

Accenture Ltd

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company. Committed to delivering innovation, Accenture collaborates with its clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. With some 10,000 UK employees, Accenture established a UK employee forum in 2005. All employees are invited to put themselves forward with reasons why they would like to serve as representative for a two year period. All employees then vote on the candidates, so each representative represents the whole workforce as opposed to just their office or department. The process has gone well, with Accenture looking to further develop the consultation element in order to make the Forum as interactive and two-way as possible.

AstraZeneca UK Ltd

AstraZeneca's is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies and the Charnwood site, near Loughborough, is one of its research and development centres.

The Charnwood Joint Consultative Committee is an active consultation forum where employee representatives from 12 constituencies across the site, which employs over 1200 people, meet quarterly with the site head and other members of the senior management team to discuss matters affecting the site as a whole.

Agenda's are jointly defined with full discussion and consideration of relevant items at quarterly meetings. Representatives also take an active part in progressing and resolving queries and concerns between meetings. Representatives keep in regular contact with their constituents to ensure the agenda's are relevant to them and to communicate the outcomes from meetings.

Representatives are elected for a period of 3 years and work closely with other representatives during their term of office. Training days and recognition events have also taken place to develop personal skills of the representatives, to continually improve the site consultation processes and to publicise the forum, its achievements and the work of the representatives to the rest of the site. The representatives from Charnwood are also highly valued contributors to AstraZeneca's UK and European consultation forums.

Beazley Group plc

Beazley Group plc is a specialist insurance underwriting business, operating within the London market since 1986. There are around 250 UK employees, most of who are based at the London headquarters, and 60 in the US. Teams need close proximity to the information that enables them to leverage their expertise and take decisions, so Beazley uses a number of direct means for informing and consulting employees. These include bi-monthly all staff briefings, which can be webcast to international locations, ad hoc committees created to encourage escalation of ideas and issues that arise day to day, as well as real time management information on desktops and a regularly updated intranet. Employees are regularly surveyed for feedback on how internal communications can be enhanced. Beazley's aim is to create an open environment which is not only efficient and profitable but enjoyable and innovative.

Cable and Wireless plc

Cable & Wireless is an international telecommunications company with operations in the UK, Caribbean, Panama, Monaco, Macou. Total UK head count is around 5,500. The company does not recognise trade unions in the UK. The Company has a long history of informing and consulting with its employees and has had a UK consultation forum for more than 20 years. By working with elected representatives of the company, management has implemented significant business change in better ways than would otherwise have been possible in a context of continuous restructuring. On occasions, special employee sub-committees have addressed major issues and resolved them through colleagues working together. This has brought positive benefits both to the way we work and the management of the company.

Canon (UK) Ltd

Canon UK & Ireland has a national non-unionised workforce. Its informal, open culture places a strong emphasis on two-way communication, however until 2004 there was no formal information or consultation framework.

In October 2004, Canon UK & Ireland introduced “Evolve”. Evolve is made up of a national committee which is chaired by Andy Vickers, Managing Director, Canon UK & Ireland, and five channel committees which are chaired by Channel Directors. This commitment from the company's senior management has undoubtedly contributed to its success. After just 18 months Evolve is a valuable communication tool and represents a very significant part of Canon UK & Ireland 's culture.

Comet Group plc

Comet, the electrical retailer operates some 250 stores throughout the UK. Comet's information and communication structure is made up of a national colleague Consultation forum, and local “satellite” forums in each business area. The national CCF consists of 10 elected representatives from each business area and its scope is to address national issues such as policies and procedures, and any issues where statutory consultation is required. The satellite forums are made up of self-nominated representatives and discuss more localised issues whilst also giving senior management the opportunity to communicate national information and initiatives. Both the CCF and satellite forums are held quarterly, their objectives are “to make a difference to the way we work within Comet, by giving colleagues the opportunity to meet with Senior Management to raise and discuss business opportunities and issues, and giving the business the opportunity to meet with operational colleagues to discuss these issues.

Coors Brewers Ltd

Coors Brewers Limited (previously Bass Brewers Limited) had several years experience of employee consultation on a range of issues when it decided to create the Coors Brewers Employee Forum in 2004. The Company publicised the creation of the Employee Forum internally in early 2005 and advertised for Employee

Representatives across the business to represent both negotiated and non-negotiated employees. The first meeting of the Employee Forum was held in March 2005 and to date there have been several meetings where we have been able to discuss business issues and truly consult on the way ahead.

DS Smith plc

DS Smith is an international Group focused on two major activities - Packaging manufacturing and Office Products wholesaling. With 7,500 UK employees, DS Smith has set up an Information & Consultation Forum in each of its four UK divisions, chaired by the divisional chief executive. There are between 6 and 20 elected representatives on the Forums, a mixture of union and non-union representatives. The company recognises two unions - Amicus and GMB. The Forums meet at least twice yearly to hear about company results and discuss issues such as reorganisations, expansions and acquisitions, and health and safety. Wage bargaining and other remuneration issues, such as pensions, are dealt with separately at local level. Members of the separate Forums can be brought together where there are issues for information and consultation that affect more than one division. The process of setting up the Forums worked well, and proved very valuable in getting lots of employees involved both as candidates and in voting for representatives."

