

New Forms of Work Organisation *Innovation, Competitiveness and Employment*



EUROPEAN FOUNDATION
for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

New Forms of Work Organisation

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New Forms of Work Organisation *Innovation, Competitiveness and Employment*

Report on the Sixth European Ecology of Work Conference



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Chapter 1

The Context

This report presents a synthesis of the deliberations of the *Sixth European Ecology of Work Conference* which was held at the Gustav-Stresemann-Institute, Bonn, Germany, from 17 to 20 May, 1999.

For the past 20 years Ecology of Work Conferences have been regular events in North America and have been aimed at contributing to the improvement of productivity, competitiveness and the quality of life.

The 'Ecology of Work' term refers to the design of work systems which optimise both people-outcomes and business-outcomes. Such work systems emphasise participation, teamwork, and cooperative problem-solving to achieve increased performance and productivity.

Five Ecology of Work Conferences have been held in Europe since 1991. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions welcomed for the first time in 1993 the opportunity to organise jointly with the Ecology of Work Inc., USA, these events which have constituted relevant fora in industrial relations. Following on the success of the previous events, four European Ecology of Work conferences have been jointly hosted since then. These events showed practical experiences of organisational change, mainly concentrated on enterprises in Europe and North America. Since the Fifth European Ecology of Work Conference the fact that workplace innovation and change is a global phenomenon has been emphasised by including worldwide presentations from countries such as Australia, South Africa or Japan.

The Sixth European Ecology of Work Conference held in Bonn from 17 to 20 May was an official event of the German Presidency of the European Union, and the conference was held in

conjunction with the first working meeting of the European Work Organisation Network, established by the European Commission, DGV. The event was attended by more than 130 participants from 20 countries, drawn from managers, employee representatives, trade union officials and consultants, with an opportunity to exchange experiences and to learn from their counterparts in other organisations. This involvement of representatives worldwide brought a richness of views and experiences which are reflected in the complex themes covered by the conference.

The conference concentrated on four main themes:

- The introduction of innovative work organisation;
- The impact of new forms of work organisation on the employment relationship;
- A high involvement/participative approach to work organisation;
- The new role for employee representatives and managers in work organisation.

These themes were selected to complement the discussions at the previous European conferences and to take account of the changes occurring in enterprises; the need for greater competitiveness in the global economy, how this can be achieved through people; and through the application of new technologies, and how to train people with the necessary skills for new work organisation.

In this context, the conference examined new approaches to the design of work and working systems which provide the optimum results for both the workforce and the enterprise - systems which emphasise the enterprise-level social relationship, employee involvement, teamworking and cooperative problem-solving to achieve increased performance and productivity.

The conference featured keynote speakers representing labour and management involved in the change process of work organisation. There were 22 case studies presented by enterprises which have experienced change through innovative work organisation and could demonstrate how improvements can be achieved through cooperative redesign and restructuring of work and worker participation strategies.

Eight application sessions examined some specific aspects of, or approaches to, new work cultures: the techniques used, the theories behind their introduction, and the attitudes of the different groups - management, worker representatives and unions - to the changing work environment. Panels of leading international experts also made presentations and stimulated debate.

These presentations have been compiled and summarised in this report. They have been distributed into five key areas: the Public Sector, Services, Telecommunications, Manufacturing, and Application Sessions.

The report also includes the conference programme and the list of participants. Further information about the presentations can be obtained on request from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions or from the presenters.



Chapter 2

Introduction to the Debate

Opening session: new forms of work organisation - European, Japanese and American perspectives

Eric Verborgh, Deputy Director, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, Ireland.

Wolfgang Koberski, Ministerialrat, Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Bonn, Germany.

Marie Donnelly, DGV, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium.

Masami Nomura, Professor, Tohoku University, Japan.

Nancy Mills, Centre for Workplace Democracy, AFL-CIO, Washington D.C., USA.

Chair: **Ray Wild**, Principal, Henley Management College, UK.

In his welcoming remarks, Eric Verborgh introduced the theme of the conference and said he was pleased that the Sixth European Ecology of Work Conference was taking place within the framework of the German Presidency of the European Union, and in cooperation with the European Commission's Work Organisation Network. Although the conference was called European, he welcomed the opportunity to embark on a global discussion of the issues of innovative forms of work organisation, made possible by the many international case presentations at this event. He also commended the coverage of a wide variety of sectors as well as the very practical orientation of the conference through real-life case presentations and site visits.

Wolfgang Koberski, welcoming the participants on behalf of the German Presidency, emphasised the importance of strengthening the social dimension of Europe if the concept of Europe is to gain the necessary trust on the part of the European citizens.

In a time of considerable transformation due to European integration, increasing privatisation and fiercer global competition, companies in Europe have to develop more flexible structures of work organisation in order to maintain competitiveness. While new forms of work organisation are not sufficient on their own to increase competitiveness and solve the problem of unemployment, it is important that countries should learn from one another about successful innovations in work organisation.

He stressed the importance of employee participation in the process, both at the level of individual companies and at European level. In today's swiftly changing and highly technological work environment workers have to show enormous qualities of innovation and flexibility and changes are only feasible with the active participation of employees. The impact that restructuring has on jobs and content of work must be shaped with social concern and with the active involvement of the people concerned. Therefore, in a social Europe where companies are operating increasingly across borders, it is essential that trade unions and works councils which also operate across borders be given rights, and that workers be given the opportunity to engage in dialogue with their counterparts in other countries. Comprehensive information and consultation policies are important in order to maintain high motivation and to increase the capacity for innovation among employees. Pointing to the long and successful tradition of worker participation in Germany which has facilitated workplace restructuring, Mr. Koberski expressed the hope that the conference would contribute to enhancing the participation of employees in workplace restructuring beyond German borders in the interest of improving work organisation in general.

From the European perspective, Marie Donnelly gave an overview of the involvement of the European Commission in issues of work organisation.

Employment is one of the three main objectives of the current work programme of the European Union. Efforts to achieve the target of an increase in the labour force participation rate in Europe from 60% to 65% are set out in the 'European Employment Strategy', which was launched in 1997 in Luxembourg. The European Employment Strategy builds on a new mechanism of coordination, whereby objectives and guidelines are defined at EU level which are subsequently turned into policies by the Member States in their yearly National Action Plans. The Employment Strategy rests on four pillars: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, and equal opportunities.

Within the context of the Adaptability Pillar, there is a clear recognition of the need to modernise work organisation, which is to be achieved by way of a tripartite partnership. As the key players with direct impact in this area, the Social Partners at European, national, regional and local levels are invited to take the initiative in coordinating changes in work organisation. Member States and public authorities are called upon to facilitate this process.



These efforts are supported by the European Commission through two large financing programmes.

The first programme is the new European Social Fund, the financing of which was agreed in March, 1999, as part of Agenda 2000. Work organisation is seen as one of five priority target areas and the European Commission strongly recommends that Member States use no less than 15% of their funds under the European Social Fund for this activity.

The second source of financing is the Fifth Framework Programme, the research programme at European level, which has been given a new focus on issues concerning employment, organisation and the interrelationship of society, work and the production process.

A third area of activity is the European Work Organisation Network, launched in March 1999, which brings together practitioners from all Member States, with hands-on experience of introducing new forms of work organisation on the ground. It is a forum for the identification of new trends and developments as well as an important means of disseminating knowledge about work organisation throughout Europe. In order to facilitate exchanges of information between different parts of the European Union, all available tools will be used, including a website (Europa.eu.int), a newsletter and conferences.

These three programmes of the European Commission are designed to support European workplaces in the adaptation process necessary to achieve the overall target of a high level of employment in the European Union.

In the following speech Masami Nomura offered a Japanese perspective, focusing on the role of Japan's female workers as a marginalised workforce.

Historically, Japan's unemployment rate has not only been very low but has also been insensitive to external and internal shocks, such as the first and second oil crises in the 1970s. The unemployment rate has, however, started to increase at a more rapid rate in the 1990s.

It is important to make the distinction between unemployed persons who are looking for work but unable to find a job and discouraged workers who want to work but do not take concrete actions to find work and are therefore not considered to be in the labour force. Compared to the US and Europe, Japan has a much higher rate of discouraged workers, and most of them are women. Statistics show that, unlike men, women and married women in particular, are more likely to become discouraged workers than unemployed persons on losing their job.

While, among industrialised countries, an unemployment rate of 2% was widely believed to be the full-employment level, the present poverty in Japan made it impossible to believe that the country was enjoying full-employment. Japan instead was in a situation of all-employment. This, in comparison to full-employment, means that although there is no involuntary unemployment, employment is not always at a fair wage level or suitable to the ability of the employed persons.

Big firms, SMEs and self-employment alike contributed to all-employment. All-employment has, however, started to decline in the 1990s due to the protracted recession, as well as to the adoption of deregulation policies. Big firms are reducing their regular male workforce and, for the first time, more small and medium-sized enterprises and family businesses are exiting from the market than are being launched.

Therefore, Japan now faces three policy options for its employment situation. Full employment is not a realistic option at present as it depends on high economic growth, leaving a choice between all-employment and high unemployment. This represents a choice between the bad and the worse, as all-employment is maintained at the cost of the female workers who are likely to be marginalised in the labour force. To maintain the all-employment mechanism in Japan, deregulation policies would have to be abandoned, and protection for SMEs and self-employment would have to be increased.

From the American perspective, Nancy Mills spoke about the work of the AFL-CIO's Centre for Workplace Democracy to encourage companies to become 'high road competitors'.

A 'high road competitor', according to Ms. Mills, does not make the cost of their product or service the only or main element on which the company competes. Instead 'customer delight' is made the guiding principle. This requires that the company invests in the workforce to enable the employees to use their skills, talents, passion and experience in order to delight customers.

The AFL-CIO believes that the following changes are crucial for the development of 'high road competitors'.

- The burden of personal and professional development should not be borne solely by the individual, but the employer must make a commitment to the ongoing training of the workforce. In the US this principle is honoured in the breach, as the total number of dollars as a percentage of the payroll spent on training and education has been falling steadily over the last 20 years. Also, more and more of that money is being spent on managers rather than front line workers, which is directly in contradiction to all the research on who most needs education and who can use it best to delight customers.
- It is crucial that companies offer their employees security. It is naïve to expect workers to contribute their skills and knowledge to the good of the company if they will find that their suggestions will result in either them or their coworkers being dismissed.
- Workers need to receive a share of the reward in order to contribute all they can to the success of the company. This can be implemented directly by way of profit-sharing or other forms of contingent compensation. It could also mean giving the unions access to information about the results of the workers' input so that they can bargain for a different wage settlement at the end of the three year period on the basis of this information; or the rewards can be shared by creating new markets and new services so that employment in that firm goes up rather than down.



- It is important that the culture of management domination and authority is shed. Management has to come to think of power not as power of authority but as the power to get things done. In order to get things done, management requires the buy-in and willingness and commitment from everybody in the company. This is achieved through empowerment, not authority. It is, however, equally important for unions, too, to change their attitudes and structures in order to create 'high road companies'.

Looking at unionisation in US companies, Ms Mills referred to a study by Roberta Lynch on over 300 manufacturing sites which showed that unionised 'high performance' companies are twice as productive as their non-unionised 'high performance' counterparts. This is due to the fact that unions have the ability to negotiate the sharing of costs of investments in education and training and thereby allow more workers to avail themselves of further training. Unions also have a way to negotiate for workers to have a share in the rewards and to be empowered to make decisions in the workplace.

However, among traditional manufacturing firms, which have not embraced a production-team approach, or have not invested in education and training etc., unionised firms are less productive than non-unionised traditional firms. This shows that unionised firms have the capacity to be the most productive companies, but in reality, all too often they are the least productive. All in all there are many more companies, whether unionised or non-unionised, that are not 'high performance' companies than there are 'high performance' firms.

Too many companies are 'middle of the road' spending a lot on their workforce in terms of wages, benefits, working conditions, education etc., but not using the skills, knowledge and talents of their workers for the success of the company. This may be due to management not wanting to share power, as much as to unions considering important strategic business problems not to be their problem but solely management's responsibility.

The question remains as to why there are not more unionised high performance companies given the potential to reach high levels of productivity. One reason is the increasing gap between raises in productivity and raises in workers' pay, with more money going to management. This discourages employees from deciding to pool their energy to contribute even more to the success of the firm. The US labour movement is making major changes to shift resources into organising the workforce, recruiting new members and into becoming more directly involved in politics in order to address issues such as these.

Another problem has been the lack of involvement of unions in the basic business decisions, as opposed to issues of work organisation. However, more and more unions are now also raising work organisation issues as well as strategic issues.



A third obstacle to the creation of more 'high performance' companies is the inability of many small and medium sized firms to meet the need for job security and for investment in the workforce, again making workers reluctant to commit themselves to change. The AFL-CIO, therefore, tries to find ways to encourage small and medium-sized firms to come together in consortia to identify economies of scale for investment in education, or to jointly receive training on worker empowerment, team based decision making and similar issues.



Chapter 3

The Public Sector

Profiting through diversity in the London Borough of Hillingdon

Gillian Bobb-Semple, Personnel Policy Manager, London Borough of Hillingdon, UK.

The organisation

The London Borough of Hillingdon is the second largest in area of the 32 London Boroughs created by the London Government Act, 1963. It was formed by the amalgamation of the Borough of Uxbridge and the Urban Districts of Hayes and Harlington, Ruislip/Northwood and Yiewsley and West Drayton. The Council was controlled by the Conservative Party between 1990 and autumn 1993, after which Labour took control until May, 1998. Since the May elections the Council has a minority Conservative Administration.

The change process

The aims and objectives of the organisation are to provide a range of effective services to meet the needs of the paying public. The Borough aims to establish a work environment and culture which supports diversity, to effectively manage diversity and to provide equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery.

Some of the external factors impacting on the development of the organisation are attempts to modernise local government and to make it more accountable, with emphasis on achieving 'Best Value' and raising service standards through dialogue with all key players including customers, employees and the private and voluntary sectors. The organisation is also clearly influenced by local party politics and the internal power of key stakeholders.

The presenter introduced the 'Profiting from Diversity' standards which are designed to improve an organisation's performance through effective management of diversity. Diversity standards are useful as a charter mark and as a performance indicator and should be integrated into business goals and practices.

The Profiting from Diversity Standard is based on the four following principles:

1. **Commitment:** commitment to recruit, maintain and develop a workforce which reflects the organisation's customer base, current and potential, and to meet the diverse needs of its community when delivering services.
2. **Planning:** planning of how diversity will enhance organisational effectiveness and success.
3. **Action:** effective management to make all employees feel valued and respected and to enable them to work together harmoniously to achieve organisational goals.
4. **Evaluation:** monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan and its impact on all employees and service users.

The strategy to introduce the standards has to operate at two levels. At the personal level, strategies included SWOT analysis and the identification of adversaries and key players. At the organisational level, it is important to refocus the officer group responsible for equalities, to consult with all people concerned and to ensure the involvement of trade unions.

The process of introducing the standards has to begin with the raising of awareness and with an understanding of the difference between equal opportunities and diversity. The second step is the audit, whereby a template of standard questions is used to audit current practices and procedures in employment and service delivery. At that stage, it is also important to conduct focus group meetings to gain an understanding of the employee and service user perspectives and to inform the management board and elected councillors of the issues raised and proposed actions. An action plan is developed based on the shortfalls and failings identified in the organisational audit and the plan is submitted to the management board and other key stakeholders. The implementation plan has to be clear and must include guidelines for cascading and approaches. Also, accountability must be clarified and deadline dates set to ensure successful implementation of the plan. Finally, it is important that the organisation sets up monitoring and evaluation systems. These operate at both the corporate level and the departmental/functional level.

London Borough of Hillingdon at present is in the implementation phase. Key issues at this time include training and development, for example in matters relating to grievance procedures.

The experience of the London Borough of Hillingdon with the introduction of the standards shows that it is important to identify the key and critical phases for people as individuals and for the organisation as a whole. Management clearly needs to buy into the process for it to work, but should adopt a facilitating role rather than taking over the process. Some disagreement exists over the importance of external auditors whose objective view could act as kite mark in public



recognition. Internal audits to monitor the process are on-going. The benefits of the adoption of the standards in terms of equal opportunities and Best Value are clear and the Borough hopes to be a 'beacon' authority in five years.

Change management 2001 in Helsinki Energy

Kirsti Aho, Manager Human Resource Development, Helsinki Energy, Finland.

Liisa Muurinen, Chief of Section, Helsinki Energy, Helsinki, Finland.

The organisation

Helsinki Energy is a commercial utility company owned by the city of Helsinki which produces and distributes electricity, district heating and natural gas, and provides related energy services. The company's turnover in 1998 was 2.5 billion FIM (€470m) and the number of employees is around 1700. The energy market in Finland has been deregulated since 1995 and since 1998 all customers can decide for themselves where they purchase electricity.

The change process

Ms. Aho gave an overview of the developments in Helsinki Energy in relation to company values and strategies and management training.

In preparation for the new demands placed on the company by deregulation, Helsinki Energy had already started, in 1993, to train people to be sales-minded, while in 1995 a group was formed to consider the image of the company. One of the responses of this group was to formulate new company values.

A group of six people (including the managing director) worked to define the company values with the participation of more than 50 other employees representing a wide range of occupational groups and worksites within Helsinki Energy. The values are a tool for achieving the company's goal, which is to be the energy company best prepared for the new operating environment. The values are not prescriptive, but are intended to promote mutual cooperation. They were created to serve as guidelines for individual jobs and team work, to ensure everyone's right to work in a sensible manner, to promote correct modes of operation and to help people find more functional solutions.

