



## OUTSOURCING

# Successful Employee Transfers

In this rapidly-growing company, priority was given to services that involved customer relations. But internal services also had to permanently adapt to the needs - outsourcing appeared as the obvious solution. BPI organised the transfer of the identified activities - specifications, invitation for tender and social communication.

### ► Context

#### ACCELERATED GROWTH

56 shops at the end of 1997, nearly 200 in 1999. The administrative services followed suit - the workforce at headquarters doubled between 1997 and 2000. However, in its ways of working and its size, the company maintained all the characteristics of an SME. These conditions made it difficult to play the role of «base camp» needed to develop the distribution network. The idea of entrusting a service provider with some of the activities conducted at headquarters was therefore considered.

### ► Task

#### PREPARING THE TRANSFER

BPI began the outsourcing procedure with the general services department before the summer : mail, reception, switchboard, cleaning, maintenance. A tight schedule had the transfer planned for September. The specifications were written, an invitation for tender was launched, the supplier was chosen, and the message to be communicated to employees was prepared. Everything was ready on time, but...sales have priority - the company had to operate at maximum capacity until the end of the year. The operation kick-off was to be given at the beginning of January.

#### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND SOCIAL CONTRACT

While the invitation for tender was being prepared, ten employees were to be affected. The supplier would take over activities which had doubled in size in the meantime. At the same time as the technical specifications, BPI prepared a «social contract» defining the **conditions of transfer for employees** and guaranteeing that the new employer would honour commitments made. The invitation for tender was successful - twelve companies submitted bids, and there were twelve complete proposals. The company executives were involved in the company process.

#### COMMUNICATION WITH EMPLOYEES A SENSITIVE STEP

This was prepared in advance, and communication of the changes to the employees began in January. The transfer was to be a significant event in the career of the employees concerned - a subject for preoccupation and apprehension on the part of the managerial team.

Whether sent by the company or the supplier, for all employees or personnel representatives, regulatory or general information, every communication was examined by the BPI project leader with a fine toothed comb. "Image is of the essence in this context. Everything has to be perfect."

### ► Perspectives

#### TRANSFER(S)

The most important step - **starting a dialogue**, remained to be taken. As work meetings took place, the employees gradually accepted the project. Individual interviews were an important complement to collective actions. At the end of April, the works council approved the whole project and the effective transfer of the employees on June 1st. In parallel, the management team entrusted BPI with **the outsourcing** of the logistics department. This time, 120 employees were affected.

#### Labour Code

Conditions for a change in organisation linked to stopping an activity, a merger or a transfer of activity :

- Article L 122.12  
Transfer of employment contracts unchanged.
- Article L 132.8  
Maintenance of collective status.

#### Reasoning Win - Win - Win

- For the company  
concentrate on strategic occupations, optimise quality and control costs.
- For the supplier - grow by integrating and making the most of a team of professionals.
- For the personnel: maintain salary and benefits while increasing perspectives for career development

#### Employees' questions evolve with time.

- Permanence of employment.
- Technical questions on non-cash benefits, such as «Will my work clothes be provided?»
- Organisational questions, such as «Couldn't we work differently?»