

## APPROACHING CHANGE

### CASE STUDY 1

#### SCENARIO

You are a shop steward working for a small firm manufacturing and designing kitchens. There are 80 workers at the firm; 3 managers, 17 staff (design, sales and marketing, finance etc) and 60 shop floor workers (skilled workers, labourers and foremen). The company has some degree of 'boom and bust' due to the fluctuation in the order book. This is managed by overtime and the use of casual labour to cope with the peaks and, on occasions, short time working to cope with the troughs. Your union is recognised and, on the whole, industrial relations are reasonable. There are the odd disciplinary and grievance issues but there has not been a major dispute in the ten-year history of the business. Now the firm is struggling to compete with larger mass production companies and orders and workload are falling. Seeing a crisis situation the senior manager asks to meet with you.

At the meeting the manager is very open about the situation, presenting figures and charts showing the company's situation. Despite the problems she is very upbeat about the workforce and what they have achieved and states that she wants to involve you in a radical idea to save the company. Whilst the kitchen market is becoming more and more mass produced she believes she has identified a market for high quality specialist wooden toys. Many of the skilled workers would have little or no trouble adapting to manufacturing the proposed new product range but many of the semi skilled machine operators would require re-training either to work different machines or train to become skilled workers. She also proposes some other changes to be effective during the transition period. In essence you have been asked:-

- *Commit yourself and your members to a transition from manufacturing fitted kitchens to manufacturing wooden toys.*
- *To actively help the management team make the transition and identify new market areas.*
- *To participate in weekly review meetings during the transition.*
- *To promote the re-training of your members where necessary.*
- *To accept a pay freeze until the company sales figure stabilise after the change is made.*
- *Accept a 'no overtime' situation in return for a guarantee of no short time working during the change period.*

Discuss the scenario in your groups as if your group was the TU reps committee at the company. Formulate a strategy for your committee to address this situation.

- *Is there any more information you need from the company before your team could come to any conclusions?*
- *What problems and opportunities do you see for your members?*
- *What assurances would you want from the management team?*
- *Which of the 5 change options would you choose?*
- *Look at the benefits and risks associated with the method you have chosen – how would you maximise the benefits and minimise the risks identified in the workbook (page 27)*

Prepare a response to the management team to their proposals and a brief to deliver to a mass meeting of your membership identifying the changes that are being proposed and how you are going to address them. The other groups will act as the membership so be prepared to field some questions!

## **APPROACHING CHANGE**

### **CASE STUDY 1**

#### **MEMBERS BRIEFING**

You are a semi skilled shop floor worker working for a small firm manufacturing and designing kitchens. There are 80 workers at the firm; 3 managers, 17 staff (design, sales and marketing, finance etc) and 60 shop floor workers (skilled workers, labourers and foremen). The company has some degree of 'boom and bust' due to the fluctuation in the order book. This is managed by overtime and the use of casual labour to cope with the peaks and, on occasions, short time working to cope with the troughs. Your union is recognised and, on the whole, industrial relations are reasonable. There are the odd disciplinary and grievance issues but there has not been a major dispute in the ten-year history of the business. Now the firm is struggling to compete with larger mass production companies and orders and workload are falling.

There have been a number of rumours circulating about the possible closure of the firm, a take over by one of the larger manufacturers and redundancies. You have approached the union reps about this and, as yet, they have had no information.

## APPROACHING CHANGE

### CASE STUDY 2

#### SCENARIO

You are the TU representative for a group of cleaners working at a large textiles factory. There are over 700 workers at the factory, 65 of whom are your members. The factory workers have recently moved from 6-2 / 2-10 working to a three week rolling system which includes a 10-6 night shift due to a new contract demanding an increase in production. Workers going on to the new shift have attracted a premium of 20% payable for all 3 weeks of the shift cycle.

You and your members all work part time, 4 hours per day mon-sat (24 hrs per week) either from 6am to 10am (35 staff) or from 6pm to 10pm (30 Staff). The rate of pay is £4.20 per hour for either shift.

Management have told you that they need extra cleaning cover because of the increased production. Their proposal is to split your members into three rosters (2 of 22 staff, one of 21) each working 4 shifts of 6 hours as follows:-

- Shift 1            4am to 10am, Monday to Thursday
- Shift 2            2pm to 8pm, Tuesday to Friday
- Shift 3            6pm to midnight, Wednesday to Saturday

Management state that they recognise that shift 3 falls in un-social hours and as such are prepared to offer a payment. They are proposing two options, either for the three rosters to rotate shift week on week and attract a 15% premium payment or for the shifts to be fixed with shift 1 & 2 remaining on the flat £4.20 per hour and shift 3 attracting a premium of 35%. In the case of the latter volunteers would be sought for shift 3 with management reserving the right to select staff should there be either too many or too few to meet the requirements of the business.

Discuss the scenario in your groups as if your group was the TU reps committee at the company. Formulate a strategy for your committee to address this situation.

- *Is there any more information you need from the company before your team could come to any conclusions?*
- *What problems and opportunities do you see for your members?*
- *What assurances would you want from the management team?*
- *Which of the 5 change options would you choose?*
- *Look at the benefits and risks associated with the method you have chosen – how would you maximise the benefits and minimise the risks identified in the workbook (page 27)*

Prepare a response to the management team to their proposals and a brief to deliver to a mass meeting of your membership identifying the changes that are being proposed and how you are going to address them. The other groups will act as the membership so be prepared to field some questions!

## **APPROACHING CHANGE**

### **CASE STUDY 2**

#### **MEMBERS BRIEFING**

You are the TU representative for a group of cleaners working at a large textiles factory. There are over 700 workers at the factory, 65 of whom are your members. The factory workers have recently moved from 6-2 / 2-10 working to a three week rolling system which includes a 10-6 night shift due to a new contract demanding an increase in production. Workers going on to the new shift have attracted a premium of 20% payable for all 3 weeks of the shift cycle.

You and your members all work part time, 4 hours per day mon-sat (24 hrs per week) either from 6am to 10am (35 staff) or from 6pm to 10pm (30 Staff). The rate of pay is £4.20 per hour for either shift.

There have been a number of rumours circulating about the possible need for extra cover because of the increase in production, these include more overtime, agency workers being brought in and also the complete outsourcing of the cleaning role which would lead to redundancies. You have approached the union reps about this and, as yet, they have had no information.