



EMCC company network

Achieving gender balance: Four case examples

*Grupo Texto Editores:
About respect and personal development*

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The case examples are available in electronic format only.

In a seminar organised for members of its Company Network, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions explored corporate practices leading to a better work-life balance for women and men, while also contributing to enhanced competitiveness and human resource management models in European countries. The seminar 'Achieving gender balance – strategies for competitiveness' was held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 18–19 November 2004. Four companies from Portugal, Denmark, France, and the United Kingdom (an SME in publishing and printing, a public/private consultancy firm, a multinational and a public health authority) presented both professional and personal experiences to an audience of 42 participants from 14 EU countries.

Grupo Texto Editores: About respect and personal development

Box 1: Overview

This case example is of Grupo Texto Editores and looks at the way in which this company has developed and been able to assume a pre-eminent position in Portuguese publishing and printing. To ensure that the company's objectives of quality and profitability were achieved, its management understood that it was essential to recruit the best staff available and to provide the right environment in which they could work, flourish and reach their potential. As a result of hiring highly qualified employees to make the company profitable, they unwittingly realised complete gender balance and equality, while also creating a more competitive company.

The company has been recognised by the Portuguese Commission for Equality at Work (CITE) as a prime example of good employment practice including gender equality. In 2000, CITE awarded the *Gender Equality and Quality Award* to Grupo Texto Editores.

Company profile

Grupo Texto Editores is a Portuguese SME, founded in 1977, which originally focused on the publishing and distribution of schoolbooks. In 1986, the company launched its first line of non-educational publications opening up new markets; in 1995 it launched Universal, an imprint specialising in dictionaries and reference books. Further to this, the company ventured into multimedia and 'edutainment' and also started an e-commerce project called 'Mediabooks.pt'. The company publishes in the Portuguese language only and is now a leader in these fields.

In 1996 the company began a process of internationalisation by opening Mozambique Editoria. Following an internal restructuring period in 2000, it started Cape Verde Editoria in 2001 with Luanda Editoria, in Angola, following in 2002. The company thereby consolidated its investment by strengthening its ties with clients in Portuguese speaking countries in Africa, and by creating its own market segment there. Now after 27 years of operation, Grupo Texto Editores occupies the largest presence in the Portuguese-speaking world. The group has developed into a content management company and ensures the best marketing for its titles. The company employs some 300 people of which 49.8% are women, with a 2003 turnover of €26.5 million.

The company places high priority on gender equality in the workforce. It has taken conscious corporate decisions to facilitate work-life balance practices resulting in equity in the recruitment and selection of employees, career development, training and promotion, flexible working hours, employees' discounts for the purchase of schoolbooks as well as medical insurance for the whole family. These initiatives have resulted in high employee satisfaction, commitment and productivity. The company won the *Gender Equality and Quality Award* in 2000, awarded by CITE, the Portuguese National Commission of Equality at Work.

Box 2: *Some statements from within Grupo Texto Editores*

Question from a Director:

Why do I have more women than men in my company?

Answer HR Director:

Because I am responsible for staff selection and I only hire the better qualified and better prepared people.

Head of the Logistics Division responsible for recruiting temporary warehouse personnel:

When I recruited temporary staff this year I chose to select more women than men for the warehouse because they are more attentive to what they are doing and we have less absence.

The female Head of Marketing and Editorial to HR Manager:

Don't give me any more women; give me a man this time!

Employee in Human Resources department:

Curious how there are more women in the production departments and men seem to be mainly in the support sectors.

Interview with a female employee of 35, a qualified professional:

How do I like to spend my free time? Sleeping! I am married with two children and a profession. What do you think?

The most important thing is to sleep so I can face my working days.

Company structure

Grupo Texto Editores is a private limited company, very much owner inspired and with a horizontal management structure including departments such as: school books (editing and marketing); general books (editing and marketing), production; finance; general services (insurance/security/reception/telephone/cleaning etc); sales, informatics, logistics; human resources (HR); and international relations. The HR department controls the staff budget, as well as having responsibility for quality standards. It therefore plays a pivotal role in developing appropriate staff policies and recruitment of new employees who are capable of achieving the company objectives of quality and profitability.



For further information on Grupo Texto Editores, please visit their website at: <http://www.textoeditores.com>.

Corporate culture – Grupo Texto Editores' seven principles

The company believes that its most essential requirement is to have a committed workforce. There are no measurement tools in place for this, performance and business success is judged by company results alone. Staff retention is strong and employee turnover rates are low with almost everybody working full-time. Seven principals characterise the company culture and explain many of the actions bringing gender balance into existence as not only as a tool for competitiveness but as a matter of course:

1. Dynamism:

Recognise the need to do new things, to grow and identify opportunities and take advantage of them. The company considers itself to be ambitious and believes this is a virtue.

2. Strength:

Growth is to be sustained, even if slowly. As a well-organised company, Texto Editores does not want to be faced with situations without the capacity to respond.