In addition to the establishment of values, it was also considered necessary to formulate a company strategy. It was called Strategy 2001 and has since been renewed with Strategy 2003. The strategic aim formulated in Strategy 2001 is for the company to be valued by its customers as the most highly competent company, to be the most effective producer, the most trustworthy distributor and an appealing employer.

In the company strategy special emphasis was put on training of personnel and especially managers. A project called Management 2001 was put together and 138 persons from top and

middle management participated in the programme. It was a training programme covering modules such as strategic and business thinking, customer relations, leadership skills, self-management and internationalisation. The training took place in residential seminars outside Helsinki and was complemented by a 'fitness for work' seminar in a sports institute.

Customer relations emerged as a subject that should be given special emphasis. Therefore, another training programme was created aimed at foremen, experts and planners on the one hand, and employees directly involved in customer services on the other. This training project started in 1998 and by the end of 1999 about 500 people will have participated in it.

The evaluation process for Management 2001 was started even before the training programme proper started, in the form of a questionnaire sent to all participants. The same questionnaire was used after the training programme and the individuals' present position was compared with the starting position. This evaluation, as well as a mid-term evaluation of Management 2001, has shown that there have been benefits throughout the company.

The key learning points are:

1. Strategic management - the strategy making is more open now;
2. Business management - cost awareness has increased;
3. Leadership - giving and receiving feedback has improved;
4. Self-management - insight has increased;
5. Customer relations - the importance of customer relations is better understood;
6. Willingness to change - the need to change is more marked;
7. Culture of internal organisation - openness has increased.

One most important step has been to emphasise the managerial development of potential future managers by starting the Helen Business School. It will provide short-term training for today's managers, as well as long-term training for potential future managers and specialists. The first group of highly motivated students will start this 1-2 year course in Autumn 1999.

In the second part of the session, Ms. Muurinen talked about the experiences of the Metals Laboratory of Helsinki Energy, which engages in non-destructive testing, material technology and monitoring of the conditions of rotating machines. The laboratory faced problems, such as production losses and conservative maintenance, as well as problems with internal customers. In relation to internal customers, under the change processes adopted by Helsinki Energy, the length of time to deal with requests and the number of different persons involved in the process has been reduced significantly by the laboratory.

To address the desire for changes and flexibility in the Metals Laboratory, development discussions are taking place regularly. Power and responsibility are delegated more to encourage



successful working, while employees are rewarded in the form of greater appreciation of their work, as well as financial rewards and education. Variable work and job rotation is possible for young and old people working in the same team.

Constructive participation at Aer Rianta

Bernard Browne, Facilitator, Joint Union Company Group, Aer Rianta, Dublin.

George O'Connor, General Manager, Dublin Airport, Dublin, Ireland.

The organisation

Aer Rianta is an Irish owned multinational airport management company with its core strengths in airport operations and airport retailing. The company has a proven record of highly successful commercial operations and has established an international reputation. There are, however, a number of adverse factors in the current trading environment and these include limitations on borrowing, the depressed level of aeronautical revenue, and the potential loss of duty free revenues.

The change process

The company is committed and is actively pursuing its economic and commercial development, including organisational and personnel transformation and renewal. In this session the presenters reported on the 'voyage of discovery' undertaken by Aer Rianta between 1984 and 1999.

In 1991 a Joint Union/Company Group was established composed of representatives from senior management, the Group of Unions, trade unions, airport management, the Department of Public Enterprise and external observers. This group offered a safe environment for discussion where formal roles were suspended to allow for joint investigation and open debate.

The structures for constructive participation include a number of different working groups.

The Regular Working Groups deal with items of importance to them in the execution of their own tasks, such as resources, equipment, workloads and so on. These groups are also involved in budgetary matters and relevant strategic planning. They engage in 'off-line' problem solving activities and initiate improvements or innovations. The development programme for these groups focuses on group dynamics, participation, the group's business, and such matters.

The Department Working Groups review the work of the RWGs and assess departmental and operational performance. They review departmental financial performance and discuss difficulties and threats to the department. The Department Working Groups identify objectives for their department and discuss the financial and operational plans for reaching those objectives. The development programme for these groups deals with trade union policies and procedures, the company's organisational systems, budgeting and departmental strategy.

The Business Unit Working Groups meet about three times a year and have an input into the strategic direction of the business unit. They review marketing activities, capital business programmes and business development. Airport economics, pricing policies, aviation standards and recommended practices are among the issues covered in these groups' development programme.

The Corporate/Combined Operations Group is involved in the consideration of the company mission and implementation of the overall participation concept known as the 'Compact'. This group reviews the growth of the company, its financial and investment performance, as well as the creation of employment. The development programme covers strategic planning, corporate financing, the national transport policy and so on.

Furthermore, Significant Issues Groups have been established which deal with particular issues relevant to the company, such as technology, gainsharing, the company's legal status, remuneration systems. Five further Strategy Groups work on strategic issues concerning specific aspects of the business, such as its financial services, the airport cleaning services or the strategy for handling the abolition of duty-free.

The principles and objectives of constructive participation under which these groups operate are stated in the Compact for Constructive Participation which was published in 1994. The word 'compact' was chosen as opposed to 'contract' to highlight its fundamentally cooperative character. The purpose of the Compact is to make paramount the success of the company, to create a new role for trade unions, to implement the Worker Participation Act, 1998, and to improve mutual trust and respect within the company. The principles for the joint mission include the aim to go beyond traditional collective bargaining relationships and to accept new responsibilities and significant change. Jointness is the fundamental principle underlying the Compact. Employment security is regarded as a major policy objective and a low-wage policy is rejected as a grounds for competitiveness. The Compact expresses support for trade union activity but highlights the need for changes in both union and management structures. Joint objectives under the Compact relate to changes in relationships, in company organisation and culture as well as to changes in external affairs and finance. Its strategy envisages participation at all levels within the company and a high level of equity and fairness. Continuous learning and systems re-design are included.

The company aims for genuine cooperation based on adult role relationships which are built on mutual understanding and strive to eliminate hierarchies.

Social dialogue and arrangement of working time: Air France

Thierry Rochefort, ANACT, Lyon, France.

The organisation

Air France, the biggest French airline, experienced a serious crisis in 1993 involving a loss of FF8 billion (€1.2 billion). Following a capital investment of FF20 billion (€3 billion) into the company by the French government, a reconstruction plan was adopted addressing four points: flight programming, commercialisation, marketing and cost reduction. In 1997 Air France merged with a smaller airline, Air-Inter. The company's profits in 1998 increased to FF1.87 billion (€2.85 billion) but remain lower than those of other major airlines, such as British Airways and Lufthansa.

The company's workforce is represented by 14 different trade unions, reflecting the wide range of occupations from mechanics to pilots. The company underwent major conflict with ground staff in 1993 and with pilots in 1998. The change of the General Director of the company led to attempts to engage in social dialogue from 1998 onwards.

The change process

The social contract which is in the process of being formed has two aspects. The first part applies to the pilots and involves a moderation in wage demands in return for a company shares system. The second aspect deals with the ground staff and concerns reductions in working time.

ANACT intervened in relation to the second agreement for ground staff. This agreement covers 30,000 people and five large trades including maintenance and IT. The ground staff are organised in eight different trade unions, all of whom have very different views and concerns, reflecting the huge variety of occupations. One major difficulty, therefore, was the tradition of centralised bargaining in a situation where the questions and concerns about work organisation varied greatly between different employee groups.

The change process relating to working hours was taking place in the context of the so-called Aubry law on the 35-hour week and a vigorous debate in France on what constitutes effective and reasonable working time. However, it was the aim of ANACT to move the change process away from a purely legalistic approach to more concern with the organisation of work. It was important for the consultants to link up the question of working time with the question of working conditions as well as with the question of productivity and efficiency.

The role of the consultants is to provide technical support for negotiation and to assist all parties involved in clarifying what is at stake in terms of work organisation. As a first step, both management and unions were asked to discuss their expectations of a reduction in working time and to exchange their views and concerns. The information was recorded in writing.

Due to the complexity of different groups of personnel, a list of activities and job descriptions was drawn up with input from both management and unions. Eighty different work situations were analysed and over 1500 employees interviewed in order to assess the organisational factors. This analysis lasted six months and involved over 300 days of consultancy. However, it was important to take this time for analysis and to resist union pressure for immediate negotiation.

On the side of ANACT, the project was carried by a standing expert, who is the Director of the Agency, and by two consultants. It was necessary for the consultants to have the necessary support within the company. In particular they required the support from one contact person who acts as identifiable head of the project and from a policy-making steering committee. A methodological group was set up to produce a transversal analysis of the work organisation issues. The transversal nature of this group, with the inclusion of activity planners from marketing, strategic management, flight scheduling etc., was important as it allowed the process to move away from traditional confrontation between bargaining specialists from management and unions. Finally, a project group was created that operated on the basis of the different trades involved in the process.

The diagnosis of the situation showed three main areas of difficulties:

- In relation to flexibility, it became clear that flexibility of working hours already existed in the company, but in a badly organised and dysfunctional way. The employees tended to swap working hours between each other according to their individual preferences for time off, with the result that management often did not know who in fact would be working at any particular time.



- Management faced the serious difficulty of having to adjust personnel requirements (which are planned according to cycles of two weeks) to flight schedules (which depend on commercial pressure). Changes in the programming of flights and the resulting adjustments in staff need to be well forecast, but often do not harmonise.
- Attention needed to be paid to the content of work and to what was actually being measured. A considerable amount of time used could be described as inefficient due to poor service coordination, information and regulation.

From this analysis, the Framework Agreement for ground staff was developed. It was signed in January 1999 and accepted by six out of nine trade unions. While working hours have been cut from 39 to 35 hours, the agreement provides for the creation of 4000 new jobs and moving of some part-timers into full-time employment. It entails an agreement on the moderation of wages and introduces greater variability in the length of time off that employees can take. It allows for more local negotiation processes and for the creation of localised gain-sharing systems. As a result there are now decentralised bargaining sessions in 26 establishments of Air France. This move to more decentralised bargaining and the collective learning by all who are involved in this new development are seen as positive changes.

The AA teleworking experience

Lance Bowie, Manager Business Systems Analysis, Automobile Association, Basingstoke, UK.

Sarah Stacey, Management Development Manager, Automobile Association, Basingstoke, UK.

The organisation

Founded in 1905, the AA is the UK's largest motoring organisation and market leader in the roadside breakdown assistance market. It has some 9.5 million members and more than 3,600 patrols.

The change process

The AA commenced a teleworking pilot project in December 1997, with ten staff from the Yorkshire area answering emergency breakdown calls in their homes. Teleworking is a flexible form of working and in the case of the AA it means the establishment of a fully functioning call centre of one, in the home of the call handler. The rationale for teleworking includes greater flexibility in terms of hours and resources, long-term reductions in overheads, increased productivity and reduced absenteeism. Predictions are that by 2010 over ten million people in the UK will be working from home.

The AA project was based on preparatory research and an agreement made in July 1997, with the involvement of a wide range of internal and external sources. The information technology required for teleworking include a PC and 'AA Help' software, telephone, fax and network link to the AA Host system. Key issues are the reliability and consistency of the technology as downtime in the home is 'dead time'.

In relation to the people involved in the pilot project, key issues to be addressed included the home environment, health and safety at work, support and supervision, and training.

The Teleworking Agreement covered issues such as flexibility, the IT system and data security, taxation and insurance. The responsibilities of both employer and employee are spelled out.

As well as the Agreement, the organisation also took care to develop a measurement strategy by defining key areas for measurement, establishing benchmarks for comparison and developing data collection mechanisms. Key areas for evaluation, among other things, are the cost of teleworking, productivity and call performance, quality of service, attrition and sickness, and benefits to the employee. Some of the results from the evaluation are:

- In relation to the costs of teleworking, costs derive from the initial set-up, the ongoing call traffic and the resources necessary for management and support of teleworkers. The increased costs are clearly offset by increases in productivity. The teleworking team's productivity is 37% to 45% higher than that of national benchmarks, while the increases in productivity of individual workers range from 8% to 80%. Time spent per call and for post call administration is reduced compared to office workers. These improvements are based on the introduction of demand related shift patterns, a complete rethink about the distribution of calls, a more effective working environment, and improved morale and motivation.
- The quality of service also improved, especially in relation to accuracy of data capture, service satisfaction, and telephone manner. The number of commendations has increased.
- Teleworking also has considerable consequences in regard to office space and property. As the need for new property is reduced, the property portfolio can be rationalised and an opportunity is created to review the operational strategy.
- Attrition is minimal in comparison to the call centres and absenteeism is reduced.
- Flexibility of resources has increased. Work is organised in two shifts in one day, and the resources are available to meet exceptional demand. The organisation is more flexible in meeting short-falls in manpower.
- The benefits to the teleworker are the most pronounced advantages of the pilot project. Benefits are both of a financial and a social nature and include the positive effects of a more relaxed work environment.

Teleworking, however, also raised several issues that are of concern to either management or the teleworkers themselves. Concerns relate to the technological nature of the work organisation, the more remote provision of support, and the possibility of exploitation and encroachment.

Despite these implications which have to be addressed and despite the considerable costs of teleworking, the positive benefits to employees and the productivity and quality improvements make the approach a 'win-win' situation for both employees and the Automobile Association.



Based on completion of a detailed evaluation report the pilot project is to be 'rolled out' throughout the organisation and by the end of 1999 the AA will have some 150 teleworkers around the UK. What has been learned from the pilot project has encouraged the organisation to share its recipe for success through the publication of a guide to teleworking.

The Land Bank of South Africa: People moving change - change moving people

Bankies Malan, Manager Operations Training, Land Bank of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.

The organisation

The Land Bank of South Africa was established in 1912 to support resource-poor whites to settle on land. Afrikaners remained as the principal account holders for the most part of this century. In 1997, the Land Bank employed 1300 people, of whom 350 worked in head office and the remainder were spread over 25 branches located to serve the former whites-only commercial farming areas.

Following South Africa's first democratic election, a Presidential Commission reviewed the situation of accessibility to rural financial services and proposed that the Land Bank should be mandated to transform itself to take a lead in providing finance for the entire rural population and especially for the historically disadvantaged. A new Board of Directors and a new Managing Director were appointed.

The change process

The presenter began by describing the starting point for the change process and the inherited workplace environment as encountered by the new Directors. The organisation operated as a racially biased and patriarchal unit. Senior management was dominated by white Afrikaner males, while women were overrepresented in the lower administrative ranks and blacks were restricted to menial service work. Sexist and racist divisions were also in place in relation to the requirement to wear uniform, the right to medical aid, and access to dining rooms at head office. The organisation was very hierarchical and promotion was closely linked to years of service rather than performance. The bank was described as an 'Administrative Factory' with an excessive creation of paper-flow and repetition of tasks. The work process was highly segmented and staff had no vision of the whole process beyond their discreet part of the workflow.

In June 1997, the new Board of Directors held a breakaway Think Tank session and decided to organise a brainstorming session with a cross-section of employees from both branches and Head Office. The Board drew up a list of guiding principles: vision lead, transparency, personal choice, fairness and justice, consultation, inclusivity, gender affirmation, sustainable transformation, empowerment .. and that it must be.. fun!

The Land Bank contracted consultants from RGA (Reconstruction, Growth and Alignment) to facilitate the consultative process in which 1300 employees in 26 different locations had to be engaged. RGA placed emphasis on the need for a consultative stakeholder approach with special importance given to external stakeholders, existing and potential clients, farmers' unions etc. A six-month process was scheduled. The one mainstream activity was a process of workshops culminating in a national conference at the end of the six-month period. Branches held internal workshops as well as workshops with external stakeholders and elected delegates for a provincial conference, which in turn sent delegates to the national conference.

The second channel of activity, coordinated from head office, was the establishment of task teams focusing on new product development, human resources development and communications. These task teams drew on a cross-section of bank personnel and also employed external expertise.

At the National Consultative Conference the proposals from each province for a new vision and mission statement were tabled and a final draft drawn up. The design for the new logo was concluded through a similar process. The staff drew up a charter of their desired organisational culture, envisaging an organisation that aspires to be people-centred, customer-focused and professional, whose leadership would be visionary, dynamic and open-minded and whose work culture demonstrates integrity, participation and determination.

It became evident that a fundamental change in the organisation of work and the decision-making process was necessary and the bank decided to explore the Emery approach to participative design for participative democracy. Five consultants were contracted to be trainer-mentors and to implement the participatory redesign process throughout the 25 branches. Trainees from each of the provinces were selected, together with representatives from head office, who were trained to facilitate participative redesign workshops. Over a period of six weeks, 900 employees participated in a workplace redesign workshop facilitated by the trainees with the support from one of the consultants. A four-hour briefing session also took place with the 25 branch directors.

As a first step of the process a comparative review of the theory and design principles was undertaken and participants accepted the fundamental design principle of locating responsibility for the control and coordination of the work with the people who do the work.

Participants were invited to examine the criteria for creating a productive and satisfactory working environment, such as elbow room, variety, mutual support etc. This revealed important information about the workplace and about people's self-perception in that workplace. A skills register of the level of competence in different skill areas was developed, which served as a tool for considering team composition and for planning training and development at a later stage. Participants at the workshops were asked to design a work structure. All of the designs generated by the workshop groups called for multiskilled teams. Moving towards implementation, the employee teams were asked to set their own goals within the framework of the broader performance goals of the organisation and to put together a comprehensive training plan based on the goals identified and the skills available to them. As the teams were ready for implementation,



a Branch Directors' workshop was held to gain their support and deepen their understanding of the concept of self-managing multiskilled teams, as their work role shifted from managing supervisors to managing work groups and results. Issues around quality control had to be addressed also.

