



THE BODY SHOP CASE STUDY

Legally privileged ER support delivers speed, confidence and HR impact

The Body Shop strengthened its employee relations capability by partnering with Halborns, the Employment Law Division of Empowering People Group, to deliver a seamless, outsourced ER solution with legally privileged support. This approach provides daily access to expert ER advice, drafting support and monthly reporting, ensuring consistent, high-quality guidance across all 110 locations, whilst maintaining strong cultural alignment.

This delivered faster case resolution and improved manager confidence and capability, creating a partnership that supports operational excellence and positive employee experiences.



49%

faster ER case closure rates in just **3 months**



45%

reduction in ER case volumes in the first **12 months**

About The Body Shop

The Body Shop is a purpose-led British skincare and beauty brand known for its distinctive culture, values and approach to retail, focusing on delivering exceptional customer experiences in their stores, with managers working closely with their teams to bring the customer experience to life.

At a glance



INDUSTRY

The Body Shop is a leading omnichannel retailer operating in 110 stores across the UK, along with office and distribution centre operations.



KEY CHALLENGES

The Body Shop went through a period of significant change in 2024. Following this, they saw an opportunity to drive efficiencies in the employee relations function to help improve employee experiences across multiple locations, with a lean HR team.



SOLUTION

They were looking for an employee relations advisory outsourcing supplier to drive efficiency and deliver best practice, compliant advice to their management teams.



CHALLENGE

The Body Shop faced substantial organisational change and business stabilisation in 2024. With a lean in-house ER function and a growing need for consistent, expert support across its diverse network, the business recognised the potential to create a more scalable, accessible and future-ready ER operating model to:

IMPROVE MANAGER CAPABILITY AND CONFIDENCE: Strengthening manager support was a key priority. Managers relied on the in-house ER team for everything from managing sickness and conducting investigations to handling disciplinarys, grievances and drafting outcome letters. External assistance was essential to maintain service quality and responsiveness.

ENSURE CONSISTENCY IN ER SUPPORT:

Consistency across the store network, back-office functions, and distribution centres was another driver for change. The Body Shop wanted a unified ER experience across all locations, maintaining cultural alignment and operational excellence.

OPTIMISE HR CAPACITY: The Body Shop identified that their lean HR team needed to be freed up from tactical, day-to-day ER matters to be able to focus on more strategic priorities and people development.



SOLUTION

The Body Shop partnered with Halborns to implement an outsourced ER solution. The solution is designed to maintain cultural alignment whilst delivering a seamless experience across the business, including:

UNLIMITED, STRAIGHT-TALKING LEGAL ADVICE: Halborns provides on-demand advice from specialist employment law professionals, ensuring managers and HR have immediate access to expert guidance for complex ER matters whenever they need it.

MONTHLY REPORTING: Detailed reports on new cases, total cases, case volume by store or function, case types, and time to close cases, enable data-driven decisions and improve transparency.

DRAFTING AND DOCUMENTATION

SUPPORT: They provided comprehensive drafting assistance for letters, investigation reports and outcome documentation, helping maintain consistency and compliance across all cases.

LEGAL PRIVILEGE AND RISK MANAGEMENT:

By embedding legal privilege into ER processes, Halborns safeguarded sensitive cases and reduced organisational risk, giving The Body Shop confidence and commerciality when handling complex situations.

"Drafting outcome letters was an absolute win and music to managers' ears, and for us it was equally about ensuring managers felt confident."



HEAD OF PEOPLE, THE BODY SHOP



BENEFITS



CONSISTENT ACCESS TO ER AND LEGAL EXPERTS

Managers and HR teams have continuous access to specialist ER advice every day, eliminating gaps caused by holidays, sickness, or other absences. This ensures uninterrupted support across all locations.



IMPROVED MANAGER CAPABILITY AND CONFIDENCE

Managers are empowered with timely guidance enabling them to handle ER issues competently and confidently. Quick identification of managers requiring support enables targeted upskilling, strengthening capability across the business.



OPTIMISED HR CAPACITY TO FOCUS ON STRATEGY

Outsourcing ER support enables HR teams to focus on strategic priorities and people development, helping support better employee and customer experiences.



FASTER CASE RESOLUTION AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Streamlined processes and expert input speed up ER case resolution, with managers receiving same-day advice to keep issues on track from the outset. End-to-end documentation provided throughout the process enables managers to deliver consistent, robust people processes, minimising disruption and protecting productivity.



ENHANCED EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES

Timely and consistent case handling improves the experience for employees going through ER processes, supporting wellbeing and fairness. Halborns operate as an extension of The Body Shop team, immersed in their ways of working. This has helped reduce ER case volumes by **45%** in the **first 12 months**.



LEGALLY PRIVILEGED PROTECTION AND REDUCED RISK

Legal privilege and expert oversight provide complete confidence and commercial assurance, ensuring compliance and mitigating risks in complex ER cases. Advice protected by legal privilege guarantees objectivity and security for decisions.

SEAMLESS IMPLEMENTATION

The transition to outsourced ER support was designed to be seamless and collaborative. Halborns worked closely with The Body Shop team to align processes with the company's culture and operational needs.

This included setting up clear communication channels, providing managers with immediate access to legal experts, and introducing monthly reporting to track progress and outcomes. A phased approach ensured consistency across stores, offices and distribution centres, while maintaining confidence and transparency throughout the change.

“What we value most is our genuine partnership approach, improved manager capability, consistency and visibility of data insights enabling us to be more proactive in improving people strategies and employee experiences”

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The Empowering People Group advantage:

The Empowering People Group is passionate about simplifying processes, reducing risk and empowering people to drive business success.



A leading provider of specialist HR services and technology



Flexible, straight-talking, pragmatic employment law specialists



Powerful career transition, coaching and learning solutions



A leading digital-learning and Learning Management Software provider