Electronic Data Systems Ltd

EDS is a leading global technology services company delivering business solutions to its clients worldwide. Its core portfolio comprises information-technology, applications and business process services, as well as information-technology transformation services. EDS, which is American-owned, has around 118,000 employees in 56 countries. Some 16,000 employees are based in the UK, which recognises five trade unions.

EDS established four nationally-elected employee bodies in the UK in early 2005 - called Strategy Involvement Forums - which focus on strategic developments affecting its people. The architecture of the forums is based on the organisational structure to ensure that managerial decision-making and consultation are aligned. Independent training for representatives and coaching for business leaders was integral to the establishment of the forums.

The advantages to the business of the new consultation structure are already clear - with leaders expressing their belief in the value of the forums as a key means of receiving a coordinated view of employees' concerns. EDS recognises, though, that it will take time for the relationships between the leaders and representatives and among the representatives themselves to evolve, and for the full benefits of the forums to be realised.

The Grass Roots Group plc

Grass Roots, with its headquarters in Tring in Hertfordshire, is an international provider of performance improvement services.

The business, founded in 1980, now employs some 240 people in Tring and 400 worldwide.

As a business in a semi rural location we understand, perhaps more than businesses in urban environments, how important it is to develop and retain our people. The Information and Consultation processes embedded into our operation are fundamental in helping us do this.

In 2005 we introduced an Employee Forum with 10 members elected by their peers from all strata of the business. The Managing Director, Group Personnel Manager and a “rotating” Director attend the Forum where issues relating to our key business areas are openly discussed, queries answered and many things referred for further action. Topics for discussion include Products and Positioning, Prospects and Clients, Service Delivery, People, Continuous Improvement, Infrastructure and Financial Results.

Communication and information are reinforced through monthly management and team meetings, a quarterly internal newsletter, a weekly internal update from the Managing Director, and an annual “State of the Nation” meeting for the whole Company

Hudson Global Resources Ltd

Hudson Global Resources is one of the world's leading providers of specialized professional staffing, retained executive search and human capital solutions. With 830 employees in 14 locations throughout the UK, Hudson has developed a direct information and consultation strategy. This includes weekly, fortnightly or monthly team meetings according to specific business issues and practice, a monthly UK senior management roadshow to all locations, quarterly town hall Question & Answer sessions with the CEO, and six monthly global communications on performance. Hudson is keen to encourage two-way dialogue and effective consultation, and experience has shown that this is best achieved with groups of no more than 20. This clearly puts extra time commitments on the senior team but the company believes that the benefits it has experienced by creating an open environment that encourages individual responsibility, initiative and key staff retention make this worthwhile.

ITV plc

ITV plc is a leading UK media company, owning all of the regional Channel 3 licences in England and Wales, as well as the digital channels ITV2, ITV3 and ITV4. It also owns the market leading cinema screen advertising businesses in the UK, while its production arm comprises the largest commercial television production company in the UK and one of Europe's largest programme distributors. ITV has some 6000 employees in the UK across 37 sites and has established parallel union and non-union arrangements for informing and consulting its staff. The company recognises a number of unions and has a range of collective bargaining arrangements at local level.

It also uses a series of communication groups to engage and involve all employees, which are well-established and have worked very well. Staff representatives for the communication groups are elected from constituencies which reflect the business groups and functional areas. The union bargaining units and the communication groups each meet separately on a regular basis, the frequency dependent on local business needs.

Orange Personal Communications Services Ltd

Orange is one of the most powerful brands around, and not just within telecommunications. Openly providing information and encouraging consultation and dialogue on employment and business topics that are of concern or interest to our 13,000 people has always been important to us at Orange. Recognised trade unions are not present within Orange but back in 2003 we established our first Employee Consultative Forum where elected employee representatives met to discuss issues around the business, our commercial performance, and proposals for change – particularly where they affected our people. Since then things have taken off. We now have 10 local consultative forums, and a national employee consultative forum. Anyone will tell you these things rarely happen overnight, but we believe that employee consultation has genuinely become “just something that we do naturally around here”. Our strong belief remains that listening to the voice of our people, and considering issues and suggestions made, is an integral part of how we in Orange prefer to manage change and can best achieve overall and lasting business success.

Pearson VUE

Pearson VUE provides innovative electronic testing solutions that enhance the performance, reliability and security of high-stakes testing programs.

Pearson VUE was a start-up in the UK in September 2004, having won the contract to deliver the UK Theory Driving Test on behalf of the Government - the world's largest computer based testing contract. This is a large operational business with over £30m revenue, 151 locations and 1000 staff in the UK. As Pearson VUE's staff are widely dispersed, their forum plays a key role in maintaining positive employee relations and communication. It has helped the business move forward considerably over the past year. The forum, which was established in March 2005, has 16 representatives and meets on a quarterly basis. The forum covers a range of issues from the company's results, prospects and strategy to internal communications and social and employment issues. Some of the meetings are held by telephone or video conference.