A Leadership Alignment and Development Workshop was held in every section of Head Office and in all 25 branches in order to assist the employees to come to terms with the rapid changes taking place. This was very important, considering that many other traumatic changes, apart from work organisation issues, were taking place within the bank and within the wider South African society. These workshops stressed the importance of emotional intelligence in the modern workplace and were designed to foster the leadership and interpersonal competencies needed for working in new ways.

In order to support the staff for whom the impact of the new working culture and the high work load resulted in increased levels of stress, two pastors, trained as clinical psychologists, were hired to provide pastoral counselling and supportive care to employees.

In the summer of 1998 'temperature visits' to branches took place to take stock of progress and to get to grips with burning issues. A monitoring and evaluation team consisting of ordinary team members from branches and some head office staff started to assess the quality of work.

A peer training system was introduced at the branches to deal with skills shortages in the form of participative training initiatives. Training was specially customised to not only cover technical training, but also to incorporate managerial or soft skill training.

An end of year workshop in Pretoria and subsequent evaluation by two consultants in March 1999, showed that some difficulties existed for team members battling to become multiskilled and that multiskilling needed to be reconsidered more strategically. Also, discipline was a hard call and teams needed to establish some ground rules. On the positive side, the evaluation showed that team members worked more cooperatively, that communication lines were better and quality of work improved. Work processing has become easier and red tape has been reduced.

The teams are closer to customers and are more business oriented as they have clear branch goals to strive for. Client satisfaction has increased. The role of Branch Directors changed from manager to leader and they increased client relations. Anecdotal evidence clearly shows behavioural changes and increases in self-confidence and job satisfaction among employees that impact on both their work performance and their private lives.

The findings from the transformation experience include the following.

- The emphasis on consulting and including external stakeholders in the process saved the workshops from the tendency to lapse into introverted 'navel-gazing' and provided important impetus for change.

- Time-tabling and complementarity of activities is paramount and communications need to be continuous, be it to the Board of Directors, the employee unions, clients or investors.
- More attention should have been paid to including the Branch Directors in the redesign at an earlier stage to facilitate the necessary shift in perception about the managers' role and to address their fears and concerns.
- The Bank doubled its expected revenue in 1998 and business increased by 22% in one year. The Bank now has over 200,000 clients, 70% of whom are women. Thus, considerable progress has been made in the delivery of the bank's new mandate of providing loans to the historically disadvantaged. The achievements of the Land Bank in transforming itself are seen as very significant and the critical mass of change is believed to have been accomplished.

Flexible work time arrangements at Kreissparkasse Schlüchtern

Klaus Fischer, Personnel Manager, Kreissparkasse Schlüchtern, Schlüchtern, Germany.

The organisation

The Kreissparkasse Schlüchtern is a district savings bank with an annual turnover of DM 1 billion (€5.11 billion) and a workforce of 220 employees. The district is located between Frankfurt and Fulda and a high proportion of residents in the district commute to either of these towns for work. This has an influence on the business of the bank, as many people work outside the district during normal bank opening hours and transfer their money to banks nearer to their place of work.

The change process

The original situation in the bank with regard to working time was one of regular working hours from 08.00 to 16.40 (17.30 on Thursdays). A productivity study in 1994-1995 showed that too many staff spent too much time carrying out routine tasks such as filling out forms for customers. Therefore, in 1994, a Steering Committee was set up to find out how operations could become more customer-driven and more productive. The assignment for the controlling project was to design customer-driven service times to keep and attract customers, to gain a competitive edge through optimum service readiness.

In order to free customer advisers from the routine tasks and to allow them to be more active in promoting the bank's services to customers, it was decided that self-service machines should be integrated into the bank and available to customers for 24 hours per day.

In 1997, the first branch was opened that had no cash desk at all but was equipped with cash distributors, bank statement printers, and a night treasury access for business customers etc. This was a unique development at the time. Unlike the standard location of ATM machines outside the bank, in this case self-service equipment was integrated into the bank. A glass wall which closes at night allows access to the self service area outside bank opening hours. Another special feature



of the bank's physical design was the removal of counters for individual members of staff. Instead, customer advisers walk around the bank, approach customers and may make use of any one of the range of seating arrangements for longer consultations.

In order to improve services to customers it was also necessary to extend working hours. In autumn, 1996, a working group consisting of the employees from the pilot branch, representatives of the staff council, human relations department management and the external consultant was set up in order to develop a model of working time within the following parameters.

- The opening hours should be the same every day in order to prevent customer confusion.
- Staff requirements in peak hours must be dealt with flexibly.
- Taking time off by staff in busy times must be avoided. Therefore, the building up of time credits is not desirable.
- The administration of the working time model should be simple so as to avoid additional staff needs in personnel.
- The number of absentee hours for private reasons should be reduced.

The first step was to agree on the opening times of the bank, based on customer demands, around which the working hours of staff involved in customer advice were organised. As a second step, the necessary working hours for staff in the central division and in support services were decided upon. The fundamental rules for the working time model were that all hours worked should be counted and credited as work time, but absence for certain private reasons should no longer be paid and counted as working time.

The following principles for the regulation of the model applied.

- Working hours as a resource have to be dealt with in an economical manner. This means that presence of staff is to be linked to customer demand and economic use, rather than standard hours.
- Contractual working time of 38.5 hours per week should not be exceeded. The planned time of presence is 8.5 hours per day.
- In quiet times employees should work fewer hours to have a positive time account that can be used in busy periods. 'Time debts' of the employees are preferable to overtime. Employees are thus expected to state their reasons for working more than planned.
- The recording and documentation of working hours is to be simplified by adopting a 'soft time registration' system where only deviations over 30 minutes are recorded.
- A working time frame is set whereby work is possible from 08.00 until 18.00, but not beyond these hours, except for certain exemptions.

Staff capacity is organised by a so-called weekly deployment plan, with time windows limiting the deployment, in order to adjust the capacity to customer frequency. This weekly deployment plan is the only control mechanism and, within its limits, the team controls the use of time autonomously. A 'clearing centre', composed of the Chairman of the Board, the chairman of the staff council, and the staff manager, is available to decide about problems arising in individual cases.

The project faced a number of challenges. Firstly, the employees' resistance to time debts was considerable as they prefer to save up time for additional leave later rather than the other way round. Only 10% approximately of staff seem to take full advantage of the whole range of flexibility but the appreciation of the new system and the willingness to incur a time debt is increasing over time. The employees' desire to use dataprocessing technology for collecting time data had also to be dealt with. They perceived the manual system as a regression.

Managers needed to accept time control as a new management task. Their concerns that the 'soft' recording of deviations from planned working hours might allow too much freedom had to be addressed. Some rethinking on the criteria for the evaluation of work was also necessary, as time worked should not be mixed up with results produced. However, in general the attitude of both employees and managers towards the flexible model was largely positive.

The benefits for the bank are numerous. The pilot project has shown that a capacity driven approach is possible and that it is feasible to extend opening hours and improve customer service. The new system has also simplified time management and no additional staff had to be employed for this purpose. As intended, paid time-off has been reduced dramatically.

While some employees have difficulties adjusting to the new model, the motivation of staff has increased and they are more likely to offer services to customers outside the standard hours as all time worked is now booked to their account. They enjoy the opportunity to take time off in a more flexible manner. Customers also responded positively to the new model as staff have more time for individual advice.

BUPA

Ian Norridge, UK Service Manager, BUPA, Staines, UK.

Gail Sumner, Operations Manager, BUPA, Staines, UK.

The organisation

BUPA, formed in 1948, is the largest independent healthcare organisation in the United Kingdom. The areas of service provision include health insurance, dental cover, nursing care and travel cover. The company's market share is at 42%, in an industry where the market is static. It insures 3 million lives; has a revenue of £800 million sterling (€1.2 billion); spends over £2 million (€3 million) per day in benefits; and customer contacts include 2.5 million claims, 2.7 million calls and 70,000 pieces of correspondence.



The change process

Its vision is to be the number one provider of health care. Improvements required by its customers included full reassurance, matching promises, resolving customer enquiries at first point of contact and delivering a consistent quality of service. To carry out these improvements, management first set out to assess what they needed to change in the company. The list is as follows: products, access, customer relationship, process, systems and sales channel.

In relation to products the objectives were to ensure that the core permanent medical insurance (PMI) benefits met customer needs. They needed to provide reassurance to their customers that the service was complete and fair. Benefits offered required harmonisation. The final objective was to ensure improvement of BUPA's position in the marketplace.

With regard to processes, BUPA required an increase in effectiveness of service. The cost base to the customer needed to be reduced, while ensuring that customer service did not suffer. Linked to this was systems change, where BUPA endeavoured to provide its staff with the tools they needed to deal with customer enquiries, of which 95% were dealt with at initial point of contact. The aim was to deliver a consistent quality of service and increase job satisfaction within the company. In order to do this, management involved all staff in building the system of change. All members of staff had mock-ups or demonstrations of the desired end result and were kept constantly informed via regular staff-management communication and updates. A design was drawn up for 'Best Practice' and staff were all provided with training which included technical training, a follow-up support system for trained staff in the workplace and an extra behavioural incentive scheme called 'Champions of Service'.

A point made by the presenters was that the role of the Front Line Manager required adjusting in accordance with the changes made in the working environment. The new role became that of Service Team Manager, where team members and manager coacted while relating weekly on a one-to-one basis on personnel issues.

Positive performance management was also introduced, where quarterly reviews assessed the progress and performance of the staff. Quality consultants were contracted to fill in the gaps or advise on quality of performance. A reward system was also put in place, whereby employees and customers alike can nominate a staff member for an award.

The 'One Life' theme was a corporate event involving 12,000 members of staff designed to increase customer orientation within the whole organisation, the key themes being BUPA customers, the BUPA brand and all the individuals in the organisation. The outcomes resulted in BUPA staff realising that they had an important contribution to make and that it was they who could make improvements for the customers. Employees were encouraged to provide the best service for the customer. Staff began to take pride in their work. At the same time, there was always room for continuous improvement, and one of the ways to look for solutions was through ideas or suggestion schemes in which everyone was invited to participate.

Management also looked at the office design and staff steering groups were established. These steering groups carried out work station assessments and user requirements. They visited seven 'Best Practice' call centres for examples. It was decided to incorporate the Chinese art of *feng shui* into architectural designs. Three videos were shown during this presentation with comparisons between the old and the new building layouts. For the new layout, BUPA adapted what they had. Business was maintained throughout the seven months that it took to bring everything from concept to finality.

From these changes, which were made in eighteen months, it was learned that phasing in changes gradually would enable them to manage expectations with incremental change. They learned that staff involvement is critical and that it is imperative to listen to staff and act accordingly. BUPA intends to set about building on developing managers, encouraging new ideas through awards and the 'One Life' idea, working on improved system development and setting up staff consultation groups.

Following these changes, staff sickness was running at a lower rate than before. There was more staff attrition. It is a non-union organisation, but participation is conducted by the one-to-one method of communication between staff and management, with managers working in the open plan offices. Recognition of staff qualities has improved staff satisfaction. BUPA earned the award for European Call Centre of the Year, 1998, in the customer service category.

Vitae Group - a high performance company

Peter Blokland, Director, Vitae Group, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Tonny Janson, Quality Manager, Vitae Group, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The organisation

Vitae specialises in a range of employment services and is the leader in a number of niches in that market. One of its specialist business units offers architectural firms, contractors and other technical companies the possibility to hire trained specialists on a short-term project basis. Vitae started as a project engineering company by two friends, Jelle Boelen and Teo Rasing. There are now 16 separate business units with regional offices across the Netherlands. By 1998 sales had reached €58 million and Vitae employed 350 people.

The change process

The presenters started by outlining their definition of a high performance company, the criteria for which are a good understanding of individual customers, high flexibility and motivated people. All three aspects are about people. They believe a company is made by its shared values and shared ideas on how to achieve the company's mission. What makes Vitae as a company is its emphasis on 'pleasure at work', which is fostered by personal development, personal attention, long-term relationships and a pleasant working environment. The company tries to let employees



be proud of their position and see their future five years later. Great importance is attached to encouraging formal and informal communication between management and staff in both directions.

Annual team-building holidays for all employees are part of the attempt to encourage 'pleasure at work'. The company also tries to involve their 350 staff members in activities that are not always business related, such as the organisation of a charity event.

The employees, who on average are very young, dynamic and fast thinking, are given as much responsibility and freedom to manage their own work as possible. When employees are ready to take on even more responsibility the company would endeavour to help them set up their own franchise as part of the Vitae Group thereby creating new businesses and new jobs.

In explaining the background to the change process, the presenters mentioned scarceness of employees, company growth and increasing competition as the issues encountered by the company, which resulted in increased employee expectations, greater distances between people and higher needs for work quality and quantity. In order to face these issues and the resulting threat of employee dissatisfaction, the company introduced the following techniques:

- annual employee satisfaction survey;
- an idea system (ensuring follow-up on good ideas);
- quality audits;
- written procedures and job descriptions;
- extensive training and coaching;
- a customer complaints system.

While these techniques were all found to be useful in providing structure, they did not offer the solution. The real solution was company-wide workshops in which the company's mission was restated. These workshops were important in order to learn what the employees are, and would be, proud of; to identify what the market asks for; to improve social interaction, and to achieve a general commitment to the outcome.

The set of shared values held by the founders of the company and communicated to the staff on a regular basis are most important for the development of the company and for the creation of a strong corporate culture, which has been proven to enhance the company's competitiveness, increase the number of employees and improve job satisfaction.

Chapter 5

Telecommunications

Telecom Éireann

Kevin Boyle, Boyle & Associates Inc., Oregon, USA.

Bernie Gray, Group HR Director, Telecom Eireann, Dublin, Ireland

This was the keynote case study, presented to the second plenary session of the conference.

The organisation

Telecom Éireann is the principal provider of communication services in Ireland. The company, formerly part of a Government Department of Posts and Telegraphs, was established in 1984 as a state-owned commercial organisation. In 1995, 20% of the company was sold as part of a strategic alliance to KPN which is the consortium of Koninklijke PTT Nederlands, the privatised Dutch telecom company, and Telia, the Swedish state-owned telecom provider. Under an agreement with the Group of Unions a further 14.9% was sold to an Employee Share Ownership Trust and the Irish Government is floating the remainder of its shareholding in Telecom Éireann so that in July 1999, it will be fully privatised.

Telecom Éireann provides 1.5 million fixed telephone lines and over 100,000 ISDN channels. Its mobile operator Eircell has 700,000 customers and the company also provides an advanced digital network. The financial performance of the company during the last financial year resulted in a revenue of approximately IE£1.8 billion.

The company is benefiting from the economic boom in Ireland which has the fastest-growing economy within the EU. However, the industry is highly complex with many different factors

interacting, including globalisation, privatisations of many major telecommunications operators across Europe, fast and ongoing processes of convergence between major companies through alliances, mergers and acquisitions, and significant developments in terms of regulation and liberalisation of the market. Furthermore, customer demands are changing quickly and expectations from customers are increasing as a result of greater competition.

The change process

A strategic business review carried out in the mid-1990s made it clear that the company had to transform radically if it was to survive and to realise the vision for the company for the year 2000. Debt had to be reduced dramatically, prices needed to fall in an increasingly competitive market and, as a consequence, costs needed to be cut significantly. The company had to ensure sufficient volume growth to replace the revenue loss that would occur from price reductions, and a whole new set of products and services needed to be developed to meet increasingly sophisticated customer demands. Improvement in customer service had to become a key corporate priority. The entire nature of the company's business needed to be redefined, with a clear shift from a telephone to a communications company.

Since telecommunications is a hugely complex industry, the transformation dimensions within Telecom Éireann are equally multifaceted and interlinked. A significant number of interrelationships occur between processes; technologies; products and services; systems structures; and skills and people. At the centre of the different transformation dimensions is the customer.

The 'people' aspect of the transformation is the most subtle and difficult and has the potential to be both very powerful and very destructive depending on how it is approached. It was realised that the competitive advantage of the company relies more and more on its intellectual capital and the management of knowledge, as opposed to capital and technology. The vision of the company, therefore, is to be a world class organisation with the best trained and most skilled workforce who will deliver first time every time to the customer base.

The values which underpin this vision are being reviewed as part of the overall change strategy, which also includes changes in the external image of the company, soon to be named Eircom. Among the values, which are to reflect the changed external image, are the principles that customers come first, that integrity and respect are crucial in dealing with customers and each other, that the vision is to be achieved through team work and that all people in the company should seek continuous improvement. Telecom Éireann aims to refocus from *ad hoc* change to integration and cohesion, and to place people at the centre of this long-term strategy, by moving away from just tools and techniques to fairness, trust and inspiration as the basis for securing the commitment of the workforce to the changes.

A model of partnership in industrial relations was adopted as the only way to succeed. The real challenge was how to transform a very traditional, hierarchical, labour management relationship and industrial relations strategy. As it was very important for both management and trade unions



to be very clear about their transformation agendas, the consultants engaged in separate sessions with management and trade unions on the values underlying their objectives and the strategies for accomplishing their values.

A large Search Conference was held with 250 top labour and management leaders within the company to identify what goals and values are shared and what can be accomplished together. The consultants recognise that there are values and goals that are not and will not be shared and seek to teach new skills for interest-based problem-solving to help the two sides identify common interests on a daily basis as a way of bargaining. The consultants also began moving down that process to all the branches and sections of the company and are now engaging all 11,000 employees at the shopfloor level in the exploration of values and goals in the same way as the leadership.

