



8 January 2009

STAFF RETENTION MECHANISMS

It is clear within the current financial crisis that many companies are looking for ways to hold on to staff despite declining product and service demand. Whilst this is not always possible, set out below are some ideas from our members that companies are agreeing with staff as means of sustaining employment for as long as possible.

- Temporary wage cuts – across the Board or graduated (recognising the greater impact on lower earners);
- Reduced working days/working weeks (sometimes using unused holiday entitlements to “top up”);
- Redeploying staff to other tasks (even sometimes to other work sites);
- Using accrued annual other leave to cover work reductions or bringing forward leave periods to cover such reductions;
- Restructuring work rosters/shift arrangements;
- Temporary suspension of certain benefits or work allowances;
- Deferring wage increase already agreed;
- Filling work gaps with training;
- Review of use of temporary work and of outsourced activities;
- Reduction of overtime premium or penalty rates;
- Conversion from full time employment to more flexible demand based part time or casual employment for an agreed period;
- Switching from a production to maintenance/low season work schedule with a lower rate of pay and no production bonuses or incentives;
- Hiring freezes/non-replacement;
- Use of group apprenticeship schemes to spread training costs and utilization of apprentices;
- Having staff undertake community-based work where normal work is unavailable;

Whilst the ideas above relate to a company alone, there are also possibilities that should be considered arising from national social security schemes. In some instances state support is extended to staff whose hours of work or earnings are reduced by a certain percentage. Such possibilities should be explored as part of a staff retention strategy and can also be explored with governments as a policy initiative to support company efforts.