Pindar Set Ltd

Pindar Set processes all the adverts and pages that make up Yellow Pages and Business Pages in the UK and Yellow Book directories in the USA. In April 2005 Pindar established a Communication Forum for our 400 employees to facilitate information and consultation within the business across our 5 UK sites. The original idea came out of an internal communication plan prompted by feedback from employees that demonstrated that we weren't doing enough to inform and consult them. In setting up the Communication Forum we followed the outline of the new Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations and worked with a law firm

who had expertise in this area. One year on, the main benefits have been that we have shared information with employees in a consistent and timely manner; and we have established a mechanism for people to express their views and have their questions answered.

Prudential UK and Europe

Prudential UK and Europe is a leading provider of Insurance, Investment and Retirement products employing approximately 6000 people. Prudential UK utilises both direct and indirect I&C arrangements. In April 2005, it created a consultative forum covering all employees irrespective of grade or location. The new forum comprises of 27 democratically elected representatives, plus a full time seconded Chair and seconded Co-ordinator.

Prudential UK also recognises Amicus for collective bargaining covering approximately half of its workforce.

There is no relationship between the forum and the recognised union, although 7 of the forum representatives elected are also union representatives. The successful co-existence of union recognition and all-employee forum revolves around there being a clear distinction between negotiation, through collective bargaining, and influence, through consultation.

Collective representation is one of a number of channels employed by Prudential to stimulate employee involvement. Direct I&C is also utilised to complete an integrated approach, designed to appeal to the broadest possible audience.

Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Group plc

Royal & Sun Alliance is one of the world's leading insurance groups

providing general insurance products to over 20 million customers worldwide.

1,450 people are employed at their Liverpool office. AMICUS are recognised for consultation and collective bargaining. TMA (The Managers' Association) represent employees in the Management Group for information and consultation purposes.

In RSA we try always to be the first to give information to staff and manager representatives. We engage employees directly through a variety of communication channels but we also strive to ensure that their union and manager representatives hear from the company first. We have found that this approach can frequently allow a common message to be delivered to our employees which greatly increases its effectiveness. We have grappled with some difficult issues in recent years, including downsizing, outsourcing and pensions. Time invested in full and effective consultation, including discussions around how a change can best be communicated, has in our experience lead to earlier employee engagement, better performance and speedier implementation of business change.

Tesco plc

The supermarket retail group Tesco and the shop workers union Usdaw have a Partnership Agreement that replaced traditional union bargaining over pay with a three-tier structure of consultation incorporating far wider terms of reference. At store level, all employees elect a Consultative Staff Forum with representation provided by union and non-union representatives, though a place is reserved for a union representative and a store manager. Each store forum sends one representative (who must be an Usdaw member) to one of three union-only Regional Representative forums. From these, the third tier is elected to the 37-strong National Forum. The National Forum discusses major business issues and is responsible for conducting the annual review of pay and conditions. 'Representative Team Meetings' are held in every store for two hours every month, with 'Divisional Representative Committee Meetings' for each Usdaw Division four times a year. By broadening and reinforcing the consultative role of representatives, Tesco has benefited from significant co-operation from Usdaw. For its part, Usdaw took a risk in relinquishing pay bargaining and establishing the universal franchise for employee participation at store level, but has been rewarded by Tesco's commitment to consultation.

Unilever plc (Wall's Ice Cream Ltd)

Unilever, Gloucester is the UK 's largest ice cream factory, employing about 550 people, and producing over 3 million Wall's ice creams per day. As an organisation Unilever prides itself on the need to have effective employee consultation, both with local trade unions (the TGWU, Amicus and GMB) and non-union employee representatives on site as well as at a national level. Matters affecting all parties are discussed, and in doing so, a mutual interest in the long term success of the Gloucester site, its employees and the broader business is recognised. This has been achieved with a Partnership Group consisting of a small senior representative group, meeting on a monthly basis and a larger Council group, including the senior group and elected members from departmental constituencies, who meet quarterly. The Partnership representatives are accountable for feeding matters into both meetings and, via a signed Joint Statement, communicating resolutions or actions back to their constituencies. New policies, a site Behavioural Charter and cultural change initiatives have all been successfully developed within the group.

Westinghouse Rail Systems Ltd

Westinghouse Rail Systems Limited design, manufacture and implement signalling and train control systems. They currently employ 1,060 people and operate a Company Council, with one elected Employee Representative for each of the 9 Constituencies across the organisation.

In May 2005 a new constitution was signed which allowed both union and non-union representatives to represent all employees. The constitution details how the Council will operate and what items are subject to Information and Consultation. The Council meets every 3 months with Company Management for the purposes of sharing information and consulting on relevant issues. To meet its collective bargaining requirements with the 3 recognised Trade Unions (TSSA, AMICUS and GMB), the

Company operates a Negotiating Sub-Committee (NSC) comprised of elected union member representatives.

In addition to the Company Council, line managers communicate with employees using team briefings on a monthly basis.