Both management and trade unions have significant development needs as the partnership process requires very different new skills compared to the old adversarial collective bargaining model. On the union side, for example, the consultants are working on an internal transformation, as the organisational structures need to be reorganised to meet the challenges created by the company transformation and the new ways of working with management. The Partnership Agreement underpinning this process has been in place for two years and is a very strategic agreement. It is built on a clear understanding of the need for change as identified by the joint consultative group at the highest level of the company. The agreement seeks to establish the structures and the process for change management and partnership, recognises the need for new industrial relations structures and outlines the Transformation Business Agenda.

A number of partnership groups were established, including the Joint Strategic Partnership Group, Business Partnership Groups and Local District Partnership Groups. The District Partnership Groups should fully assume the weight of the local responsibilities in terms of implementing change and the degree to which they would refer to the Business Partnership Groups or the Joint Strategic Partnership Group would be minimal.

The trade union defined the need to have Partnership Coordinators to work directly with the Local District Partnership Groups to ensure that the process achieves the objectives which have been set for each of the group themselves. The external facilitation received from the consultants has been instrumental in mobilising the whole partnership process throughout the company and internal facilitators are now being trained to continue that work.

More and more people have come to recognise that partnership is the way to do business, and the number of issues which are now referred to the traditional collective bargaining forum are significantly less.

The Transformation Business Agenda includes some of the following changes.

- Development of substantially new work organisation structures. For example, the company removed three layers of management right across the company.
- Creation of an internal labour market and establishment of the Resource Business to manage the internal labour market. A number of pathways for employees have been created in terms of pursuing a career inside the company, outside of it, or setting up a new business which the company will invest in. It is estimated that in the next 18 months approximately 3000 of the 11,000 employees will need to go through this internal labour market, if staff are to be deployed in an optimal way.
- Introduction of atypical work arrangements to adapt to customer demand in a much more flexible way, including annualised contracts, home-working or any other resourcing model that meets the needs of both the individual and the business.
- Extension of normal working hours to meet customer service requirements.
- Greater use of outsourcing for work that is not central to the core business strategy.

The company was also aiming for a significant reduction in payroll costs, requiring a reduction of the workforce by 2500 people through voluntary redundancies. Other cost-cutting measures included the elimination of the company-wide bonus scheme, the introduction of 5.3% pension contributions by staff to the previously non-contributory pension scheme and the move towards using more 'time in lieu' instead of payment for overtime.

Given the extent of these changes, which posed considerable challenges from the point of view of individual employees, it was crucial to redefine the nature of the company's commitment to the employees. While the unions came to recognise that cost structures needed to be dealt with if the company was to be competitive, management realised that some long-term commitment to its employees had to be made if change was really to happen. The Employee Share Ownership Plan, signed in May 1999, is an attempt to move the idea of commitment from a redistributive reward system to a more strategic reward system, whereby individual employees could see the connection between the work they are doing every day and the benefits accruing to themselves, as well as to the company.

The ESOP was very controversial and the first plan of its kind whereby workers were going to share as much as 14.9% of a company. The plan envisages that up to 5% of the company would be advanced to the employees in return for the implementation of the change agenda. The acquisition of the remaining 9.9% of the share capital of the company will occur on the basis of cash payments to the Exchequer for a fair price. All of the shares go into an Employee Shared Ownership Trust and are held there until the loan, which has been undertaken by the Trust on behalf of the employees to fund the purchase of the shares, is paid off through the dividends that accrue from the shares. Thus it is clear to the employees that the greater the success of the company, the sooner they will benefit. In the interim, every six months, employees will get a notional statement of shares. The estimated time for paying off the loan is between five and nine years.



In this way, employee share ownership, if effectively implemented, can align the interests of employees with those of other shareholders. It is a way of allowing workers to share in the prosperity of the company without undermining the long-term viability of the enterprise by inflating wage rates disproportionately.

Other benefits to the employees from the process include the survival of a significant number of jobs which would be at risk if the company was not transformed, and greater reskilling and training opportunities for individuals. New work opportunities are being created through the Resource Business. Furthermore, the partnership approach in the company means that the strategic values of the unions and the agenda for workers are being brought forward on a daily basis at the district level where managers and trade union representatives are managing the business side by side. Therefore, business decisions are no longer made unless the staff impact is being taken into consideration.

It is hoped to sustain the continuous nature of the process through a review of the partnership and through the transfer of new skills for working in partnership at every level of the company. The entire measurement system in the company is changed, and drivers of business success were identified from the bottom up in over one hundred workshops with employees, which also increased enthusiasm by giving people a line-of-sight between their daily work and the satisfaction of customers, employees and shareholders. Enthusiasm for the change process is also hoped to increase when the company is floated and the results of the work become clearly visible in the external financial markets.

Pathways to the future: a joint employee education benefit program sponsored by US West, CWA and IBEW

Lew Ellingson, Co-Director, Pathways, Communications Workers of America, Englewood, Colorado.

June Paradise Maul, Chairperson, Board of Directors, Training Partnership Inc., Phoenix, Arizona.

The organisations

US West is a telecommunications company employing over 50,000 employees and serving over 25 million customers. Its products and services include local telephone services, high speed data networking and wireless personal communications services.

The Communications Workers of America is the largest telecommunications union in North America, representing 630,000 public and private sector workers, located in 10,000 communities.

The programme

US West is committed to 'making life better' by achieving both customer delight and superior financial performance while building a world-class and results-oriented team that is committed to the success of the company and the customers.

A joint company-union proposal for education and training programs for eligible employees of US West was put together to improve on the original computer skills training, which needed focus and structure. The new programme began in 1987 and is governed by a joint company and union non-profit corporation, Training Partnership Inc. (TPI). The Board of Directors comprises members from CWA and US West, who are committed to TPI, rather than the two organisations. Training Partnerships Inc. is a corporation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning through educational opportunities which meet individual needs, provide personal and career choices and create a flexible and skilled workforce, so that the employees, the company and the union are prepared to successfully compete in a changing and diverse marketplace.

TPI offers a variety of educational programme, including two to four-year degrees, continuing education and essential skills training in areas necessary for the future success of the business. The courses are provided predominantly by colleges and universities and go beyond what is required in the employee's current job.

The corporation is also involved in creating programmes for the future in an industry-wide initiative, involving an alliance between Bell Atlantic, US West, CWA, IBEW etc. With funding from the Sloan Foundation, this initiative creates opportunities for distance learning via the Internet and for obtaining an Associate Degree in Telecommunications.

The Governing Board of Training Partnerships Inc. has set up a structure for running the corporation that includes:

- Co-Directors who manage the administration of the programme (one from US West, and one from CWA);
- Outsourcing the programme administration to the Council for Adult and Educational Learning (CAEL);
- A network of 140 employee advocates (96 from the Union, 44 from management) who communicate and advocate the programme to other employees;
- A network of 243 Pathways consultants (41 independent consultants, 202 school-based consultants);
- A group of State Liaisons composed of leaders from adult and continuing education in each of the fourteen states;
- A Local Advocate Committee composed of union and management advocates, consultant and worksite coordinators.

The majority of education provided is in areas related to the company, such as telecommunications, information sciences, business administration or sciences. Other non-company related courses cover professional studies in education or health care, technical and vocational studies or other career and personal development.



From the supervisors' perspective, education under the Pathways programme has positively and considerably affected employees' self-esteem, efficiency on the job, communication skills, team spirit and flexibility. Over 70% of participants agree that what they have learned since returning to school has helped them become a more productive worker and that the education received under Pathways has been useful to them in their career paths. Over 80% have found the training to have been rewarding in many other ways.

The programme provides significant value to the three primary stakeholders involved in it: the employees, the CWA and US West. Its success depends on creating an intervention which continuously offers value to all key stakeholders.

The benefits to the union include the improvement of participants 'employability' and the increase in employee control, as the education enables them to upgrade their skills and to become more attractive job candidates inside and outside the industry. The programme is thus seen as an employment security measure.

From the employees' perspective, the programme allows them to gain new skills for current jobs and future careers which translates into greater earnings potential and greater self-esteem. Employees also benefit from the opportunity to choose from studies in a wide variety of areas.

For US West, the Pathways programme is both an 'attraction of talent' and 'retention of talent' strategy. It contributes to a positive brand image for US West both nationally and internationally. It contributes to develop source pools for essential skills for the future and improves skills in areas that are essential to the business and industry. The programme also increases the number of employees who have the qualifications and general competencies required to move into management and leadership positions.

The following are the lessons learned from the process, so far:

- Joint union-management programmes can be successful if governance is focused on purpose and running a business rather than differing organisational perspectives, if a structure is set up to support all aspects of the programme and if communications reinforce the purpose and value to all stakeholders.
- The use of 'organisational development' and 'external facilitator' can improve the effectiveness of the Board.
- Aligning stakeholders requires considerable attention and effort by the Board.
- External recognition and rewards lend considerable credibility to the programme.
- Companies in an industry can work together to create new models of learning.

Priorities, until 2001, include stakeholder communication, further programme evaluation and the development of new essential skills and telecommunications programmes.

Applying Open Systems Theory for dramatic improvements in business performance

Peter Aughton, AMERIN Consulting Group P/L, Melbourne, Australia.

Neville Brien, Telstra Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

This presentation provided background information about the Australian-developed Open Systems Theory concepts, processes and terminology and their use by a large information technology and telecommunications company in its implementation of genuine self-managing teams. The Virtual Company example was used to illustrate the application of Open Systems tools.

The presentation started by highlighting the importance of the 'contextual environment', i.e. the extended social field beyond an organisation's industry or task environment. It is in this environment that there are currently dramatic and discontinuous shifts in social values and community expectations, for example, in relation to attitudes to authority, individual rights, and family structures. This uncertain environment with great diversity of views poses significant challenges for organisations used to dealing with change in mechanistic linear approaches. It is important to understand that organisations (and the people who work within them) are open systems which have known and evolving social relationships with the extended social environment.

The only external factors taken into account by traditional organisations are of a technical and economic nature within the industry environment. This failure to recognise the changing social environment leads to inadequate planning and passive or reactive adaptation to social change. However, to survive and thrive in today's unpredictable environment, organisations need to become actively adaptive. They need to have plans and structures that align and realign the organisation's values with those of the extended social environment. They need to understand that the social relationships between the system and the environment are two-way: the environment can impact on the system, but the system can also change the environment.

To establish active adaptive relationships, contextual thinking organisations are changing the way they manage, plan and structure themselves. Planning in a turbulent social field requires that all key players within an organisation are committed to its future direction. To generate this commitment, strategic planning must become much more participative. Such planning must also involve thorough scanning, analysis and synthesis of the extended social environment if an organisation expects to maintain its customer relevance and loyalty.

A proven planning methodology that creates active adaptive relationships is the Search Conference. It is a highly reliable method for participative strategic planning which has the power to produce learning, planning communities committed to their own futures. By participating in a



Search Conference, people are not only committed to making their own futures - they also learn about the Search Conference process itself, enabling them to continue to adaptively change.

In order to maintain active adaptation in the long term the organisation must, however, also change its fundamental structure or design principles from a bureaucratic design to a democratic one. Bureaucratic structures entail an emphasis on hierarchies where responsibility for control and coordination are located at least one level above where the work is done, and they build redundancy into an organisation by adding extra parts or people in order for it to have flexibility. A bureaucratic structure fosters internal competition rather than cooperation and tends to contribute to deskilling. This traditional structure is not one which suits today's more informed and questioning workforce. It is far too rigid and slow to adapt to the fast changing external environment and not responsive enough to meet the day to day needs of customers.

Adaptive, responsive organisations, on the other hand, are designed to produce employees who are more responsible and accountable and who are empowered to respond to markets. They are designed to continuously create capabilities that lead to customer value and reduce the time from concept to execution.

Key features of adaptive organisations include:

- self-managing work teams as the basic work unit;
- measurable team goals that are monitored, negotiated and renegotiated;
- high levels of training and development;
- rewarding employees, not for 'doing their job', but for having the business skills to achieve agreed goals.

The basic building block of a democratic structure is a group taking responsibility for its own coordination and control - the self-managing team. It builds redundancy into an organisation so it can be flexible and adaptive by adding redundant functions and skills to each individual. It is a democratic organisation with a relationship of cooperation and interdependence and with a non-dominant hierarchy of function.

Self-managing teams within the organisation build strong links with each other, are interdependent and have aligned goals. When environmental changes cause strategic goals to change, team goals can be quickly renegotiated and realigned.

By empowering employees to control and coordinate their work, there is alignment of the empowerment that people now value in their communities. This powerful motivational factor generates high levels of employee commitment to improve productivity and quality.

Another benefit is that people have their social needs of belonging and a sense of community met by the work itself. As such, they need not seek alternative *de facto* structures such as cliques, factions or a management-versus-workers scenario.



The transition from bureaucratic to democratic design principles is facilitated through the Participative Design process developed by Fred Emery, a coherent strategy whereby employees and managers within an organisation are given the concepts and tools to redesign their workplace using democratic principles.

The presenters pointed to the proven results of such changes in organisational design principles. In the case of Telstra the recently established Internet based self-managing teams have led to high levels of employee commitment and increased motivation, which in turn, has produced dramatic improvements in productivity and output, improved quality, introduced greater flexibility in reacting to market demands and providing an end-to-end customer service.

Chapter 6

Manufacturing

An African transformation experience - the Dorbyl Group

Heather De Beer, Consultant, Competitive Capabilities Africa, Green Point, South Africa.

Absai Ngubeni, Group Human Resources Manager, Dorbyl Group, Houghton.

Funekile Dave Sithole, Patrol Inspector, Guestro Wheels, Port Elizabeth.

The organisation

The Dorbyl Group is a manufacturing and trading company in the automotive component and building system business areas with 144 operations and over 10,000 employees internationally. The political and economic changes in South Africa, including the increasing integration into the global economy, resulted in a 'wake up call' for the company, with strong pressure to adopt innovative strategies to increase competitiveness and become a global player.

The change process

In the past the company could be described as a racist and autocratic organisation with poor communication, no participation from lower levels and polarisation between management and employees.

The decision was made to transform the company and address the past. The 'people transformation' involved the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission of two people from outside the company who met with employees to hear grievances and address the complaints. This was a very difficult and painful exercise as a result of which some senior executives left the company.

The transformation of the business into a more competitive company was the next target, at which point the consultants became involved. The project involved 19 sites from five divisions of the company and the general aim was to improve productivity and profitability through the implementation of 'Best Practices'.

To start the process it was necessary to get the 'buy-in' of all people concerned. This was achieved through efforts to democratise the workplace, through the adoption of Workplace Change Agreements and the implementation of gainsharing systems. Management, union members and non-union employees were brought away on weekend sessions and 'Bosberaads' (Bush Councils) designed to facilitate honest communication between all people concerned. In the ensuing Sensitisation Workshops agreement was sought from all people involved as to the way forward.

After ensuring the inclusivity of the process, the aim was to align business and operational strategies to meet the market requirements, to identify the core values of the company and the key success factors needed to achieve the business strategy. Best Practices were implemented on a number of lines as pilot projects at first and their results evaluated before the changes were extended to other lines. Changes were focused on four areas: the creation of shopfloor teams; the implementation of '5S Housekeeping'; visual performance measurement; and problem-solving for continuous improvement.

To implement these changes, a programme of training and development was adopted to cover all levels of the company from workshops for executives from management and unions, down to shopfloor training of employees by trainers. Task force training involved multidisciplinary groups from all 'pilot' lines, and team leaders and trainers received extra training. The educational process is based on the principles of Action Learning and adopts a wide range of methodologies including group projects, simulations, case studies, experimental learning at a learning site, and industrial theatre.

Dave Sithole gave an overview of the implementation of Best Practices and the training programme for one 'pilot' line at Guestro Wheels. A representative stakeholder forum involving staff and management was formed and a teambuilding weekend allowed team members to build trust and establish ways of working together as equals. The concerns of staff who were uncertain about the intentions of management and the benefits to themselves had to be addressed. The training of shopfloor staff was active and was built around games and workplace exercises designed to relate the learning to the day-to-day work of the individuals concerned. Illiteracy, educational disadvantage and low self-confidence of people used to a very autocratic work environment had all to be taken into account in order to develop the appropriate kind of training. The team designed their own visual boards with the information they want to monitor and show their results in graphs as learnt in Visual Performance Measurement. Progress charts and individual checklists for employees are used to achieve defined targets. The employees now run their own team meetings and set the agenda for the meeting. These changes, and seemingly simple matters, such as the ability to paint the 'pilot' line in a colour of their own choice, increased the workers' sense of ownership and control over the work. Employees learn about the role they play



in the production chain, with the result that absenteeism decreases and more effort and care is put into all their activities. Employees also take an interest in learning extra skills. The results of the changes at the Passenger Pilot line at Guestro Wheels include an increase in efficiency from 60% to 70.5% on average and scrap reduction from 4.5% to 3.4%.

Positive results have also been found at the other 'pilot' projects. In the traditional foundry sector weight processing per day has increased by 37% while overtime has been reduced from 20% to nil. The heavy transport sector reports increases in sales from ZAR43 million (€6.5 million) to ZAR62 million (€9.5 million) and a growth in throughput from 9000 to 13000 tons per month.

Organisational results of the transformation process include the opportunity to win the hearts and minds of everybody in the company and to achieve goals jointly. The company has a more flexible and multiskilled workforce and empowered teams. The industrial relations climate has improved and business scenarios are more positive.

From employee to team member: Organon Teknika

Peter De Haan, Change Co-ordinator, Organon Teknika BV, The Netherlands.

Geert Peulings, Chairman Works Council, Organon Teknika BV, The Netherlands.

The organisation

Organon Teknika is a business unit of the AKZO Nobel Pharma group. The business unit has approximately 2,200 employees worldwide, in 45 countries with national companies or distributors.

