

**Reducing Stress and Improving Performance through
Work Reorganisation**

Final Progress Report for the British Occupational Health Research Foundation
Contract 132:E:00

Dr Frank Bond and Dr David Bunce
Goldsmiths College,
University of London



Table of contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2

Research Objectives 2

Background 3

Risk assessment & implementation of work reorganisation interventions 4

FINDINGS 5

Reasons for the improvements: Mediator Variable..... 8

Summary of the project 8

REFERENCES 9

Appendix I: Record of steering committee meetings 10

Appendix II: Key issues and outcomes 14

Reducing Stress and Improving Performance through Work Reorganisation

Final Progress Report for the British Occupational Health Research Foundation
Contract 132:E:00
Dr Frank Bond and Dr David Bunce
Goldsmiths College,
University of London

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the final set of findings of the project set out in the British Occupational Health Research Foundation (BOHRF) contract 132:E:00. Specifically, it involves a longitudinal project, conducted in a private sector organisation, aimed to manipulate work variables, in an effort to improve stress-related outcomes such as mental health, work motivation, and sickness absence. Using a participative action research (PAR) intervention, we demonstrated that, working in collaboration with managers and employees, methods of reducing or removing stressors can be successfully designed and implemented. Moreover, results indicate that, at a one year follow-up, the PAR intervention significantly improved employee mental-health, organisational commitment, and sickness absenteeism rates, along with corresponding absence expenditure. Consistent with previous occupational health psychology research (e.g. Bond & Bunce, 2001) an increase in job control, or the extent to which people have choice and discretion in their work, served as an important mediator by which improvements in mental health, commitment, and absenteeism occurred. In addition, increases in organisational commitment also accounted for decreases in absenteeism. These findings are consistent with the ones presented in the first-year progress report for this contract.

Research Objectives

The aims of the research are to expand upon Bond and Bunce's (2001, 2003) previous work and examine the extent to which a work reorganisation intervention can improve employee mental health, absenteeism, and attitudes towards work (i.e., motivation, organisational commitment, job satisfaction).

In pursuing these objectives, our study makes a unique contribution to the occupational stress literature in that it assesses the generalisability of findings from earlier work carried out as part of the British Occupational Health Research Foundation (BOHRF) contract 132:E:00, with the host organisation's employees from Customer Service Centres (CSC's) and Intermediary Sales Centres (ISCs). This earlier work demonstrated that by working in collaboration with managers and employees, strategies for reducing or removing stressors could be successfully designed and implemented. By identifying and reducing such risks, we have shown that organisations can increase employee well-being, sustain motivation levels,

and reduce sickness absence rates. However, what is not clear is whether these findings translate to different work groups, or to employees exposed to different job demands and occupational stressors. Indeed, this is the first piece of research, of which we are aware, that seeks to establish such generalisability.

Hence, this research focuses on employees who work in Retail Contact Centres (RCC's), who are exposed to very different types of job demands than are employees from CSC's and ISC's. In particular, as well as carrying out different tasks, the nature of the work carried out by employees in RCC's, means employees have markedly less flexibility in terms of their work time and little control over the pacing and scheduling of their work, compared to employees who work in either CSC's or ISCs.

Consistent with recommendations from the occupational stress literature (e.g., Bond & Bunce, 2000), we are also seeking to understand how our work reorganisation intervention works; that is, we want to identify mediators that account for any improvements in stress-related outcomes that occur as a result of the intervention. As Bond & Bunce (2001) note, by identifying mechanisms of change, the efficacy of organisation-level interventions can be improved, since, practitioners can develop techniques that specifically target the crucial mediating variables.

The Report

This report gives an overview of the findings of a PAR work reorganisation project across three business sites. Within the report we have provided some background regarding the participating organisation and details concerning the project findings, twelve months following its inception. In Appendix I, we provide summaries of Steering Committee meetings (the central component of our PAR intervention), since the 18 month report (submitted after the first six months of this intervention). In Appendix II, we detail the specific change initiatives that the steering committees implemented, across the three business sites.

Background

The host organisation's business centres located in X Region, Y Region, Z Region and C Region (control group) are participating in this project. The 'Retail Contact Centres' (RCCs) located in these regions deal mainly with telephone applications for current accounts, credit cards, mortgages, and personal loans. In addition, they also have to handle other transactions that can be dealt with via the telephone (e.g., cancelling standing orders/direct debits, transferring money between accounts, increasing overdraft limits or credit card limits etc.).

