

**IN SEARCH OF ALTERNATIVES OR ENHANCEMENTS TO COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA: ARE WORKPLACE FORUMS A VIABLE
OPTION?**

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SUMMARY

Collective bargaining (coupled with the right to strike) has become a primary means to force employers through negotiation to achieve the improvement of standards and conditions of employment. The South African labour market has been plagued by unprotected strikes as well as violent and lawless behaviour during both protected and unprotected strikes. Some have said that the collective bargaining process is in trouble and has failed the objectives intended by the *Labour Relations Act*. The fact that collective bargaining in South Africa and elsewhere is quite adversarial puts these criticisms into the spotlight again. Calls to explore a participatory structure, where distributive and non-distributive issues are separated from each other, supplementary to collective bargaining have been made again. What immediately comes to mind is the system of workplace forums, which has been unsuccessful in South Africa thus far.

KEYWORDS: collective bargaining; workplace forums; co-determination; trade unions; adversarialism; consultation; information; decision-making; joint decision-making; conditions of employment; distributive issues; non-distributive issues

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