The main focus of Organon Teknika is R&D, manufacturing, marketing and sales of healthcare products for hospitals, laboratories and blood banks worldwide. Organon Teknika has a systematic approach, which means that apart from the diagnostic test kits, related equipment, training and services are offered. Muscle relaxants is the other product line.

The market that Organon Teknika serves can best be described as turbulent. The competition is fierce and mergers and/or joint ventures take place frequently. The customers are organising themselves and become more demanding. This is not only reflected in pricing, but also in product specifications.

Approach

The presenters gave an introduction to the changes which the company has experienced. At the outset the company exhibited a functionally organised manufacturing organisation and a 'traditional' structure in terms of centralised decision-taking and power. The culture was in line with the structure and no bottom-up initiatives existed. The planning and communication to control the production process of products needed great effort.

It was decided to restructure the manufacturing organisation by taking the products and their primary processes as a starting point. This parallelisation of the production process would make the organisation more transparent and reduce the need for extensive communication and planning systems. A team-based organisation was considered the most appropriate way to enhance this restructuring.

The presenters gave an overview of the various groups involved in the change process, such as the Works Council composed of employees elected for three years; the Cross Section Group, which analysed all the production activities and procedures across the company; or the ST-Group offering socio-technical support on request.

A questionnaire was used to identify the skills and interests of employees and to gain an overview of the changes employees could make and the training and education that would be needed. The belief that a process of restructuring can only be successful with participation of the involved employees determined the way in which the analysis was handled. The bottom-up approach, with a cross-section of the organisation, in combination with a more quantitative analysis by a project team proved to be a good choice. The in-house analysis was brought in line with organisational prerequisites for team work, by consulting specialists on key issues. The total restructuring proposal was laid down in a blueprint and implementation was planned and the coaches for the teams were appointed.

Implementation

The first critical step in the implementation was the selection of team members. The special care exercised during this process consumed considerable time but reconfirmed the goals and the approach of the management. The implementation was started with three 'spearhead' teams in order to reduce the potential confusion in the organisation, as well as to learn from their start-up. The start-up was evaluated and the remaining part of the organisation started working in teams three months later.

The whole implementation process is guided and controlled by an implementation team. Today this team, consisting of coaches and supporting staff, is still active. Their main task is to facilitate teams and remove obstacles (systems, structures, communications) in order to let the teams concentrate on their specific tasks.

Evaluation

The evaluation is a continuous action on task level. As a result of the changes to multidisciplinary teams, the organisation has become less hierarchical. Employees have gained a greater understanding of the entire production process and their role in it. The redesign of the work organisation has helped cut red tape, saving time and improving communication. Other achievements include a reduction in lead time, greater transparency, greater output flexibility and increased levels of responsibility.



The appointment of coaches/team leaders who had no direct input into the redesign process, was found to ensure objectivity but made it more difficult for the coaches to 'feel' the choices that had been made. An increase in the coaches' knowledge about the organisation and its business processes is crucial for the implementation of the change process and should be taken care of in advance.

The evaluation of the change process justifies the following conclusions.

- A bottom-up approach takes a lot of time in the analysis phase, but saves time in the implementing phase.
- Communication is essential to continuously prove the absence of a 'hidden agenda'.
- Involvement of the Works Council (representing the employees) is necessary to mobilise the employees and develop a partnership.
- To ensure compliance with other business functions and their organisational changes in combination with a complex change, the presence of a Change Coordinator is essential.

Partnership at Raychem Shannon

Joe Lane, Operations Manager, Raychem International, Shannon, Ireland

The organisation

Raychem is a US multinational materials science company with 9000 employees worldwide and an annual revenue of \$1.8 billion (€1.908 billion) in 1998. The plant in Shannon was established in 1979 and employs 300 people. It is a centre for moulding production and technical development and a supplier to large electrical and telecommunications utilities. Its products include insulators, surge arresters, electrical connectors etc.

The change process

The new management team in 1990, realising that business performance needed improvement, determined that involvement of employees and small work teams would be the key to making the necessary changes.

In the light of previous experience, the workforce was sceptical of this change in management attitude. After years of conflicting signals from management, with a lack of management control and a lack of direction for the plants, they suspected a hidden agenda, and were concerned with the effects of the change proposal on income and on their power of veto through the conflictual approach.

The core principles of the competitive weapon strategy were total quality, total involvement, management by facts, health and safety, and clarity of objectives. In detail, these included changes in the structure of the organisation of the production process, which involved greater employee flexibility. To achieve this, the employees had to be educated on the reasons for change and the need to remain competitive. This was done through more effective communications, building

quality and better house-keeping into the system, and greater employee involvement in all aspects of the process. As regards external relations, Raychem also set up partnerships with its suppliers and customers, developed information systems to feed-back into the production process and 'continuous flow' manufacturing.

In September 1992 a survey of the existing communication structures was carried out, highlighting frustrations caused by insufficient structure to meetings, failure to make decisions, management domination of meeting agenda, lack of trust. Summarising employee relations, it became evident that there was little decision-making, constant conflict, failure to implement business improvements, frustration, confusion and no trust.

In agreement between employees and management a steering committee was formed, with the full involvement of the plant, which was to work together with consultants. Considerable investment was made in training and benchmarking, in developing individuals' knowledge and allowing trust to grow. The new structure designed by the committee over nine months was accepted by 95% of employees in a ballot.

A Communications Council was set up with the objective of improving and developing a unique culture for Raychem Shannon, to provide a forum for consultation, involvement and negotiation that would contribute to the success of the company and its employees, and to provide a central negotiation forum for all substantive issues at the plant. The Communications Council meets monthly with representatives from the various shifts and departments and decision-making is by consensus. Employees have an input into the agenda, which covers all major relevant issues. The representatives meet a week in advance for preparation and brief the employees the day after the meeting. So far the partnership has dealt with issues such as the complete reorganisation of the plant purpose; redundancies, outsourcing; shift arrangements; introduction of new technology; multiskilling; gainsharing; work organisation flexibility; team building; pay and benefits; and cost reduction.

Partnership at Raychem has grown in seven years to include a range of involvement arrangements, including team-working; better communication (through the Communication Council); trustees on the pension fund; benchmarking committee; a safety representative; and a representative on the European Works Council. The role of the Strategic Council which is core to the process, includes responsibility for training, communications and team development, technology, grievance handling, customer service and business development and growth.

As a result of the restructuring of the plant into a team-based structure, the company reports significant improvements in business performance and the resolution of major industrial relations and employee issues. In terms of quantifiable changes, costs have been reduced by 10% per annum and customer complaints have gone down by 50%. In terms of the workforce, the key changes have been in the organisation of work around self-organised teams; equality of pay; rewards linked to the performance of the individual and the team; and investment in training and education. These changes, however, have had to recognise that not everyone wants to be



‘involved’ and that the reservations of the traditionalists (old timers) must be accommodated in the new arrangements. Some of the issues confronting the plant now and which must be addressed in the future include: to what extent will Raychem be capable of retaining developed employees; how should they deal with the time constraints; how can decision-making at Council level be extended, and, most important, will teamwork have delivered significant improvements in twelve months time?

Leadership and cooperation at VISHAY Vöcklabruck

Egon Binder, Works Council, VISHAY GmbH, Vöcklabruck, Austria.

Andreas Steurer, Senior Manager Human Resources, VISHAY GmbH, Vöcklabruck.

The organisation

VISHAY Semiconductor GmbH produce various forms of transistors and SMD Diodes for a broad range of applications. The company’s customers include firms such as Philips, Siemens and Bang & Olufsen.

The change process

In 1998 the senior management decided to reanimate the discussion about ‘Leadership and Cooperation’ in the company. Workshops were held with all members of management and coaches were selected and trained for each department. A survey was carried out among employees which covered issues such as decision-making, provision of information, the definition of authority, employee perceptions of management, and the handling of mistakes and conflict within the company. The findings of this survey, together with the up-dated brochure on ‘Leadership and Cooperation’, provided the framework for employee workshops. The results of the workshops were discussed in joint meetings between management and the workforce and were transformed into ‘wish lists’ and guidelines for change.

The six main guidelines are:

- We - the management - want to set examples.
- We want to strengthen the cooperation with our employees.
- We want to increase communication in our company.
- We delegate responsibility to our employees.
- We motivate our employees.
- We promote our employees.

During the workshops representatives of management and employees were asked to explore what the guidelines mean for them in their day-to-day work and how they can be used to improve some of the failings identified in the survey. It was emphasised that it is the joint task of management and workforce to recognise the weaknesses as a necessity for change, to maintain and build on the strengths and to learn from one another. Both sides have to exchange suggestions and expectations to identify shared goals.

Among the problems discussed in the workshops for management were a lack of willingness of departments to cooperate with one another; the inadequate provision of information by management to employees; insufficient initiation and support for new staff members; and the lack of involvement by people in the decisions directly affecting them. It was suggested, among other things, that management practices had to be reconsidered based on the feedback from employees, that cooperation between departments should be strengthened through better information and mutual visits and that employees should be informed on a monthly basis on the company's results.

Some of the suggestions from employees that arose in the workshops were:

- Introduction of a time for meetings at the change of shifts;
- Provision of important information to all staff, in writing;
- Standardisation of overtime arrangements across the entire company;
- Provision of more training options;
- More frequent expression of verbal appreciation by management and supervisors;
- Greater encouragement of constructive criticism and initiatives by staff.

Out of the discussion between management and staff the following results emerged and actions agreed on:

- Employees are informed every half year on the production costs of all products;
- Motivation is to be fostered through small signs of appreciation (group parties);
- Work-related training to be increased significantly in certain departments;
- Mutual visits of different work departments to be arranged;
- The tasks and functions of operators to be expanded as far as possible;
- One production team has already set up its own newsletter.

A repeat survey was undertaken and this showed that employees' satisfaction with their job and their superiors has increased by 16% to 18 % respectively as a result of the process.

Group work in a new organisation: Theo Wellen GmbH & Co. KG.

Wolfgang Kötter, Consultant, GITTA, Berlin, Germany.

Kirsten Osterspey, Organisational Development, Theo Wellen GmbH & Co. KG, Krefeld, Germany.

The organisation

Theo Wellen GmbH & Co. KG is a family business founded in 1894 which produces instant puddings, desserts, and baking ingredients. The company employs approximately 190 employees and the annual turnover in 1998 was DM67 million (€34 million). The business finds itself in a highly competitive market for foodstuff with increasing pressure on prices and costs. Since 1980 the company has increased its percentage of export from 2% to 18% of turnover.



The company employs a high number of unskilled and semiskilled staff, eighty percent of whom are female. The workforce consists of up to 15 different nationalities and company loyalty among the female staff is high.

The change process

Management increasingly recognised that the company will only survive if it is possible to find ways of working which extend the times of production in a cost-effective way, and if it is possible to involve the workforce in a significant way, to cope with the dynamic changes in the market. With the motivation to increase the company's ability to respond in a flexible way to the changing patterns of demand, senior management began to prioritise issues of work organisation and of participative personnel management policies.

Under the 'Ramona' project (short form for Framework Conditions and Modulation of New Working Structures), funded by the Federal Government and designed to illuminate the processes of 'cultural transformation', the company introduced team-based production, established a systematic up-skilling programme for employees and designed flexible working time systems to compensate for fluctuations in the production.

Team-based work structures were seen as beneficial, due to the growth of the company and the increasing complexity of production processes for new products. Team work requires that employees think in an entrepreneurial way and understand the business as a whole and their part within it.

The transformation process was started in October, 1995, with the preparation of a pilot team which started working in early 1996. Three further teams were started very gradually in 1997 and 1998. The pilot stage lasted relatively long and prepared many important discussions for the collective bargaining process, starting in autumn, 1996. The training programme was launched in 1997. In the same year, process management was introduced and success parameters and indicators for team work and other business processes were adopted. The introduction of team-based production was overseen by a steering committee representing all departments, management and the workforce which met at intervals of six weeks to prepare the project's milestones and to discuss the proposals originating within the work groups.

The fears and worries of management were explored with the assistance from consultants. This is particularly important in a family business where people cannot easily be replaced due to commitments that go beyond mere work contracts. The concerns of the staff involved were ascertained through a survey, showing among other things dissatisfaction with the increase in workload which had not been anticipated. The pilot phase was not a smooth process, as training needs had to be met under pressure and the high number of casual workers made team-building more difficult. The women workers themselves, however, managed to draw up a model of working time that was accepted by management and proved to be very successful.

The groups consist of approximately 20 people, covering both the late and early shifts. Each shift selects its own spokesperson and once every one or two weeks the entire group meets. The team consists of set-up staff, technical support staff, coaches, planners and quality control staff. The duties of the team include initiating casual workers, keeping the work environment clean, sporadically conducting quality control checks, and providing technical assistance for the resetting of machines. Twice yearly surveys are carried out to identify what areas of work employees are interested in and what training they want to pursue. The new work organisation structure has elevated the role of the people involved in production vis-à-vis the service departments (dominated by men) which has had a considerable positive effect on the self-confidence of the female workforce. Production teams also relate to a process monitoring group which assists with the organisational changes and addresses problems arising for groups and individuals, and to a 'SOS'-team which offers advice as difficulties arise.

In relation to the collective bargaining process, some of the problems identified included the high number of casual workers and the rigid system of early and late working shifts. The new collective agreement set up a new payment structure according to qualification criteria, allowing more staff members to move into a higher pay bracket following completion of agreed training programmes. The agreement also provided for more flexible working hours and new shift models. In addition, time accounts were created for each member of staff which can be 'filled' or 'emptied' according to their own wishes and which thereby allow for considerable flexibility in relation to overtime and leave.

The training programmes allow every machinist to attend up to four different training modules. Wages are increased by 1% upon successful participation in quality control training, by 1.5% for flexibility and planning training, and by 2.5% for qualifications in technical support. If through this up-skilling the sum of 4.5% is reached the person enters the next higher pay bracket. Further technology training to become a set-up expert or coach is available at that higher level, with attached pay increases of 3%. All training is carried out internally by colleagues for colleagues, which has improved the level of understanding between departments.

The results of the company transformation include improvements in product quality due to increased quality awareness and business understanding among employees. The workforce has become more highly skilled and understanding between the departments has improved. Work processes have improved and down time has been reduced. Employment levels have increased by 45 people since the start of the project. Management has become more process-oriented and more foresighted in its important business decisions.

As a new step, the company is involved in a project on optimised production called Top 2000 which involves an alliance of three SMEs without government subsidisation. This is seen as a very important development in overcoming the difficulties of smaller companies in accessing resources for transformation projects.



A decade of organisational renewal at Stork PMT, Boxmeer

Frans Van Eijnatten, Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands.

Theo Hoen, Stork PMT, Boxmeer, The Netherlands.

The organisation

Stork Poultry processing Machinery and Technology (PMT) employs 450 people and has a market share of 60%. It is part of the Stork Group which operates worldwide. The company develops, produces and installs equipment for the poultry processing industry, ranging from a single machine to a complete processing plant.

The change process - theoretical background

At Stork PMT, the Dutch sociotechnical approach of Integral Organisational Renewal is being used. According to Mr van Eijnatten, it is a cybernetic, open-systems approach that provides a sociotechnical basis for the design of business processes, organisational structures and human work, in order to create a 'dynamically balanced production function'. The approach takes as its starting point the architecture of the actual division of labour. Modern sociotechnical design theory is being used in order to transform this architecture. A participative redesign strategy called Self-Design by Knowledge Transfer is adopted as part of Integral Organisation Renewal. The result of a typical Integral Organisational Renewal implementation process is a flat organisation, based on self-managed and decentralised teams.

During the session an overview was given of the approaches taken under Integral Organisational Renewal, including, among other things, changes to the performance structures and the control structures of the company; the parallelisation of product order flows; the introduction of self-managed teams; and the adoption of the 'Self-Design by Knowledge Transfer' Strategy, to encourage participation and learning.

The presenters also gave an introduction to complexity theory and 'chaordic systems thinking' which underlies their approach to organisational renewal and offers a novel way to look at an organisation as a non-linear, dynamic, complex whole-entity.

The change process - historic overview

In the 1980s, Stork PMT was suffering from a number of problems, including long throughput times; low product quality and low workforce motivation. Organisational renewal started in 1988 with a pilot project to test the self-managed team concept in a factory in Dongen. Two years later, following the parallelisation of product order flows, self-managed teams were implemented in Parts Production in Boxmeer and introduced to other departments in 1992.

At the beginning of the 1990s in Parts Production, multidisciplinary staff groups were formed in which planning, stock control, maintenance and so on were grouped to form self-managed teams. The implementation of self-managed teams was a very intensive process. Workers were trained to

execute multiple tasks and roles and were taught different technical, social and administrative skills. In 1993, 'star roles' were defined in Production in order to improve quality. Star roles are temporary responsibilities of selected team members to coordinate and communicate information about problems and improvements concerning specific aspects between teams.

In order to improve quality, performance indicators were developed by the team members themselves, using ProMES (Productivity Measurement and Enhancement System). Each team got its own budget, and an annual prize was introduced for the team that performed best on these performance indicators. At a later stage, management started to think about company-wide performance indicators in order to improve coordination between self-managed teams. However, this proved to be a difficult objective and a feasibility study was inconclusive.

In 1994, the TKK (Dutch acronym for Time, Quality and Costs) project was initiated to improve office work. The idea was to transform the administrative organisation from a functional one to one which is process-oriented. In 1996 Stork PMT started to create parallel development teams which are multidisciplinary product creation teams, consisting of a small core team, that stays for the whole project, and a peripheral group of temporary team members. Due to their success, parallel development teams were set up for each new product creation project. A series of company-wide dialogue sessions were arranged in order to develop an 'organisational mind-set', to stimulate deliberations about common problems and to start developing integral solutions. The development of strategic management indicators was initiated and mission statements were both articulated and communicated throughout the organisation.