We randomly assigned the X, Y and Z centres to receive our work-reorganisation intervention, with the C Region RCC acting as our control group. At the organisation's request, the interventions were aimed primarily at employees who had been employed by the host organisation for less than two years. The organisation's rationale was that turnover rates had historically been markedly higher in this group of employees.

Risk assessment & implementation of work reorganisation interventions

The ‘time 1’ survey incorporated measures of work design characteristics (i.e., job control, workplace support, and influence), mental health, job satisfaction, turnover intention, organisational commitment, and intrinsic job motivation (see March 2004 Progress Report for details). The survey was sent, in September 2003, to 1,050 RCC employees, all of whom had been employed by the host organisation for less than 2 years. Of these, 753 employees completed and returned the survey, an overall response rate of 72%, consistent across all business sites. The specific measures that we used were as follows:

Intrinsic job motivation (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979). This valid and reliable measure of motivation assesses the degree to which a person wants to work well in his or her job, in order to achieve intrinsic satisfaction.

Work Empowerment Scale (WES; Bond, in prep). This 20 item self-report measure assesses various work and organisational characteristics. Previous factor analyses, suggest that the scale measures three aspects of ‘empowering’ work- job control; social-structural support; and influence.

General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12; Goldberg & Hillier, 1979). The GHQ is one of the most widely used psychometric measures of general mental health, and has good reliability and validity (Goldberg, Gater, Sartorius, Ustun, Piccinelli, Gureje, & Rutter, 1997).

Job satisfaction (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983)- measured by one item: “How satisfied are you with your job in general?” Answers were recorded on a response scale running from *extremely dissatisfied* (1) to *extremely satisfied* (6.) This has been shown to be a valid measurement of overall job satisfaction.

Turnover intention – measured by one item: “How likely is it that you will be working for the organisation in 1 year’s time”. Responses were recorded on a 6-point scale from *not at all likely* to *extremely likely*.

Organisational Commitment (Pressure Management Indicator (PMI); Williams and Cooper, 1998.) The PMI is a five-item scale that assesses the extent to which an employee is committed to their employing organisation.

Evaluation of work reorganisation interventions (Time 2 Survey)

Twelve-fourteen months after the initial risk assessment exercise of September 2003, the ‘time 2’ survey was distributed to assess the effects of the work reorganisation intervention on employees’ well-being and attitudes. The measures used in the time 2 survey were the same as the time 1 survey. At time 2, 51% of respondents, who returned a time 1 survey, returned a time 2 survey. Whilst such a response rate is fairly good for this type of survey, it is lower than the other three that we have conducted as part of this project. We believe that the reason for this is that the organisation asked employees, without the researchers’ knowledge, to complete the survey in their own time (in September 2004); and, after a very poor response rate (i.e., 10%), another set of time 2 questionnaires was administered (in November 2004), and employees were allowed to complete those during work time, as was the case at Time 1.

Analysis and Feedback to the Organisation

Using repeated-measures multivariate analysis of variance, measures of employee attitudes (motivation, job satisfaction, and turnover intention), well-being and absenteeism were compared across the two groups (i.e., intervention and control groups) and observation points (i.e., time 1 and 2). In this way, we could determine if any significant differences occurred, as a result of the work-change initiatives. The findings are now discussed.

FINDINGS

General Mental Health

The extent of probable psychiatric illness amongst employees was examined for all respondents. Although from these findings we cannot say for certain what kinds of mental health problems, if any, are being experienced by employees in the host organisation, previous studies in organisational settings suggest that employees who report high levels of mental ill-health typically experience problems such as anxiety or depression.

Prior to work redesign changes, the extent of probable psychiatric illness amongst employees differed significantly between the four business centres that implemented work-change interventions and the control group.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the intervention was very successful in significantly reducing levels of mental ill-health amongst the three business sites that comprised the intervention group; in particular, levels of mental ill-health reduced, from Time 1 (September 2003) to Time 2 (September-November 2004), in the PAR group, but not, as predicted, in the control group.

In more practical terms, the mental health findings indicate that 50% of respondents at Time 1, in both the PAR and control groups, had mental health problems that were of some psychiatric note (probably mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression). At Time 2, this percentage was unchanged in the control group, but it improved in the PAR group; such that, only 36% had psychiatric problems at Time 2, down 14%.

Figure 1.

Organisational Commitment Levels
{Graph removed}

The Goldsmiths survey examined levels of organisational commitment. This refers to the extent to which people feel emotionally attached to their organisation, which is determined by the degree to which people feel that their company shares their own goals. Organisational commitment is also increased by employees perceiving that they are 'getting out what they are putting into' the organisation (e.g., they feel that they are being recognised sufficiently (in terms of compensation and respect) for their work).

