



INTERNAL MOBILITY

Encourage and organise action towards a successful merger

This services group, resulting from the merger of three companies, began a far-reaching reorganisation based on a general principle of decentralisation of its business. The new organisation required substantial geographical and functional mobility within the group. BPI took part in preparing and co-ordinating the arrangements.

► Context

DECENTRALISING BUSINESS

Move closer to customers and streamline management - these goals encouraged the new group to overhaul its organisation to form specialised divisions according to distribution channel, and to decentralise its business. Transfer of activities and the specialisation of each regional division provided the momentum for a massive wave of internal transfers. To ensure the success of the merger and maintain a good social climate, the principle of voluntary transfers was retained. The group called on BPI to organise and support the transfer process from Paris to the French regions.

► Task

DESIGN MEASURES

Challenge of the task : successfully redeploy internal resources **to develop the global expertise** of the enterprise while maintaining employment levels. The project engineering was carried out by a combined project team (BPI/customer) whose cohesiveness was strengthened by a team building session. Using a target organisation, the team began studying the ideal staffing redistribution and analysing the resources available within the Group.

CREATING A CROSS-CUTTING MOMENTUM

Throughout the operation, the accent was placed on communication. During the preparatory stage, an awareness seminar was organised for HR actors to explain the strategic issues involved in the project. This was reinforced with a number of information meetings for managers and employees.

These actions were then continued, aimed in particular at those employees directly affected by the changes. Various support materials were used: transfer charter and guide, intranet, specific internal publications, etc. These were aimed at promoting the jobs to be decentralised as well as the new working locations, and gave regular news on the progress of the project.

LISTEN, ORIENT

Three Mobility Spaces were opened. These were co-ordinated by BPI consultants in collaboration with internal counselors. The aim was to provide confidential and neutral advice for employees affected by transfers or wishing to move. They provided information on the positions to be filled, conducted orientation interviews, prepared employees to submit applications, and put them in touch with the new management hierarchies.

► Perspectives

REVIEWS: TOOLS TO ASSIST IN PREPARING FOR CHANGE

In total, almost 500 transfers took place in less than a year: 140 geographical transfers and 350 functional transfers. Respecting the principle of voluntary mobility meant that over 1,600 people were interviewed individually. Rethinking concerning the strategic skills required for the various divisions revealed a true need for certain populations to undergo retraining. There are currently plans to implement a training policy both for populations with low-level qualifications and for careers requiring rare skills.

Encouraging Volunteers

Some employees, whose positions were transferred or disappeared, refused to relocate. Their internal reorientation in the Paris region had to be ensured. Then, in order to reach the goals set for transfers to the French regions and to free up a sufficient number of positions, BPI had to encourage functional and geographical mobility in employee populations other than those initially targeted.

The Key Role of Managers

Managers play an essential part in encouraging employee mobility. They must first be ready to let some people leave, that they would have preferred to keep, even if these employees do not correspond to the "ideal" profile. Managers also need reassurance concerning their own future, as mobility issues also affect them.

The situation was complicated due to :

- Different issues depending on the divisions : some felt a greater impact from the decentralisation process than others
- Assignments to become effective between one and three years later
- Measures for progressive early retirement, likely to affect 1,500 people
- Ongoing negotiations concerning the switch to the 35 working hour week.