In 1998, four projects were carried out to improve specific performances within the company and lately Stork PMT has started a dedicated knowledge-management project.

Stork PMT reports a number of improvements in company performance, such as a 65% reduction in throughput times and a 50% reduction in costs associated with poor quality of products. The company also reports a significantly improved market position, increased controllability of business processes, very low turnover of personnel (less than 5%), and improved quality of quotation and order specification.

A main characteristic of the ten years of organisational renewal is that the company never copied exactly any standard approach but spent significant amounts of time discussing all details of the contents, processing and phasing of change and looking into the desirability of the intended overall effects first. Large amounts of money were invested in additional training of personnel and many meetings were organised off-site and measures were taken to guarantee equal opportunities for all personnel to participate.

Another main characteristic of the transformation process is that change was always incremental. Although renewal measures were carefully planned there was no overall master plan to change the whole company. Instead every next move was very much dependent on the readiness of the workers and the development of the new 'organisational mind-set'.



An *ad hoc* or anticipative approach to change was adopted whereby the management was only pointing in the direction where the company should go without following a single master plan for long-term strategic development. In order to move in the desired direction, only one single action was selected and discussed, implemented and evaluated at a time. Therefore, the path of organisational renewal was far from 'straightforward' but followed all sorts of detours!

Union-management redesign of the packaging line: Labatt Breweries

Alan Fernandes, Brewery Manager, Labatt Breweries of Canada.

Charlie Flynn, Union Plant Chairperson, Labatt Breweries of Canada.

Jim Rankin, Partner, The Effectiveness Edge, Ontario, Canada.

The organisation

Labatt Brewing Company is a privately-owned organisation consisting of eight breweries operating across Canada. It has been in existence for more than 150 years and is Canada's largest brewer with approximately 45% market share. In the province of Ontario, beer is brewed, packaged and shipped from breweries in London and Toronto. The packaging operation involves bottling and packaging the beer prior to shipment.

Before 1997, the brewery in Toronto had a history of failed capital initiatives and, at the outset of the change process, the very survival of the plant was at stake. The brewery also had a history of very adversarial union-management relations with a high level of mistrust between the two sides.

The change process

In 1997 an opportunity for capital investment emerged that would result in fewer jobs due to new technology but no permanent job loss. If approached by union and management as a win-win situation, it would strengthen the viability of the plant. As a change of management in 1996 had allowed for a less confrontational situation to emerge, the decision was made by union and management to move forward and to embark on a joint design of an implementation plan. The preconditions for the plan were a capital investment of CDN\$7.5m (€4.6 million) and a reduction of the number of people working on the packaging lines from 56 to 28.

There was a risk that the project would fail due to lack of support from union members and that such failure could lead to eventual plant closure.

The work redesign process involved several groups.

- The Steering Group, which established the framework for the redesign, approved the final design and was given authority to resolve issues at the implementation stage.
- The Planning Group, which generated alternative designs.

- The Design Group, which reviewed the proposed designs and made recommendations to the Steering Group concerning the final design. As it was crucial that the Design Group reflected the thinking of everybody in the company, the group of 13 people was composed of management representatives and union members as well as non-union employees. It was also the job of the Design Group to identify and resolve design implications. This meant defining tasks, knowledge and skills for each position and developing a plan to close any gaps in knowledge skills and authorities. All along it was important to find a participative design and to collect input from all other stakeholders in the company.
- The Staging Group.
- The Benchmarking Group, whose members visited other Labatt plants to compare and identify 'Best Practices' elsewhere.
- The Installation Groups, which worked on the technical aspects of the project, allowing members of the Benchmarking Group to work alongside engineers.
- The Communication Group, which provided timely and accurate information on the redesign process, using tools such as videos, presentations, and computers, and assembling all relevant information in one particular room to allow everyone in the company access to the information. As in the past, the company had negative experiences in relation to poor communication, mistrust and fear of hidden agendas, the establishment of this Communication Group was crucial in order to create a 'rumour-free environment' and to address people's concerns as much as possible.

Several principles were underlying the process of work redesign.

1. The design must include both lines running on continuous operation.
2. The design must not have a negative impact.
3. Job expectations have to be realistic.
4. The design is open.
5. Opportunities for job rotation are to be created.
6. Accountability and authority must be maximised.
7. Responsibilities are open to change.
8. An internal customer focus is to be fostered.

Looking at the highs and lows of the redesign process, it is clear that the design group faced a very difficult task in having to involve over 100 employees and to respond to all their concerns. Despite the serious difficulties with finding an appropriate work design and the considerable pressure on the members of the design group from their peers, the design group managed to stay together throughout the process. The experience was described as 'an emotional roller coaster'. This was particularly so as the introduction of changes in the work design coincided with a particularly good weather period requiring weekend brewing - summer months always being the peak time in the brewing business. This meant that the necessary training for the implementation of the work redesign had to be addressed within a much shorter time frame than had been originally intended.



In terms of the current situation, the redesign has contributed to the development of skills and growing confidence among the workforce and has created new relationships among people and between departments within the company. The work design is still changing and is still frustrated by attempts to balance the work load with the change process.

Subsequent to the initial redesign process, a joint approach was again adopted to secure funding for further investment in new equipment. Everyone in the company was aware of the project before the idea was presented to senior management, the proposal was submitted by a joint union/management group and, when approved, the budget was also managed jointly.

Looking to the future, continuous redesign will be necessary to deal with new equipment as there are plans for more capital investment to strengthen the survival and growth of the company. The role of the Design Group will continue to be re-evaluated and joint running of day-to-day operations by union and management is envisaged. Attention will have to be paid, however, to concerns arising from the stresses and strains on people as productivity increases.

One of the lessons learned as a result of the redesign process was that the building and nurturing of trust was the cornerstone of success. Therefore, it was essential that commitments were met, that communication was clear and honest and that ground rules for partnership were established.

Unravelling the spaghetti: Esso Chemicals

Chris Doyle, Associate Director, Work Structuring Ltd.

Alan Randall, OD Manager, Esso Chemicals Ltd., Southampton, UK

Esso Chemicals contacted the consultancy firm, Work Structuring Ltd., in order to strengthen its organisation. Looking at the organisation of the company, it was suggested that it looked 'like a bowl of spaghetti'. The objective was to restructure the organisation in such a way as to make it clear for everyone in the company who was in charge of what. The spaghetti had to be unravelled!!

Work Structuring Ltd offers a whole-system methodology, which builds an enabling organisational structure on the key tasks in the key work processes necessary to achieve the organisation's core purpose. The approach is based on a philosophy of work derived by Christian Schumacher.

Schumacher's seven principles of work organisation are:

1. Work should be organised around the Basic Transformations in the process to form Whole Tasks.
2. The basic organisational unit should be the primary work group.
3. Each workgroup should have a designated leader.
4. Each workgroup and its leader should, as far as possible plan and organise its own work.

5. Each workgroup should be able to fully evaluate its performance against standards of excellence.
6. Jobs should be structured so that workgroup members can personally plan, do and evaluate at least one transformation in the process.
7. Personal and structural conditions that encourage team working and participation throughout the organisation should be established.

Attention has to be paid to the barriers to motivation, which are often related to a lack of understanding and application of reward, and to the structural barriers which hinder the translation of an individual's efforts into performance.

The approach focuses on the work process in any organisation and the different levels of change which constitute this work process. It identifies the whole tasks within the company's basic processes and constructs workgroups with the appropriate resources to plan, implement and evaluate their whole task. The workgroups become task-oriented rather than traditional skill based. As far as possible skills are shared rather than being jealously guarded.

In the case of Esso, the restructuring approach is believed to have contributed to 'hard-nosed' efficiency and accountability savings and to have had a beneficial impact. It has enabled the improvement of the whole system, while eliminating a lot of confusion. The effect of the new organisation and the clearer definition of areas of responsibility is hard to measure; however, the presenters estimate that improved communication has increased employee motivation, which in turn has contributed to a 20% increase in competitiveness. The results will continue to be evaluated, as the restructuring process is still ongoing and will not end until 2003, after eight years of implementing change.

Some of the lessons learned at Esso include the recognition of the importance of local ownership for handling uniqueness and challenges; that the maximum possible degree of participation allowed by the local culture is important to avoid resistance to the changes - cultural factors and impacts cannot be ignored. In relation to communication in situations of crisis, it has also been learned that employees need to be told clearly what the problem is and what will be done about it, rather than having information withheld from them.

Participative redesign: action research into the strategic restructuring of a plant

Leopold S. Vansina, Professional Development Institute, Korbeek, Belgium.

The organisation

The company under study was founded in 1897 and transformed into an enzyme manufacturing company in 1968. Due to economic difficulties and unsuccessful attempts to introduce new products in the mid-1980s, the company engaged in restructuring and downsizing in 1989. Also in the early 1990s, a new Human Resource Manager and General Manager was appointed.

The Action Research

The presenter outlined the purpose of the study:

- that people are able to face the realities of the situation they are in, no matter how painful these may be;
- that people are willing and able to search for and to implement courses of action;
- that there are many human ways to restructure organisations under unfavourable conditions.

The role of the presenter, who acted as a change agent, was to help the company redesign itself to achieve an agreed strategy and to learn from the ways of working together to improve performance. Collaboration with the people concerned was to be the cornerstone of the redesign efforts, which took place in three phases.

During Phase I an analysis was undertaken of the plant in relation to its business units, customers and the competition; and, most importantly, organisational characteristics to be realised were identified. Three different scenarios for organisational design were explored.

During Phase II, the main task was to engage the employees in redesigning the operations. Sixteen employees, including some union representatives, were asked to volunteer and two study groups were set up to design a dedicated line and a multipurpose line. Three other study groups were formed to integrate support activities in the primary process so that the production teams could become self-regulating operators; to re-think the logistics, and to bring together engineers, operators and maintenance staff. The task was to design a work system that would guarantee that the installations are always in operating conditions. The new system should lead to a reduction in total costs, guarantee reliability of quality and service and improve the flexibility through the reduction of shutdowns and turn-around time. To achieve these objectives it was important to make an inventory of recurrent maintenance tasks and review their assignment to employees, to explore training needs and time needed for the transfer, to make an estimation of the required personnel in maintenance and engineering, and to discuss and describe the new ways of working together.

Phase III saw a change in ownership and the implementation of the redesign. The 'blueprint' was completed in June, 1995, outlining the following adjustments:

- reduction of the product range;
- cessation of R & D activities;
- reduction of employees in production team by two;
- introduction of 'ring teams';
- capital investment in new technology.

The internal consultant was removed from the scene. The green light for the implementation of the redesign was given, following a discussion of the psychological consequences of the changes, the formulation of redundancy criteria and the establishment of new work relations. Human Relations Management designed a social plan and negotiated an agreement with the Works Council. The reduction of personnel increased from the original proposal of 40% to 50% as a result of the redesign.

The change process was consistent with the principles of A. Pettigrew, who highlights the importance of the following features:

- Invitation to participate in an intensive way;
- Integration of strategic and operational objectives;
- Composition of inclusive teams;
- Continuity of commitment from the top;
- Operational performance indicators.

The action research showed that participation is possible even with a conflict of interests. It may be more accurate to talk about collaborative redesign, since different interest groups are involved. Collaborative redesign is not a technique but an approach. It is, at the same time, a form of action learning.



Designing and launching self-directed work teams using Whole-ScaleTM

Paul Tolchinsky, Dannemiller Tyson Associates, Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

Jim McNeil, Dannemiller Tyson Associates, formerly United Auto Workers Union (UAW), USA.

The organisation

Tower Automotive is the supplier of Ford Cars. The company has US\$2 billion (€2.12 billion) revenue and is growing considerably through acquisition. The company has two assembly lines and employs a workforce of 350 workers, 100 technical engineers and support staff. UAW was ratified as the local union at the time of acquisition.

Difficulties at the outset of the change process included a complex rotating work schedule and, as a result, low morale and high absenteeism. The production schedule was very heavy, with workers on 10-11 hour shifts, seven days a week. There were huge overtime requirements due to rotating shifts.

The change process

During this session the presenters illustrated the use of Whole-ScaleTM methodology using Tower Automotive as a case example. In less than nine months the automobile frame assembly facility was able to design and launch a work system based on self-directed work teams.

The following principles of Whole-ScaleTM change were presented:

- purpose drives the choices we make;
- whole system involvement and analysis;
- egalitarian spirit;
- ownership and commitment come from involvement;
- value the past and the present as we create the future.

The DVF (Dissatisfaction, Vision and First Steps) model, which is part of the Dannemiller Tyson approach, was outlined. The level of dissatisfaction in an organisation must be understood and it is crucial that there is a vision and shared understanding of what it is that the organisation is trying to achieve. Similarly there needs to be a shared understanding of the actions and first steps to be taken. If these conditions are met, people's resistance will be less and good reason to move forward will exist.

The Whole-ScaleTM approach incorporated real time strategic change, work design, organisation design and customer change. Whole system change involves all people in the plant, by creating teams throughout the whole organisation for all shifts and all crews. All 350 people were brought together for one day. Smaller scale interventions were, however, made necessary by production

requirements, challenging the company to reinvent itself while it could not afford to lose one minute in production.

A leadership Steering Committee was formed which included the business unit leader, local union president and his officers. Work was carried out with each of the groups involved, about their expectations of the process in order to build trust and identify mutual interests. Union members, for example, had very high expectations about the results that UAW could achieve in this change process. The Steering Committee worked with the union group and the management group, working out priorities together. The plant manager is on the Steering Committee and has been very supportive of the process.

After visiting four sites to study other methods, the design team created six designs. To improve communications, 'Open House' meetings were set up and run by the Design Team without the involvement of management, for workers to be able to come along and ask questions. A mail box for suggestions from workers and a design team board with 'road map' and bulletins were also organised.

A finalised plan was then devised, with the Design Team being very firm about team goals and responsibilities and about training. A second Design Team was set up whose sole focus was to study how to implement the designs. Sixteen people from production were chosen by their colleagues from eight areas, one from the night shift, one from the day shift. Their brief was to recommend one design out of a choice of six to the Steering Committee. The consultants had to assist the Design Team in working out roles and strengths within the team. 'Viper Simulation' was utilised to show what a team might look like and everyone from the plant was invited to witness and/or participate in this process. This team created a vision 'The Tower Croydon Story' and sent that message out to people. This vision for Tower Croydon's self-directed work teams envisages appropriate training, open and direct communication, a safe, clean and friendly work environment, respect, positive attitudes and fun among colleagues as attributes of an organisation where empowered employees maintain the highest possible production standards.

A project tracker was appointed to act as a liaison to make sure that all projects, such as continuous work improvement, ran smoothly. The Steering Committee also made a decision to create a new position of Training Tabs Coordinator, one on the day shift and one on the night shift, to monitor attendance at meetings.

The Implementation Team was a new group formed for the implementation of the final design. It consists of representatives from the Design Team, Steering Committee members, the Training Tabs Coordinators and company trainer.

It was agreed that there would be four stages for the implementation team:

- create a Pioneer team;
- provide a Pioneer team guide book for all plant workers;



- create a training design with defined measures;
- contract training vendors to implement training.

The system change resulted in a shift in the role of the team leader, as well as an expansion of the work scope for individual team members and the teams as a whole. All team members, therefore, received 40 hours of training, while the team leader, elected by the team, received 80 hours of training.

The first team was launched late March-early April, 1999. Pressure is now coming from the teams to begin the next step in the process. No results on performance and production are known as yet, but a follow-up will be carried out by the consultants during June, 1999.

Whole-ScaleTM methodology places great emphasis on involving the whole system, in this case 350 people, and on working with a cross-section group representative of the whole. Therefore, the consultants would normally have involved everyone at the Planned Communication stage and would have left design choice to the entire plant, and the 'open houses' would have been whole-system decision meetings, making sure that everybody receives the same information at the same time. However, in Tower Automotive the methodology had to be adapted to a situation where large group meetings were not possible, due to production demands.



Chapter 7

Application Sessions

New forms of work organisation: case studies

Richard Meads, Director, Business Decisions Limited, UK.

This session was based on the recent report by Business Decisions for the European Commission DG V ('New Forms of Work Organisation: Case Studies'). The report used detailed evidence from 30 case studies in 12 different European countries to illustrate changes in work organisation and identify best practices and benefits.

Case studies reflected a wide variety of organisations in terms of sector, company size, public and private ownership, level of growth or maturity, involvement in local and global markets and so on, showing that high performance work systems can be used in all kinds of companies.

The report identified three main drivers of change:

1. Opportunities and crises, such as new market opportunities, and changes in competition;
2. Pressures from the business environment, e.g. demand maturity, deregulation;
3. Internal problems, such as seasonal demand or high capital intensity.

Added to these should be the personal motivation and attitude of particular leaders in organisations. In most cases a mix of different pressures provides the impetus for change.

In terms of strategic goals a wide variety of objectives were identified, contradicting the assertion that new forms of work organisation are mainly used to reduce costs.

Some of the strategic goals are:

- benefits from new technologies;
- quality management;
- improved customer responsiveness;
- re-engineering of public services;
- improved operating efficiency;
- improved innovation.

In relation to the main changes in work organisation, the report clearly shows that there is no single model or right way that would apply to all companies, but that it is a 'system' which reflects the organisation's strategy, competitive position and existing approach.

Seven main areas of change were highlighted.