In the three business sites that implemented work-change initiatives, employees' commitment to the host organisation increased over the year of the study. In contrast, the C business site, in which it was 'business as usual', experienced no change in organisational commitment levels from September 2003 to September-November 2004 (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
{Graph removed}

Job Satisfaction, Motivation, and Turnover Intention

No significant changes were seen in employee levels of job satisfaction, motivation, or turnover intention from September 2003 to September-November 2004 in either the intervention or control groups. However, it is important to note that this review (i.e., the Time 2 observation point) is taking place after a relatively short period following the introduction of the work change intervention, and it is possible that positive changes may be seen in any or all of these variables, in the future.

Absenteeism

Absence rates

In order to be confident that any changes in absence rates are a direct result of the work reorganisation intervention, it is necessary to control for employees' absence rates for the year to September 2003 (i.e., for the year before the start of the intervention). This means that we can only analyse changes in absenteeism rates for participating employees who worked in

their specific business site for at least one year prior to the beginning of this study, which is 423 people (intervention group = 292; control group =131).

Findings from this subset showed that, as a result of changes in work processes that increased employee control, workplace support, and influence, there was, in the intervention group only, a 26% decrease (from 17 to 13 days) in the mean number of *days* absent from September 2003 to September 2004 (Figure 3). There was, however, no significant change in the mean number of *occasions* absent (i.e., 3 occasions), during that same time period.

In the control group, in which there was no intervention and hence in which it was 'business as usual', there was a statistically significant 22% increase (from 18 to 22 days) in the number of days, on average, an employee was absent from work. As with the intervention group, there was no change in the number of occasions on which an employee was absent from work (i.e., 3), from September 2003 to September 2004.

In conclusion, across the three business centres that implemented work-reorganisation interventions, there was overall a 48% decrease in the number of days an employee was absent from work (taking together the 26% decrease in the intervention group and the 22% increase in the control group)

Figure 3.
{ Graph removed }

Cost of Absences

The above decrease in absence rates translates into a substantial saving for the organisation. Across the three business sites that formed the intervention group, the host organisation was spending on average £574 per person on absence payments in the twelve-month period prior

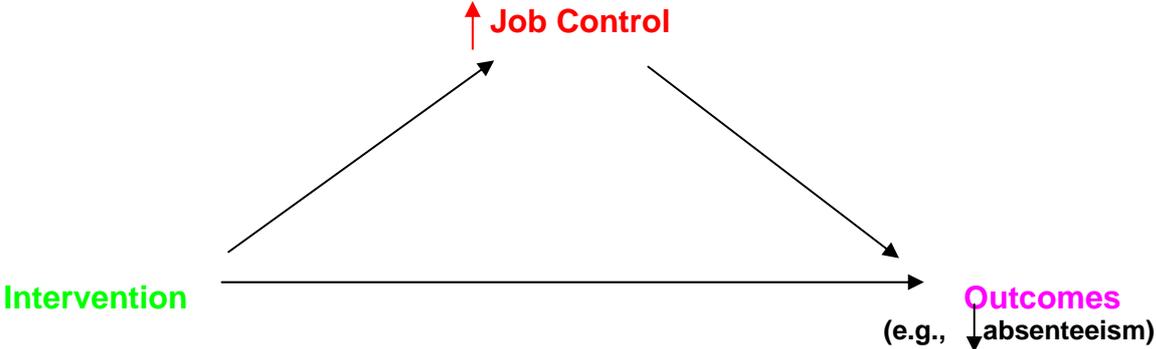
to the change initiatives. For these 292 employees (whose absence data we could use), this resulted in an approximate expenditure of £167,608. From September 2003-September 2004, absence costs fell, in this group, to an average payment of £442 per person, which, therefore, saved the organisation £38,544 in absence costs. In the control group, the host organisation was also spending on average £574 per person on absence payments in the twelve-month period prior to the study. For these 131 people (whose absence data we could use), this resulted in an approximate expenditure of £75,194. During the 12 months of the study, absence costs for the control group increased to £706 per person, hence costing the organisation an additional £17,292 in absence payments for these 131 people, alone. Had the work reorganisation intervention also occurred in the control group, it is likely that the total savings for the 423 people who participated in this study would have been **£55,836**.

Reasons for the improvements: Mediator Variable.

