

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AN EMPLOYMENT EQUITY COMMITTEE



An Employment Equity Committee is necessary to ensure that an organisation promotes and maintains a **fair and inclusive workplace**, free of discrimination and barriers.

The need for and relevance of establishing an Employment Equity Committee (EEC) are still frequently questioned by **designated employers**.

This article aims to address these concerns by exploring the key role such a committee plays, the value it adds to organisations, and the purpose it serves in promoting equitable and inclusive workplaces.

Tips on how to appoint an effective Employment Equity Committee

According to *section 16 of the Employment Equity Act (EEA)* which clarifies the consultation process between a designated employer and its employees, electing an EEC is a crucial step in promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Below find a step-by-step guide to help you elect an EEC:

- **Understand the purpose:** The EEC is responsible for promoting employment equity, addressing discrimination, and implementing affirmative action measures.
- **Determine the committee size:** Decide on the number of members, ensuring representation in terms of occupational levels (mentioned above), race and gender. You can always have more members, but not fewer.
- **Identify eligible voters:** All employees, including management, should be eligible to vote. Give your staff a day or two to nominate people they want them to represent them and ask all the employees to complete the EEC nomination form.
- **Nominate candidates:** Employees can nominate themselves or others, ensuring a diverse pool of candidates.
- **Hold elections:** Conduct a fair and transparent election process, allowing all eligible voters to participate by distributing the EEC ballot form to all staff members to vote for their representative.
- **Select committee members:** Choose members based on the election results, ensuring a representative and diverse committee. The individual with the highest vote for each occupational level (Top Management, Senior Management, Junior Management/ Professional, Skilled, Semi-Skilled, Unskilled) will be a committee member.
- **Define roles and responsibilities:** Clearly outline the committee's duties and expectations. Elected employees must then sign the Appointment of Committee Member letter that outlines all the duties and responsibilities. If the appointed member does not want to serve on the committee, they are required to sign the EEC Rejection Letter. All these letters should be filed in your Employment Equity File.
- **Provide training:** Offer training on employment equity, diversity and inclusion to ensure that committee members are equipped to fulfil their responsibilities.

What are the benefits of being compliant with the Employment Equity Act?

Being compliant with EE legislation offers numerous benefits to organisations in South Africa. Below find a summary of these benefits:

Legal and Regulatory Benefits:

- Avoids legal repercussions and fines
- Ensures compliance with Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998)
- Meets Department of Employment and Labour's requirements
- Reduces risk of lawsuits and disputes

Business Benefits:

- Enhances reputation and credibility
- Increases competitiveness and market share
- Supports business growth and expansion
- Attracts and retains top talent
- Improves employee morale and productivity
- Better decision-making through diverse perspectives
- Access to government contracts and tenders

Social Benefits:

- Promotes diversity, inclusion and equality
- Addresses historical imbalances and disparities
- Empowers marginalised groups (e.g. women, youth, people with disabilities)
- Fosters a fair and respectful workplace culture
- *Supports Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE)*

SERR Synergy guides and supports organisations through compliance with the Employment Equity Act, ensuring that equity efforts foster growth and success. Our professional *Skills Development Facilitators* (SDFs) collaborate with Employment Equity Managers, offering expert guidance and ensuring that all necessary procedures and documentation are correctly implemented, this includes the establishment of Employment Equity Committees.

About the Author: Lueda Wagner joined SERR Synergy in 2021 and has been a registered Skills Development Facilitator since 2016. She is currently a Specialist Skills Development Facilitator at our Pretoria branch.

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