1. **New organisational structures:** Changes include a shift to more market or process-oriented structures, the introduction of semi-autonomous work groups and a reduction in the number of functions or in layers of management.
2. **New working methods:** The overall theme, in terms of new working methods, is flexibility, as seen in the introduction of more flexible hours, less hierarchical structures and more opportunities for multiskilling and job rotation.
3. **New business practices:** Quality management programmes, continuous improvement, outsourcing and 'lean manufacturing' are among the new business practices adopted.
4. **New corporate cultures:** This refers to a stronger focus on customers, service and quality as well as to the adoption of a strong people orientation with emphasis being placed on trust, participation, accountability, communication, creativity etc.
5. **Education and training:** The case studies show an increased level of investment in training, wider participation in education and a more systematic approach to training. The focus of training often shifts away from purely technical skills to different skills, such as team-working or problem-solving.
6. **New performance measurement:** Changes are introduced in relation to what and who is being measured, in terms of both financial and non-financial measures. Objectives for teams and individuals are clarified and open information systems are used.
7. **New reward systems:** Greater emphasis is being placed on performance of the business as a whole, of teams or of individuals, and some companies adopt new reward systems, such as profit sharing, bonuses or share schemes.

In looking at 'Best Practices' which contribute to successful change, the report highlights a number of factors in the change process. These are staff involvement, leadership, a clear vision, communication, partnership with trade unions, step-by-step approaches, and feedback from employees.



A number of benefits derived from the changes in work organisation were identified in the report.

From the company's perspective these include:

- Improved innovation - products, services and processes;
- Increased operation efficiency;
- Greater ability to adapt to change;
- Improved customer satisfaction;
- Substantial sales growth;
- Financial performance turned around;
- Expansion into new markets.

From the perspective of employees, other benefits were:

- Enhanced job satisfaction;
- Improved employability;
- Protection of existing jobs;
- Creation of new jobs.

However, as the companies selected for this report represented 'success stories' in relation to changes in work organisation, it may be useful to study in greater depth the organisations where attempts at change have failed. It was also pointed out that there is a scarcity of data on company performance and employee views about changes in work organisation, which contribute to uncertainty about the benefits of embarking on such change projects.

Regarding the barriers to change encountered by the organisations in this report, mention was made of lack of awareness among both staff and management as to the benefits of new forms of work organisation, the continuing emphasis on more traditional ways of management in management schools, as well as the lack of funds for training projects in smaller companies.

In conclusion, it was stressed that while there is no single format or model for change, there is a revolution underway in work organisation, with a clear shift away from scientific management and that this change is happening in all sectors, company types and countries.

Large-group, direct participation in transformation in geographically dispersed service organisations

Kevin Boyle, Boyle & Associates Inc., Oregon, USA.

Garrett Sheridan, Boyle & Associates Inc., Oregon, USA.

This application session looked at the model used by the consultants in planning and implementing transformation in geographically dispersed service organisations, based on the consultants' recent experience of working with Telecom Éireann.

The presenters began by outlining the challenges faced in such a transformation process, including the need:

- to create a 'Partnership' process that could support the change within union and management organisations across a diverse market and geography;
- to build Partnership understanding of market and environmental changes and their implications;
- to engage local knowledge in rethinking roles and expectations in both company and trade unions;
- to create line-of-sight between people's daily work and value creation.

The presenters outlined a four-phase approach to the transformation process. The first phase is devoted to the development of Partnership through large-group leadership and alignment conferences. The leadership alignment conference is designed to build an understanding of the Partnership process and to begin identifying shared values and goals. Methods include an environmental scan where drivers for change are identified, a discussion of management's and trade union's understanding of the need for Partnership and an exploration of the shared history and relationships within the organisation. Workshops are used to define the desired outcomes from Partnership, to clarify roles and responsibilities for working in Partnership and to identify the support required to move forward with the Partnership. In a leadership expectation workshop the participants are facilitated to engage in a real debate about management's expectations of trade unions and trade union expectations of management. At that stage, action plans can be made and commitments entered into on the next steps and on communication procedures.

During the second and third phases the consultants facilitate direct participation conferences to engage all staff and focus on the development of 'value trees' whereby the factors creating value in the business are identified. The value trees are looked at in terms of factors driving revenue as well as factors contributing to customer satisfaction, the satisfaction of staff and of external stakeholders. The development of such value trees helps to measure performance and to identify those factors that are creating value in all trees and should therefore be employed as targets. It also helps individual employees to better understand the business and their part in it. At the Direct



Participation Conferences the analysis of the value trees feeds into an exploration of the business strategy. Employees are invited to ‘make the link’ between their daily activities and value creation in the company.

The Direct Participation principles that were agreed upon include the following:

- Employees have the skills, knowledge, experience and ability to participate in making decisions that directly influence the success of the organisation.
- Change is so rapid that organisations need more, not less, face-to-face interaction so that more people can be involved in responding to change.
- Bringing a large number of people with knowledge of the whole system together to develop plans for whole system change will counteract the forces of segmentation and alienation, caused by complex, geographically dispersed and dynamic work environments.
- Successful strategies for making fundamental improvements and achieving better results come from envisioning preferred futures. Problem-solving of old dilemmas does not work under fast-changing conditions.

The final phase involves the integration of key learnings into ongoing Partnership work and business planning. Some of the key learnings identified in the process include the following:

- Establish structures and processes to support Partnership as a foundation for change;
- Ensure both union and management organisations are structured to support Partnership;
- Manage potential ‘identity loss’ experienced in Partnership on an ongoing basis;
- Build leadership clarity on key objectives for both organisations, up-front;
- Facilitate Direct Participation conferences in Partnership (i.e. facilitation shared by local leaders from both union and management organisations);
- Use local knowledge to build value creation trees and synthesise key learnings across geographical locations;
- Customise Direct Participation conferences to meet local needs;
- Support the process with facilitation training and build facilitation and Partnership skills in both organisations.

During this session, participants were invited to take part in action exercises which are used in the various stages of the large-group participation process. Participants engaged in a brainstorming session on management and trade union goals, to illustrate the process of identifying values and goals that can be shared. Participants also developed a value tree for a virtual company in the hotel/leisure business which illustrated the usefulness of this tool in creating business understanding and identifying critical factors and targets for the business.

Participative management... how not to do it!

Laurence M. Olivo, Olivo Legal Training and Services, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The organisation

In this application session the presenter analysed a failed attempt to introduce participative management in a large public college in Ontario, Canada. The college was established in 1967 as part of a policy to set up Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in centres across Ontario, which were to offer a third-level educational alternative to university or to entering the employment market directly.

Previously only two or three public vocational colleges existed in the province and there was no existing tradition or pool of educators experienced in this type of system to draw upon. Many of the managers were recruited from secondary schools and brought with them a hierarchical, conservative management culture. Collective agreements were negotiated on the basis of a similarly conservative industrial model.

With the expansion of the college and its drift towards a more impersonal and bureaucratic organisation, conflict between faculty staff and management increased. Consultant reports from the late 1980s showed staff dissatisfaction due to insufficient input into decision-making, a remote management style and formalised top-down communication. The faculty members complained about lack of control over the curriculum and programmes. The dissatisfaction became evident in two system-wide faculty strikes.

The change process

In 1990 the election of a social democratic government in Ontario, favouring labour/employee participation in public institutions, contributed to an environment conducive to attempts at participative management. Other factors in the start of the change process were the appointment of a new President and the increasing concern of the Board of Governors that top-down management culture inhibited the development of the institution.

In 1992, the President set up a strategic planning committee (composed of representatives from key employee groups, outside agencies, employee unions, the board of governors and other stakeholders) and a strategic planning office. Employees and students were invited to participate in sessions led by consultants with the purpose to establish a vision and mission statement for the college. At this college-wide brainstorming exercise, participative management was suggested by several participants, although the concept and how it could operate was not clearly defined at first. A Strategic Plan package which included participative management as a key feature was presented to the Board of Governors in March 1993, and approved.

The participative decision-making model that was developed with the assistance of the consultants and customised to the institution sought an emphasis on participation rather than



results, or procedural rules. A 12-step decision-making model was developed, which outlined the various steps for clarifying objectives, understanding causes before developing solutions, the development of solutions and monitoring the results. It was emphasised that this model does not provide information on how the decision-making process actually works and what level of involvement is envisaged (ranging from full joint decision-making to decision-making without input or reaction from others).

Following further refinement by the Participative Management Coordinating Committee the concept emerged that all decision-making, apart from a few exceptions, needed to involve all stakeholders concerned through local action teams in each work unit. All stakeholder groups would need to have equal access to committees and decision-making would have to be by consensus to ensure that people ‘buy in’ to the process. To make this model work, it was noted by the consultants that skills in the consensus approach would have to be learnt, that work units would have to receive training and that trust would have to develop between the stakeholders.

While the process started well in some work units with traditions of collegiality, in 1994, only 1/3 of work areas had established local action teams and undertaken training in participative management. Due to changes to the Board of Governors the process also lost vital support as the new members were outside of the process. Apart from a number of committed persons, especially in the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee, a number of people in most work units lost interest and participation decreased, rather than increased. Reasons for this included the failure of staff to participate in the training due to lack of time and a perception that the training lacked relevance to their work. It also reflected the diminishing interest by senior managers over time whose support of the process had become, at best, passive.

Also, there was a failure to agree the kinds of decisions that would fall under the participative management model. The college never quite managed to overcome the history of mistrust and authoritarian decision-making within the institution.

In 1995-1996 several incidents made it very evident that senior management would not use the participative management mode, for example, when a cost-reducing and programme-cutting budget plan was adopted during summer holidays without any consultation with employees; or when the academic council, composed of students and administrators, was restructured and deprived of its direct access to the President and Board of Governors. The institution was still run in an authoritarian manner and the failure to keep the promises that were made has left faculty staff more disinterested in the development of the college than before.

The presenter outlined some of the conclusions.

- The process was initiated by an externally appointed, voluntary, Board of Governors which made the mistake of continuing the process without ensuring that senior managers would ‘buy into’ it;

- The new President, in 1990, should not have been selected from senior management, given the history of a hierarchical and conservative management style;
- The work environment, in general, did not encourage active involvement of employees in the life of the institution;
- The consultants failed to focus on meaningful structural change of those units where power had been focused;
- The reporting relationship between those in charge of strategic planning and the Board of Governors should have been stronger to ensure that policies were carried out, as intended;
- It was never clearly defined what the scope of participative management was and where and how it should be used;
- Not enough provision was made for training and education to create an understanding of participative management and to develop the necessary skills among employees, who traditionally had little control over their work.

Profiting from diversity

David Birchall, Director of Development, Henley Management College, Henley-on-Thames, UK

Nigel Ferrier Collins, Consultant, Henley Management College, Henley-on-Thames, UK

In this session the presenters described the development of a set of standards which can be used by employers to measure how effectively they are assembling and utilising a diverse workforce. The standards enable employers to improve organisational performance and secure competitive advantage by:

- tuning their organisation to their customer and community bases;
- identifying and meeting the needs of a diverse workforce;
- enabling all employees to develop their capacity and maximise their contribution;
- making optimum use of the diversity of the workforce for innovation and change.

The standards are being field-tested by London-based employers and will be disseminated throughout the UK during 1999.

The benefits of measuring an organisation's current management of diversity include the opportunity to challenge myths and manager perceptions in a constructive way and to create a model for discussing emotive cultural issues. It can reinforce a collaborative culture and allow thinking to extend beyond equal opportunities, to arrive at a definition of 'good practice'.

There is a four-point framework for measuring the management of diversity:

- assembling an appropriate cultural mix;
- creating the conditions for benefiting from diversity;
- utilising diversity;
- learning and improving.



In order to assemble an appropriate cultural mix, attention has to be paid to visioning, blueprinting, staff engagement and disengagement and training and development. The creation of the conditions for benefiting from diversity necessitates enquiries into management style, communication within the organisation (systems, style, opportunities), structures of power and influence and the way in which people problems are being dealt with.

The areas of enquiry in relation to the utilisation of diversity are quality management, change management and knowledge management. Feedback and feedforward, monitoring of formal and informal activity, cost benefit analysis and action planning for continuous improvement are important tools for learning about and improving the management of diversity.

The 'rapid organisational diagnosis' is used to check how consistently the following are applied by an organisation:

- Maintain a vision and sense of direction understood by all employees;
- Blueprint the skills, knowledge, experience, and attitudes needed to deliver the vision;
- Inventory the existing workforce for skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes;
- Try to assemble a workforce to fit the blueprint;
- Use fair and flexible management to create a dignified and exciting workplace;
- Actively remove barriers which thwart widespread participation in shaping the organisation;
- Train and support managers to manage diversity.

The 'rapid health check for managers' looks at how strongly they identify with the following statements:

- 'I demonstrate to my staff members that I respect and value cultural and other differences between people';
- 'I investigate the hidden skills, knowledge, experience and beliefs of my staff members';
- 'I recruit and select in accordance with a diversity blueprint';
- 'I welcome dissent and debate when managing change and innovation';
- 'I share information and encourage others to do so';
- 'I seek feedback on my own behaviours as a manager'.

The use of these standards can have far-reaching implications for employers who are searching for ways of using diverse teams to gain leverage in strategic, operational and project planning.

The cooperation committee as a tool of implementation in the process of change

Flemming Johannesen, Consultant, GIMK, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Susie Kristensen, Consultant, HTS-Kartellet, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Ole Risak, Chief Consultant, Danish Employers Confederation.

Susanne Westhausen, Consultant, The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions.

The Cooperation Agreement

The Cooperation Agreement is an agreement between LO (The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions) and DA (The Danish Employers' Confederation) first negotiated in 1947. The fifth Cooperation Agreement from 1986, with supplemental agreements on equal treatment and ethnic relations from the 1990s, is currently in force. It is an agreement which focuses on the common interests of the social partners and the potential to achieve mutual gains through cooperation despite different interests. For instance, employee satisfaction has been agreed upon by both organisations as the highest priority of the cooperation, as it is crucial, not only to the employees, but also to management, which recognises the link between high job satisfaction, motivated workers and competitiveness.

The Cooperation Board

The Cooperation Board was established by the Danish Employers' Confederation and the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions. It is composed of up to seven representatives from each side. The Board's terms of reference are:

- to be in charge of communications, information and development work for the purpose of promoting cooperation between management and employees;
- to assist in the establishment of Cooperation Committees and issue guidelines for their activities;
- to settle disputes.

In order to assist the Cooperation Board in performing its work, a secretariat has been set up to which the two sides appoint consultants. The consultants handle day-to-day business and are involved in giving advice when new cooperation committees are being established, problems arise or successful committees want to improve. The consultants, among other things, also disseminate information about topics and tools relevant to the 1,500 Cooperation Committees.

The Cooperation Committees

Under the Cooperation Agreement, day-to-day cooperation in enterprises is promoted and observed by Cooperation Committees for the benefit of the enterprise and the individual employee.



The Cooperation Board offers help only when it is requested by the employees or the management of an enterprise. Assistance can be requested either by the management or by the majority of the employees in enterprises employing 35 people or more within the same geographical unit. If the majority of the employees want the establishment of a Cooperation Committee the company management is obliged to accept this or it may be fined.

Cooperation Committees are composed of two groups: Representatives of management, technical and commercial staff, who are appointed by management, and representatives of the remaining employees, who are elected by the workforce. The Committees' activities are limited by the existing legislation and regulations. Certain questions relating to the conclusion, termination, interpretation or adjustment of collective agreements, where such agreements are normally settled by collective bargaining or through industrial conciliation procedures, may not be considered by the Cooperation Committees.

The primary task of the Cooperation Committee is setting up the framework for cooperation between management and employees at all levels. This is ensured by the Committee in the following ways:

- by observing and promoting day-to-day cooperation and involving as many people as possible in this task;
- by providing and maintaining satisfactory and stable terms and conditions of employment, so as to enhance the welfare and security of employees;
- by improving the employees' knowledge about the operations, finances and competitiveness of the company.

The methods used by the Committees include dialogue, agreement by consensus, motivating management systems, delegation and decentralisation.

The Cooperation Committee focuses on the importance of including the employees in the decision-making, emphasising that this must be done by informing the employees before and not after decisions are made. By including the employees in decision-making and allowing them to feel that they have influence on company policy, there is greater motivation and commitment by the workforce. The role of the Committee is to be a forum for dialogue and information between the parties in the enterprise/company. It is to be seen as a 'sparring partner' for management and inspiration for the implementation of new projects.

Objectives of the Cooperation Committees include the aim to improve information within companies, to address personnel policy, to encourage projects of development and innovation and to enhance job satisfaction.

A research project which examined Cooperation Committees in eight Danish enterprises, between 1989 and 1991, found companies reporting increased productivity, higher wages, reductions in the number of days lost through sickness, reductions in waste and a lowering of labour turnover.

Holonic meta-strategy for the transformation of a ‘whole’ whole system

Laurie A. Fitzgerald, The Consultancy Inc., Denver. Colorado, USA.

The session was based on the consultant’s work with Nedcor Bank in South Africa and explored the process of ‘whole system’ transformation which is informed by the conceptual framework of the ‘new’ science known as Chaos. The presenter introduced this ‘new’ science which looks at organisations as non-linear, dynamic and complex systems. It does not view chaos and order as opposites from which to choose, but rather as two aspects of the same reality, as two fundamental properties of ‘chaordic’ systems. Reality is viewed as being composed of wholeparts, also known as holons, entities that are whole in their own right and at the same time integral parts of ever-greater ‘wholes’. Holons exist in an infinite variety of types and the various attributes shared by all holons were outlined.