The positive changes in employee mental health, organisational commitment and absenteeism, occurred, in part, as a direct result of the Motivation and Retention change initiatives. We can say this with some certainty for two reasons. Firstly, a control group was used in this project, in which no specific work-change initiatives were implemented, and no positive outcomes were seen in this group.

Secondly, statistical analyses have highlighted the reasons for the positive improvements seen in the intervention group. Although employee job control, workplace support and influence were manipulated across the CSCs, statistical analyses indicate that the benefits seen in general mental health, motivation levels and sickness absenteeism rates were predominantly due to increases in job control (Figure 3). That is, job control, or the extent to which people have choice and discretion in their work, was an important mechanism, or mediator, that accounted for the improvements in stress-related outcomes that occurred as a result of the intervention.

Figure 4



Summary of the project

The work reorganisation project has, in our opinion, been very successful and has demonstrated that work reorganisation interventions can improve employee well-being, organisational commitment, and have significant remuneration benefits for an organisation.

Specific change initiatives that increased employee job control, workplace support and influence served to significantly improve mental health and organisational commitment, and they also reduced short-term absenteeism rates and the corresponding absenteeism expenditure within the host organisation.

In order to understand how and why changes to work processes had such a positive impact on employee well-being, attitudes and work attendance, we sought to identify a mediator that accounts for these improvements. Statistical analyses confirmed that the benefits seen in general mental health, organisational commitment, and absence rates were predominantly due to increases in job control.

REFERENCES

- Bond, F. W., & Bunce, D. (2000). Mediators of change in emotion-focused and problem-focused worksite stress management interventions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*, 156-163.
- Bond, F. W., & Bunce, D. (2001). Job control mediates change in a work reorganization intervention for stress reduction. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 6*, 290-302.
- Bond, F.W. & Bunce, D. (2003). The role of acceptance and job control in mental health, job satisfaction, and work performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*, 1057-1067.
- Cox, T., Griffiths, A., Barlowe, C., Randall, R., Thomson, L., & Rial-Gonzalez, E. (2000). *Organisational interventions for work stress: A risk management approach*. Sudbury: HSE Books.
- Goldberg, D. P., Gater, R., Sartorius, N., Ustun, T. B., Piccinelli, M., Gureje, O., & Rutter, C. (1997). The validity of two versions of the GHQ in the WHO study of mental illness in general health care. *Psychological Medicine, 27*, 191-197.
- Goldberg, D. P. & Hillier, V. F. (1979). A scales version of the General Health Questionnaire. *Psychological Medicine, 13*, 340-353.
- Scarpello & Campbell (1983). Job satisfaction: Are all the parts there? *Personnel Psychology, 36*, 577-600.
- Warr, P., Cook, J., & Wall, T. (1979). Scales for the measurement of some work attitudes and aspects of psychological well-being. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 52*, 129-148
- Williams, S., & Cooper, C. (1998). Measuring occupational stress: Development of the pressure management indicator. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 3*, 306-321.

Appendix I: SUMMARY OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Motivation and Retention Project: Initiatives across the host organisation RCC estate.

RCC SITE	CHANGE INITIATIVE	MEETING DATES
X Region	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Telephone Scripts</u></p> <p>AIM: To allow colleague input into the production of scripts used for customer calls.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Working groups consisting of colleagues across different product areas, have been set up in Sheffield. In a series of meetings, colleague's ideas have been sought on improving telephone scripts. Ideas have since been forwarded to Head Office, and the groups are now awaiting feedback</p> <p>Following this initiative, colleague views about telephone scripts that are being developed to incorporate new regulations and products, are now being sought in advance.</p>	<p>30 October 2003 7 November 2003 16 December 2003 28 January 2004 8 April 2004</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SHORT NOTICE HOLIDAYS</u></p> <p>AIM: To allow greater flexibility on booking short notice holidays when call volumes are low decisions about short-notice holidays should be made locally by Team Managers.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Implemented across both sites</p>	

	<p><u>'FUN FRIDAYS'</u></p> <p>AIM: Non-work related activities that colleagues can participate in at their workstations, to be introduced (e.g. email bingo). The aim being to foster improved team spirit.</p> <p>PROGRESS: A shared mailbox entitled 'BRIGHT IDEAS' has been developed and is available to all employees via the S drive. This mailbox has ideas of desk based activities that colleagues and Team Leaders can employ.</p>	
	<p><u>'ASK ME ANOTHER'</u></p> <p>AIM: Improve direct communications between colleagues and Heads of Operations.</p> <p>PROGRESS: A shared mailbox has been developed, whereby colleagues can e-mail Heads of Operations with work related questions. A Q & A Document is then published for all colleagues.</p>	
	<p><u>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u></p> <p>(see below)</p>	
Y REGION	<p><u>'BURNING ISSUES' MEETINGS</u></p> <p>AIM: Increase colleague workplace support by having a regular forum in which colleagues can ask work related questions.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Managers holding regular 'Burning Issues' meetings with representatives from the different product areas, to address colleague concerns</p>	<p>30 October 2003 6 November 2003 14 January 2004 25 February 2004 14 May 2004</p>

