ADR process has four steps:

- One-on-one discussion
- Internal mediation
- Panel review or external mediation
- Binding arbitration

In the first step, you meet with a manager (along with a next-level manager and/or a Human Resources representative, if you wish). If discussing it resolves the dispute—as it often does—the process ends there.

If not, you can request taking the next step, internal mediation. Here, the employee and the manager meet with a trained Boeing employee called a Resolution Advocate to find a mutually agreeable solution. Nearly 90 percent of disputes are resolved after this point in the process.

Additional steps can include a review by an executive or senior-level manager, and the dispute ultimately may be placed before a professional, external mediator or, more often, a five-member internal panel. As a last resort, the dispute is turned over to a profes-

sional arbitrator who makes the final, binding decision.

“It’s surprising the number of managers who end up saying this is a good process for employees, even though they’re the one the employee has a dispute with,” said Spencer Dunn, the ADR Lead in the Global Diversity & Employee Rights group, which runs the program. ■

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7 Things to know about ADR

Think you’ve got a case for which Alternative Dispute Resolution would be of help? Here are some important things to know.

1. If you decide to use ADR, you must do so within 30 days of the incident or decision that initiated the problem.
2. The ADR process is completely voluntary. You can stop the process at any time.
3. You and any witnesses are protected from retaliation for participating in the process.
4. Although many kinds of disputes can be resolved through ADR, they usually involve
 - Allegations of unfair decisions by a manager.
 - Allegations that Boeing policies and procedures were not applied properly.

ADR is not designed to challenge existing policies or procedures nor to implement new ones.

5. Not eligible to use ADR are employees represented by collective bargaining agreements, and executives.
6. ADR has resolved more than 1,000 workplace conflicts since the process was introduced at Boeing in 1998.
7. To submit an ADR request or to find out whether it may work to resolve your issue, take the online training. Visit TotalAccess on the Boeing intranet and click on “My Work.”

Eligible for ADR?

What kind of issues are eligible for Alternative Dispute Resolution?

Issues eligible for resolution through ADR include compensation, most corrective action decisions, violation of specific company policies, and claims for alleged actions such as negligence, defamation, invasion of privacy, infliction of emotional distress and retaliation for “whistle blowing,” to name a few. For the complete list, refer to PRO-780; to access Boeing Policies and Procedures, look for the POLs, PROs and Processes icon on either <http://my.boeing.com> (see the Boeing Web links box in the left column) or <http://inside.boeing.com> on the Boeing intranet.

Issues not eligible for ADR include layoffs, benefit and pension claims, discharge due to criminal conviction, worker’s compensation and unemployment claims, and Equal Employment Opportunity issues (unless approved by EEO). Also, ADR is not designed to challenge existing policies or procedures nor to implement new ones.

For more information, as well as on-line training for Alternative Dispute Resolution, visit TotalAccess on the Boeing intranet and click on “My Work.”