The conceptual framework of Chaos compares the ‘whole’ whole of an organisation to a computer system which is comprised both of system ‘hardware’ or an external aspect, as well as of the system ‘software’ as its interior. In the case of Nedcor Bank, it had become obvious that previous efforts to bring about change necessary for the bank to adapt to the competitive global marketplace, had failed because change methodologies were adopted which focused only on half of the system and excluded its essential software. Systems thinking had failed to address the system’s complex and causal interior. The exterior of an organisation or the ‘matter’ is readily perceivable through observation, while access to the interior or the ‘mind’ can only be dialogical, by participating fully in the flow of the meaning, that is the nature of the organisational mind.

The Chaos-informed holonic transformation strategy pursues six primary drives, three of which address systemic externality, technologies, operations, strategies and structure, while the remainder concern the crucial interiority, the beliefs, values, and assumptions comprising the minds of individuals, the organisation as a whole, as well as that of the greater context in which the organisation seeks to succeed. Factors important in relation to the transformation of the exterior part of the organisation are benchmarking, training and development and knowledge transfer systems. Factors of the interior include the experience and knowledge of people involved, accountability and the understanding of the way in which things are done within the organisation.

The presenter emphasised two major learnings derived to date from the bank’s transformation process: firstly, the critical importance of engaging members of the system in dialogue, in the articulation and institutionalisation of a shared meta-mentality, in this case, the science of Chaos; and secondly, the necessity of intervening in any system from a perspective that takes into account the system’s interiority as well as its presenting surface.



Interest-based work design: overcoming a history of conflict and mistrust

Jim Rankin, The Effectiveness Edge, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

This session explored the theories, models and concepts used by the consultant to shape a uniquely participative process at Labatt Breweries, Ontario, that would overcome the history of combative union-management relationships and mistrust at the plant. The session was held in conjunction with the case presentation by Labatt Breweries.

The joint design process has to be seen against the background of considerable interpersonal conflict, mistrust and fear of a hidden agenda in the company. However, a change in plant management and the desire by the top leaders of the union and management that the brewery survive and grow worked in favour of a successful joint design.

The method of interest-based problem-solving attempts to separate the people from the problem and to focus on interests, not positions. It is important to invent options for mutual gain and to insist on using objective criteria. Due to the history of mistrust in this organisation, particular attention had to be paid to building trust. The presenter outlined three different types of trust and presented a model which shows how trust depends on the extent to which people consider each other capable (aptitude) and the extent to which they believe the other person cares about them (benevolence).

The essential elements in designing the process in Labatt Breweries were highlighted:

- Union and management leaders, all employees affected and all other departments in the brewery that interact with the department to be redesigned needed to be actively involved;
- The design work needed to be done by the employees affected (i.e. those working on the packaging line);
- The majority of any 'group' established to work on the design needed to come from the bargaining unit;
- Interests and boundaries needed to be defined before any design work was done to provide the frame of reference to resolve positions and issues.

The presenter discussed in great detail the work of the groups forming the 'project muscle'.

The Steering Group's primary purpose was to establish a framework for the work redesign, including the participants on the Planning Group and Design Group, to approve a work redesign recommended by the Design Group and to resolve issues arising in the implementation of the redesign that the Design Group cannot solve. The Steering Group was composed of five members of the union and four managers, selected by the respective parties with criteria input from the

consultant. The objectives, boundaries and principles for the work redesign had to be clarified. Critical success factors for the work of the Steering Group included good communication between all members of the group and with other groups, openness and assurance of no hidden agenda, and a focus on the success of the project. Decision-making in the group could be either by consensus or majority vote, which was decided item by item in advance. The group met for two half-day meetings and as required thereafter. The Steering Group was dealing with disputes within the Planning or Design Groups.

The Planning Group was composed of five managers and nine unionised employees whose purpose was to generate alternative designs for the Design Group. The group met for two days and produced two possible designs.

The Design Group was set up to develop a design for recommendation to the Steering Group. Ten unionised employees and three managers were involved in this group. Their decision-making was based on plans for group design, the knowledge of group members, best practice visits to other breweries and on reviews of the design with all other operators and stakeholders. The Design Group recommended a design, observed outcomes from 'best practices', made decisions on stakeholder/operator input, planned the interim start-up and suggested line rotation. The group also defined the training model and support requirements, identified new duties, areas to monitor in start-up and issues to deal with during implementation. It defined the role of the Design Group in the future and planned the communication of the approved design to the stakeholders.

The Design Group had to manage resistance to change on the part of the stakeholders/operators. Common approaches to handling such resistance which tend to fail include using power, applying the force of reason or ignoring the resistance. Instead it was important to adhere to five principles for working with resistance:

- Maintain a clear interest-based focus;
- Embrace resistance and work to find common ground;
- Respect those who resist - tell the truth and listen;
- Stay calm to stay engaged - draw out what is behind the positions and build common ground;
- Join with the resistance - ask 'what's in it for us?'

The session finished with an examination of the role of the consultant, which was to input and design the work design process and to do so in such a way as to have a change process that impacts on people. The consultant engaged in group facilitation to share and reshape the process, to drive the process forward, resolve positions and deal with emotions on the way, and to build consensus support for the change process.



Sustaining competitiveness through value - developing human potential

Harvey Goldberg, DHP Consulting Group, Turku, Finland.

The presenter started by explaining the change in the 'S' curve phenomenon, meaning the life line of products. Whereas, in the past, companies used to have a single 'S' curve with a life cycle of 30-50 years, companies are increasingly facing multiple and simultaneous 'S' curves with shorter life cycles, which for some industries may be as short as two months. This creates a dynamic and a complexity which has many implications for organisational change and improvement.

During this application session the presenter outlined the concepts of Simultaneous Renewal and Continuous Learning and their importance for the competitiveness of companies. Simultaneous Renewal will only occur when an organisation is experiencing tension, which is defined as the force arising from a dissonance between vision and current reality. It is necessary in order to create superior customer value. Continuous Improvement requires the leadership to have a clear understanding of the organisation's vision and goals, which are influenced by the identified need for change. The vision and goals must be accepted by the employees before the process of change can be started. Evaluating the tools of change and revisiting the vision and goals of the organisation is important in order to identify new needs for change. Thus the process of change is a circular and continuous one.

The presenter stressed that, within a global economy, the only source of competitive advantage is 'knowledge'. Successful companies in the future will be those that consistently create new 'knowledge', disseminate it widely throughout the organisation and quickly embody this new knowledge in its new technologies and products. To create new 'knowledge' means quite literally to recreate the company and everyone in it in a process of personal and organisational self-renewal. Inventing 'knowledge' is not a specialised activity of any one department and needs to begin with each individual. Knowledge covers both explicit knowledge, which is formal, systematic and easily communicated, and tacit knowledge, which is highly personal, hard to formalise and difficult to communicate.

Information can be acquired by exploiting the knowledge already available within the organisation, as well as by exploring external sources. The information can be disseminated by a wide range of means including employee meetings, computerised tools, newsletters, and bulletin boards. It is important to seek a consensus for shared vision and goals, while different opinions need to be accepted.

The ability to combine knowledge creation with Simultaneous Renewal is seen as the key to a sustainable competitive advantage in the future.



Annex 1

Conference Programme

***‘New Forms of Work Organisation - Innovation, Competitiveness
and Employment’***

THE SIXTH EUROPEAN ECOLOGY OF WORK CONFERENCE

in the

Gustav-Stresemann-Institute in Bonn, Germany

17-20 May, 1999

PROGRAMME



Monday, 17 May, 1999

08.00-18.00 Registration at Gustav-Stresemann-Institute

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

09.00-12.30 **A.** Whole-Scale™ approaches to designing team-based organisations -
engaging entire organisations in their own fast and far-reaching redesign.
Paul Tolchinsky, Dannemiller Tyson Associates, Ohio, USA.

B. Using work-structuring principles to redesign work systems
Chris Doyle, Associate Director, Work Structuring Limited, UK.

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 Workshops continued

OPENING SESSION

(Chair: **Ray Wild**, Principal, Henley Management College, UK)

(FRENCH/ENGLISH)

(GERMAN/ENGLISH)

15.30-18.00 Welcome by:

Eric Verborgh, Deputy Director, European Foundation for the Improvement
of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, Ireland.

Wolfgang Koberski, Ministerialrat, Bundesministerium für Arbeit und
Sozialordnung, Bonn, Germany.

Introduction to Conference Themes:

European Work Organisation Network

Marie Donnelly, DGV, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium.

Japan's Female Workers as a Marginalised Key Workforce: Their Roles in
Work Organisation and Employment.

Masami Nomura, Professor, Tohoku University, Japan.

New Forms of Work Organisation – The North American Experience

Nancy Mills, Centre for Workplace Democracy, AFL-CIO,
Washington D.C., USA.



18.30 Reception and Opening Dinner

Tuesday, 18 May, 1999

SECOND SESSION (Plenary)

(Chair: Ray Wild, Principal, Henley Management College, UK)

(FRENCH/ENGLISH)

(GERMAN/ENGLISH)

09.00 Opening remarks:

Kevin O'Kelly, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, Ireland.

09.30 Keynote Case

Telecom Éireann.

Kevin Boyle, Boyle & Associates Inc., Oregon, USA.

Bernie Gray, Group HR Director, Telecom Éireann, Dublin, Ireland.

Discussion

11.00 Coffee/Tea

THIRD SESSION

11.30 Concurrent Sessions

- 1) The Land Bank of South Africa:
People Moving Change - Change Moving People
Bankies Malan, Manager Operations Training, Land Bank of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.
- 2) A Decade of Organisational Renewal at Stork PMT, Boxmeer:
The Success of an Incremental Strategy for Whole-Company Transformation
Theo Hoen, Manager Development & Engineering, Stork PMT, Boxmeer, The Netherlands.
Frans van Eijnatten, Associate Professor, Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

- 3) Social Dialogue and Arrangement of Working Time: the case of Air France.
Thierry Rochefort, ANACT, Lyon, France.
 (FRENCH/ENGLISH)

- 4) London Borough of Hillingdon.
Gillian Bobb-Semple, Personnel Policy Manager, London Borough of Hillingdon, UK.

- 5) Leadership and Cooperation at VISHAY Vöcklabruck.
Egon Binder, Works Council, Vishay G.m.b.H., Vöcklabruck, Austria.
Andreas Steurer, Senior Manager Human Resources, Vishay G.m.b.H, Vöcklabruck, Austria
 (GERMAN/ENGLISH)

13.00 Lunch

FOURTH SESSION

14.30 Concurrent Sessions

- 1) Designing and Launching Self-Directed Work Teams in a Complex Manufacturing Environment Using Whole-ScaleTM Methodology: Tower Automotive (USA).
Jim McNeil, Partner Dannemiller Tyson Associates, formerly UAW.
Paul Tolchinsky, Partner Dannemiller Tyson Associates, Ohio, USA.

- 2) New Forms of Work Organisation in the European Union.
Richard Meads, Director, Business Decisions, UK.

APPLICATION SESSION

- 3) Group Work in a New Organisation: Theo Wellen GmbH & Co. KG, Krefeld.
Wolfgang Kötter, Consultant, GITTA, Berlin, Germany.
Kirsten Osterspey, Organisational Development, Theo Wellen GmbH & Co. KG, Germany.
 (GERMAN/ENGLISH)

- 4) Vitae - A High Performance Company.
Peter Blokland, Director, Vitae Group, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Tonny Janson, Quality Manager, Vitae Group, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



- 5) Change Management 2001 in Helsinki Energy.
Kirsti Aho, Manager Human Resource Development, Helsinki Energy;
 Principal of Helen Business School, Finland.
Liisa Muurinen, Chief of Section, Helsinki Energy, Helen, Finland.

16.00 Coffee/Tea

FIFTH SESSION

16.30 Concurrent Sessions

- 1) Flexible WorkTime Arrangements at Kreissparkasse Schlüchtern:
 Advantages for Staff and Customers.
Klaus Fischer, Personnel Manager, Kreissparkasse Schlüchtern,
 Schlüchtern, Germany.
 (GERMAN/ENGLISH)
- 2) The AA Teleworking Experience.
Lance Bowie, Manager Business Systems Analysis,
 Automobile Association, Basingstoke, UK.
Sarah Stacey, Management Development Manager,
 Automobile Association, Basingstoke, UK.
- 3) Unravelling the Spaghetti.
Chris Doyle, Associate Director, Work Structuring Ltd., Macclesfield, UK.
Alan Randall, OD Manager, Esso Chemicals Ltd., Southampton, UK.
- 4) Constructive Participation at Aer Rianta.
Bernard Browne, Facilitator, Joint Union Company Group,
 Aer Rianta, Dublin, Ireland.
George O'Connor, General Manager, Dublin Airport, Dublin, Ireland.
- 5) Holonic Meta-Strategy for the Transformation of a Whole 'Whole' System.
Laurie A. Fitzgerald, The Consultancy Inc., Denver, USA.

APPLICATION SESSION

18.00 End of sessions

Wednesday, 19 May, 1999

SIXTH SESSION

09.00 Concurrent Sessions

- 1) Participative redesign: Action research into the strategic restructuring of the Genencor plant, Belgium.
Leopold Vansina, Professor, Professional Development Institute, Korbeek, Belgium.
- 2) BUPA, United Kingdom.
Ian Norridge, UK Service Manager, BUPA, Staines, UK.
Gail Sumner, Operations Manager, BUPA, Staines, UK.
- 3) Interest-Based Work Design: Overcoming a History of Conflict and Mistrust
Jim Rankin, The Effectiveness Edge, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

APPLICATION SESSION

- 4) Applying Open Systems Theory for Dramatic Improvement in Business Performance.
Neville Brien, Manager Product and Service Integration, Telstra Corporation, Sydney, Australia.
Peter Aughton, Director and Principal Consultant, AMERIN Consulting Group P/L, Melbourne, Australia.
- 5) An African Transformation Experience - Going Global: The Dorbyl Group.
Heather de Beer, Consultant, Competitive Capabilities Africa, Green Point, South Africa.
Absai Ngubeni, Group Human Resources Manager, Dorbyl, Houghton, South Africa.
Dave Funekile Sithole, Guestro Wheels, South Africa.

10.30 Coffee/Tea

SEVENTH SESSION

11.00 Concurrent Sessions



- 1) Union Management Redesign of the Packaging Line at Labatt Breweries of Canada.
Jim Rankin, The Effectiveness Edge, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
Alan Fernandes, Brewery Manager, Labatt Breweries of Canada, Ontario, Canada.
Charlie Flynn, Union Plant Chairperson, Labatt Breweries of Canada, Ontario, Canada.
- 2) From Employee to Team Member.
Peter J. de Haan, Change Coordinator, Organon Teknika BV, Boxtel, The Netherlands.
Geert Peulings, Operations Support, Chairman Works Council, Organon Teknika BV, Boxtel, The Netherlands.
- 3) Pathways to the Future: A Joint Employee Education Benefit Program. Sponsored by US West, C.W.A. and I.B.E.W. and run as a Non-Profit Corporation, Training Partnership Inc.
Lew Ellingson, Co-Director PATHWAYS, Communications Workers of America, Englewood, Colorado, USA.
June Paradise Maul, Chairperson-Board of Directors, Training Partnership Inc., Phoenix, Arizona, USA.
- 4) Partnership at Raychem Shannon .
Joe Lane, Operations Manager, Raychem International, Shannon, Ireland.
- 12.30 Lunch

EIGHTH SESSION

- 14.00 Application Sessions
- 1) Sustaining Competitiveness through Value: The Methodology for Developing Human Potential Through the Integration of Simultaneous Renewal and Continuous Learning.
Harvey Goldberg, DHP Consulting Group, Turku, Finland.
- 2) Participative management... How not to do it.
Laurence M. Olivo, Labour Law Consultant, Toronto, Canada.
- 3) Large-Group, Direct Participation in Planning and Implementing Transformation in Geographically Dispersed Service Organisations
Kevin Boyle, Boyle & Associates Inc., Oregon, USA.
Garrett Sheridan, Boyle & Associates Inc., Oregon, USA.

15.30 Coffee/Tea

NINTH SESSION

16.00 Application Sessions

- 1) Profiting Through Diversity.
David Birchall, Director of Development, Henley Management College, Henley-on-Thames, UK.
Nigel Ferrier Collins, Consultant, Henley Management College, Henley-on-Thames, UK.

- 2) The Cooperation Committee as a Tool of Implementation in the Process of Change and Innovation in Companies.
Flemming Johannesen, Consultant, GIMK, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Susie Kristensen, Consultant, HTS-Kartellet, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Ole Risak, Chief Consultant, Danish Employers' Confederation, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Susanne Westhausen, Consultant, The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, Copenhagen, Denmark.

17.30 Briefing session (only for participants on site visits)

18.00 Bus to Rhine Cruise on MS Beethoven/ Buffet Dinner

Thursday, 20 May, 1999

POST-CONFERENCE SITE VISITS

GKN Walterscheid GmbH

GKN Walterscheid is an engineering company specialising in agricultural drive technology and hydraulic pipe systems and couplings. It is part of the world-wide GKN company which has a product range including automotive components, aircraft and space technology, as well as services to industry. Companies in 40 countries employ more than 35,000 staff.

09.00 Bus departs from conference centre to GKN Automotive in Lohmar.

09.30 Tour of production facilities at GKN.

12.00 Return to Cologne/Bonn airport and Bonn central train station.



Küppers Brewery N.B. This is a site visit with a strong ‘cultural’ element.

09.30	Bus departs from conference centre to Cologne city centre
10.30	Visit to place of cultural interest in Cologne
13.00	Visit to Brewery
15.00	Return to Cologne central train station, Cologne/Bonn airport
16.30	Arrival at Bonn central train station/city centre

Annex 2

List of Participants

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