	<p><u>IDENTIFY OPTIMAL MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</u></p> <p>AIM: To identify strategies that managers can use to improve meetings with colleagues and facilitate ‘best practice’ (e.g. regular planned meetings, elected representatives, have an agenda) across the business.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Steering Committee members are currently exploring the different approaches that managers utilise to aid communication with colleagues.</p>	
	<p><u>COMPILE A SUMMARY DESCRIBING HOW PROJECTS LINK TOGETHER</u></p> <p>AIM: To provide colleagues with the ‘bigger picture’, to optimise communication across the business, and ensure that colleagues know what actions are being taken as a result of their feedback. Specifically, compile a short summary of how different projects link.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Steering Committee members have compiled a short summary</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Telephone Scripts</u></p> <p>AIM: To allow colleague input into the production of scripts used for customer calls.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Liaised with committee members from other project sites, to feedback colleague ideas to Head Office, and the groups are now awaiting feedback.</p> <p><u>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u> <u>(see below)</u></p>	

SCOTLAND	<u>Telephone Scripts</u>	30 October 2003 18 December 2003 29 January 2004 4 March 2004 13 May 2004
	<p>AIM: To allow colleague input into the production of scripts used for customer calls.</p> <p>PROGRESS: Colleague views about telephone scripts have been ascertained and feedback to Head Office. The group is awaiting feedback.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>IMPROVE COMMUNICATION</u></p> <p>AIM: Improve levels of Team Leader-colleague communication about work related issues such as changes in interest rates</p> <p>PROGRESS: Colleague representation at key meetings, in which business changes are communicated.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TEAM MANAGER SUPPORT</u></p> <p>AIM: Improve Team Manger support by having additional personnel support with administrative duties (Z1 location).</p> <p>PROGRESS: There is now an identified person to support Team Leaders with administrative duties</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u></p> <p><u>(see below)</u></p>	

Appendix II: RECORD OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Intervention Programme (RCCs) – X Region

(October 2003 – August 2004)

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
30 October 2003 X Region Steering committee Meeting I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a recap of the nature of the project and the role of the steering committee. • Committee members were provided with a copy of the ‘Initial Findings’ report. • Dr Frank Bond, discussed the report, identifying the key work-related risk factors linked to employees’ well-being (motivation, mental health, job satisfaction, and turnover intention). • Job control, workplace support, and (to a lesser extent) influence were highlighted as risk factors. • Specific examples of these general risk factors were elicited from the steering group. These were lack of flexibility in break periods; lack of certainty in workplace seating (pods); and problems with informational support systems. • Members were asked to generate potential ideas/solutions for risk reduction in time for the next meeting. • The group discussed methods of ascertaining ideas (e.g. e-mail, huddles, notice boards).
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The committee members quickly provided specific examples of the main risk factors for occupational ill-health (i.e., job control, workplace support, and influence), and they were asked to identify potential solutions for the next meeting.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
7 November 2003 X Region Steering committee Meeting II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members reported on the outcomes of the structured brainstorming sessions they had conducted with their colleagues. • The following issues were raised: highly prescriptive telephone scripts, allowing low levels of colleague flexibility; inflexibility in short-term short-notice holidays; low colleague morale; and, the need to maximise communication between colleagues and senior management. • Potential workable solutions were identified including: proposed changes to telephone scripts, permitting greater colleague flexibility and involvement in telephone script development; decisions about short-term, short-notice holidays to be made locally (as

	<p>opposed to centrally); have non-work related activities every Friday; and, developing a shared mailbox to enable colleagues to directly ask senior management questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members decided to go back to colleagues with a summary of the discussion; the aim being to further develop potential workable solutions.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> A very productive meeting. Committee members had shown initiative in linking the general work related risk factors to specific employee issues, and, as a result, it is not surprising that they identified potentially important improvements to work organisation.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>16 December 2003 X Region Steering committee Meeting III</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a review of the change initiatives discussed at the previous meeting. • Mortgage representatives in X1 location discussed how their team had already implemented needed changes to the decision-making process about short-term, short-notice holidays. As a result of their efforts, decisions are now made locally by Team Managers as opposed to centrally. • Two changes were proposed to increase employees' job control: (1) increasing colleague flexibility when using telephone scripts, and involving colleagues (i.e., the front-line workers) in script development. • The group also proposed that (2) the changes to decision-making about short-term, short-notice holidays should be extended to colleagues in X2 location, in order to improve their perceptions of workplace support. This increased perception of workplace support would be complemented by the development of a central database with non-work related team activities that Team Leaders could utilise for team building activities. • Steering Committee members also proposed to increase employees' ability to influence organisational practices and policies, by developing a shared mailbox that would enable colleagues to communicate directly with Heads of Contact Centres. • Discussion focused on how workplace support could be further improved. Group members decided to investigate this area further by issuing a survey to colleagues exploring perceptions of performance monitoring. • Committee members were encouraged to begin implementing the above strategies for increasing job control, support and organisational influence prior to the next meeting.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> Another productive meeting. The group quickly built upon the</p>	

issues discussed in the previous meeting, and were able to further develop these ideas. Changes had already been implemented in some teams. The group agreed on proposed changes to be taken forward

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>28 January 2004</p> <p>X Region Steering committee Meeting IV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives agreed in the previous meeting and the steps taken regarding their implementation were discussed. • It was agreed that working groups, consisting of colleagues across different product areas, would be developed to evaluate telephone scripts, the aim being to increase colleague flexibility and control. • Committee members discussed how a shared mailbox detailing ideas about desk-based team games had been developed in X1 location. • Group members discussed how this idea could be publicised across the business. • X1 representatives discussed how they had developed a shared mailbox to optimise communication between Contact Centre managers and colleagues. Ideas about how this initiative could be set up in X2 location were generated and next steps established. • Committee members were encouraged to continue implementing strategies for increasing job control and organisational influence over the next few months. • The findings from the performance monitoring survey were fed back to the group by the project researchers.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The group had further developed agreed change initiatives from the previous meeting. Next steps were agreed.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>8 April 2004</p> <p>X Region Steering committee Meeting V</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreed change initiatives were reviewed. • Working groups had been formed at X1 location , and colleagues consulted about telephone scripts. Following three meetings, colleague suggestions have been fed back to Head Office. • Steering Committee members in X1 location described how, as a direct consequence of this initiative, colleagues are now being consulted about telephone scripts that are due to come into effect from October, and the scripts altered accordingly. • Committee members at X2 location plan to set up working groups to ascertain colleague views on telephone scripts. • Committee members discussed how ‘Bright Ideas’, a shared mailbox with examples of desk-based team games, has been developed in X1 location and X2 location • The group identified and agreed methods of how this initiative could be communicated to both colleagues and

	<p>managers across the business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared mailbox, whereby colleagues can e-mail Heads of Operations with work related questions has now been developed across both X1 and X2 business sites. • The group identified and agreed how they could inform colleagues across the business sites about 'Ask Me Another'.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The group had taken steps to further develop the agreed change initiatives since the previous meeting. Next steps for Steering Committee members based in X2 location were agreed, and ideas for sustaining momentum for the initiatives over time, were discussed.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>4 August 2004</p> <p>X2 location</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Loivette met with steering committee members at Leeds RCC to offer support and guidance with initiatives. • The group had taken steps to further develop the agreed change initiatives. A PowerPoint presentation has been compiled and e-mailed to all colleagues explaining 'Ask me Another', since last meeting. • The work changes are in place and running well. The colleagues felt senior managers have been supportive of initiatives, particularly 'Ask me Another'. • Methods to ensure how the initiatives can be sustained over time were discussed (e.g. communicating initiatives to new colleagues, involving other colleagues to manage 'Ask me Another').

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>4 August 2004</p> <p>X1 location</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Loivette met with steering committee members at the X1 location RCC to offer further support and guidance with initiatives. • Steering committee members felt that the initiatives were still running well. • Methods to ensure how the initiatives can be sustained over time were discussed.

**The Intervention Programme (RCCs) – Y Region
(October 2003 – July 2004)**

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>30 October 2003</p> <p>Y Region Steering committee Meeting I</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a recap of the nature of the project and the role of the steering committee. • Committee members were provided with a copy of the ‘Initial Findings’ report. • Dr Frank Bond, discussed the report, identifying the key work-related risk factors linked to employees’ well-being (motivation, mental health, job satisfaction, and turnover intention). • Job control, workplace support, and (to a lesser extent) influence were highlighted as risk factors. • Specific examples of these general risk factors were elicited from the steering group. These were the ability to self-manage one’s time; communication/feedback as to why particular targets are set and if they have been achieved; and problems with informational support systems. • Members were asked to generate potential ideas/solutions for risk reduction in time for the next meeting. • The group discussed methods of ascertaining ideas (e.g. e-mail, huddles, notice boards). • Committee members agreed to e-mail Dr Bond with the ideas generated by colleagues by 21 November 2003.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> As with the X1/X2 group, committee members were quickly able to identify examples of low job control, workplace support and influence.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>6 November 2003</p> <p>Y Region Steering committee Meeting II</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group generated and discussed some examples of the general work-related risk factors. • Committee members discussed the outcomes of the brainstorming sessions that they had conducted with their colleagues. • The following issues were raised: poor inter-departmental communication; inflexibility in break times; poor support from Team Mangers. • Potential ideas/solutions for risk reduction included: logs of insurance cancellations to be fed back to colleagues daily, to enable them to re-evaluate targets and workload; increased flexibility in break times;

	<p>Team Leaders to hold ‘Burning Issues’ meetings to increase colleagues’ perceptions of workplace support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members decided to go back to colleagues with a summary of the discussion; the aim being to further develop potential workable solutions.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The Steering Committee generated a number of ideas for changes that would improve work organisation factors identified as problematic, in the risk assessment exercise. The group agreed to begin implementing some changes immediately (i.e., Burning Issue meetings), and further explore how other ideas could be implemented.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>14 January 2004</p> <p>Y Region Steering committee Meeting III</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a recap of the project and the ideas that the group had previously generated. • Group members discussed how their teams had already implemented ‘Burning Issues’ meetings, and discussed how the meetings could be further refined. • Committee members decided to explore approaches that different Team Leaders and Managers utilised for communicating with colleagues. • Committee members discussed how workplace support could be improved. Given that communication/feedback as to why particular targets are set and if they have been achieved was raised in an earlier meeting, the group members decided to investigate this area further by issuing a survey to colleagues, ascertaining views on performance monitoring.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> Some teams had begun trialing some work change initiatives. These changes were reviewed and developed further. The specific issues raised regarding workplace support were similar to those identified in X Region.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>25 February 2004</p> <p>Y Region Steering committee Meeting IV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a review of the change initiatives discussed at the previous meeting. • The issue surrounding inflexibility in break times was explored by Steering Committee members but could not be altered to increase employee control, due to business constraints. • Burning Issues meeting continue to take place. Discussion focused on how often such meeting were necessary. The teams continue to hold such meetings once per month. • Colleague views on telephone scripts have been sought, and suggestions for changes forwarded to Y Region for further consultation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches that different Team Leaders and Managers utilise to aid communication with colleagues will be explored next by the Steering Committee members. • Dr Bond fed back the results of the performance monitoring survey to the Steering Committee members. It was agreed that these findings should support other projects across the business.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The group built on the issues that were discussed in the previous meeting. They had taken steps to develop two initiatives (1) increasing colleague control over telephone interactions and, (2) increasing colleague support via ‘Burning Issues’ meetings. Next steps were agreed.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
14 May 2004 Y Region Steering committee Meeting IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All change initiatives were reviewed • Approaches that managers utilise to foster good communication with colleagues continue to be explored by colleagues. • Burning issues meeting continue and steering committee members believe they are proving beneficial. • The group felt it was important for new colleagues joining the business to be aware of such meetings, and committee members agreed to publicise the initiative via notice boards across the different areas. • Dr Bond discussed the links between the Motivation and Retention project and other projects within the host organisation, and committee members plan to explain the relationships between projects to colleagues.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> Committee members felt that ‘Burning Issues’ meetings in particular were proving beneficial, and plan to feedback the ‘bigger picture’ to colleagues.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
9 July 2004 Y Region Y1 location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Loivette visited the Y1 location RCC, to review information committee members had gathered on manager communication strategies. • One of the committee members felt that there was a lot of literature generated by the host organisation on optimal communication methods, but this was not being utilised by managers. • It was agreed this information would be feedback to Human Resources.

**The Intervention Programme (RCCs) – Z Region
(October 2003 – May 2004)**

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
30 October 2003 Z Region Steering committee Meeting I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a recap of the nature of the project and the role of the steering committee. • Committee members were provided with a copy of the ‘Initial Findings’ report. • Dr Frank Bond, discussed the report, identifying the key work-related risk factors linked to employees’ well-being (motivation, mental health, job satisfaction, and turnover intention). • Job control, workplace support, and (to a lesser extent) influence were highlighted as risk factors. • Specific examples of these general risk factors were elicited from the steering group. These were the ability to self-manage one’s time; communication/feedback as to why particular targets are set and if they have been achieved; and problems with informational support systems. • Members were asked to generate potential ideas/solutions for risk reduction in time for the next meeting. • Discussed methods of ascertaining ideas (e.g., e-mail, huddles, notice boards). • Committee members agreed to e-mail Dr Bond with the ideas generated by colleagues prior to next meeting.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The Committee members were able to provide specific examples of the main risk factors. It was agreed that they would work with colleagues to generate specific ideas for work-change interventions prior to the next meeting.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
18 December 2003 Z Region Steering committee Meeting II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a recap of the nature of the project and clarification of the concepts of control, workplace support and influence. • Specific examples of these general risk factors were elicited from the Steering Committee. Examples included: low levels of Team Leader-colleague communication, limited job control; inadequate communication and support from colleagues across different product areas; Team Leaders spending insufficient time supporting/training colleagues. • Potential workable solutions were identified, including: colleague representation at management meetings about

	<p>interest changes etc.; colleague involvement with the development of telephone scripts; colleague support from administration staff, by ensuring correct contact details are given to customers; colleagues to have 1-2-1 meetings with Team Leaders; a designated point of contact at each product area; additional personnel to support Team Leaders with administrative duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members agreed to give colleagues a summary of the discussion, and attempt to further develop potential workable solutions.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The Steering Committee was able to link specific employee issues to the general work related risk factors and identify possible ways to improve the identified risk factors.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>29 January 2004</p> <p>Z Region Steering committee Meeting III</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting began with a review of the change initiatives discussed at the previous meeting. • Changes were proposed to increase employees' job control: (1) increasing colleague flexibility when using telephone scripts, and colleague involvement in script development; and, (2) colleague representation at meetings with Team Leaders and senior personnel when work changes are communicated. • The group also proposed to improve colleagues' perceptions of workplace support and suggested Team Leaders should hold 1-2-1 meetings with individual colleagues. • Other potential workable solutions discussed, included: specifying a designated point of contact at each product area; additional personnel to support Team Leaders with administrative duties; minimise workload by ensuring customers are given the correct contact details. • Additional issues raised focused on how Team Leader-colleague communication could be improved. Specifically, committee members felt that the amount of time Team Leaders spent giving feedback to colleagues could be increased. Steering Group members agreed that this area would benefit from further investigation. As with X Region, and Y Region, the group decided to distribute a short survey to examine colleague perceptions of performance monitoring in detail.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> Committee members were encouraged to explore how the suggested work change initiatives could be implemented, prior to the next meeting.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
4 March 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives agreed in the previous meeting, and the steps taken regarding their implementation, were discussed.

<p>Z Region Steering committee Meeting IV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the call centre at Z2 location discussed how their team had already implemented changes to foster better communication. Colleagues are now represented at briefings about changes such as interest rates. • The group proposed Administration staff should be informed about the additional workload placed on colleagues, when customers are given inadequate information about whom they should contact. • It was agreed that each product area should have a representative that is responsible for obtaining colleague feedback on scripts, and then for communicating concerns and suggestions to risk and regulatory review. • Strategies for communicating this initiative to colleagues were developed (e.g., via huddles, notice boards). • The findings from the performance monitoring survey were fed back to the group by the project researchers. • It was agreed the findings would be utilised by another project examining the Team Leader role. • Committee members were encouraged to continue implementing strategies for increasing job control over the next few months.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> The group had further developed agreed change initiatives from the previous meeting. Next steps were agreed.</p>	

Date/activity	Key issues/outcomes
<p>13 May 2004</p> <p>Z Region Steering committee Meeting V</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All work change initiatives were reviewed. • Steering committee members felt that the project and consequent work-related changes had engendered better communication channels between colleagues and managers. In particular, many managers are using a more consultative approach with colleagues and communicating proposed business changes and reasons. • Dr Bond gave an overview of how the relationship between the Motivation and Retention project and other host organisation projects.
<p><i>Meeting summary:</i> Initiatives were reviewed. Committee members were pleased with the implemented changes, and felt that communication between colleagues and managers in particular, had improved as a direct consequence of the project to date.</p>	