3. Credibility:

All sectors of Grupo Texto Editores need to be scrupulous in their business dealings, transmitting the image of being serious and responsible, ensuring the work ethic and reinforcing confidence in the company.

4. Commitment:

The ability and will to get things done; to ensure the presence of skilled staff enabling the company to invest in profitability, and to be demanding and critical of quality so as to ensure added value.

5. Equality:

The company believes in equal opportunities for all, and continually improves the organisation and guarantees the correct treatment for all its workers.

6. Quality:

Quality certification is not considered to be an end in itself but an accredited value that comes from being fully aware of company procedures, methods of implementing actions, and criteria that allow it to continually improve its services.

7. Responsibility:

It is the company's responsibility to identify customer needs and act against inefficiency and loss, as well as to be constantly aware and critical of its work processes.

Overall ambition

The company also retains an overall ambition to be the first and best in all its activities. This has been apparent in its creation of the first Virtual Library on-line (1995), the launch of the first Portuguese CD-Rom Dictionary (1996), the creation of Editora Global to publish expressly for the Portuguese-speaking territories of Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Angola.

In the case of Grupo Texto Editores, this corporate culture appears to be the major driver behind the success of its gender equality policies.

Company dynamics

At Grupo Texto Editores, they believe that the company is comprised of people and that interaction between different individuals is essential. The social needs of employees are not to be a constraint on the operation of the company since the organisation believes that it is the individual within the company who makes the difference. Therefore, solutions to problems have to be sought and provided. For example, if an employee needs to look after a child, the company seeks to provide the workplace solution to enable this to be done, and management is expected to be capable of responding and adapting rapidly to both external as well as internal pressures. This, in itself, has created a spirit of collective consciousness, a sense of belonging and of being involved in the joint mission of ‘quality and profitability’ and ‘being the first in everything’.

This company culture also seeks to involve staff at all levels in the entrepreneurial spirit of the organisation with each department defining its objectives on an annual basis and creating a plan for their achievement. Periodic meetings are held for medium and senior staff to collaborate and analyse problems and situations, as well as to establish best practice strategies.

The company maintains the following objectives: high editorial quality, commercial innovation, rigorous financial control, and to recruit the best qualified candidates so as to ensure success in growing capabilities.

Company dynamics stimulate quality of life as well as work-life balance inside the company and the satisfaction of employees makes it possible to achieve higher levels of motivation, productivity and competitiveness.

Human resources objectives

The HR department controls the overall employment budget and cooperates with the directors of the different departments to ensure that three main objectives are met:

- Growing and consolidating the best conditions to allow staff to work to optimum levels
- Increasing staff capacities and knowledge
- Promoting personal and professional development.

These three objectives are achieved through good staff management policies, motivational support for employees’ good performances and adequate vocational training. Staff feel content working for the company, and the company offers them certain benefits over and above the Portuguese legal requirements, such as a bonus of half of one months pay for those getting married (provided they have worked for over one year for the company).

The company has no works council, not because it is not wanted but because the employees feel they do not need it. Ill-feeling between management and employees or vice versa does not exist so there has never been an employment ‘intervention’ nor has any union ever presented itself to represent the workers.

Professional development of employees is considered crucial. Workers are encouraged to progress and advance in their careers and most recruitment is internal with new posts being offered to existing staff before being externally advertised. A young employee working in the packing department some years ago who developed his career to becoming Managing Director of the Angolan division is a case in point.

Staff assessments are undertaken twice a year and staff members are encouraged to consider their own future development. Skills development and the attainment of further qualifications are very much part of the corporate culture as is consideration of the demands of each employee's job.

Staff benefits

In addition the company feels it necessary to go beyond the law in practicing equality. If the law says it is incumbent on a company to allow a nursing mother to breastfeed for two hours a day, the company recognises that sometimes more time is required and provides it. Where the law gives more rights to women, the company is concerned to give more. Furthermore, the company has been collaborating with Disabled Organisations, employing young disadvantaged people, opening up horizons. An example is one young employee with cerebral palsy, who is employed in the media books section and, through careful nurturing, has been well integrated and is fulfilled through doing a marvellous job.

Women receive special protection during pregnancy without loss of benefits. Company employee benefits include:

- Subsidised staff canteen
- Library with free access to books
- Health insurance
- Accident insurance
- Discount on all company books and products
- An annual company incentive party
- All workers participate in an annual anniversary party held for clients
- Special staff Christmas party held for workers and their families
- Special assistance for health issues
- Housing assistance
- Retirement benefits
- Educational assistance
- New projects coming on stream to support staff include a day care centre on site and a sports club.

Gender balance

The gender balance is striking in nearly all departments of the organisation and was achieved without making too much of a conscious effort. In 2004, Grupo Texto Editores saw the announcement in the paper of the first ever CITE (the Portuguese National Commission for Equality at Work) award for gender equality and work-life balance for staff. When examining the application form for this award, HR managers realised that the company matched all the criteria – 'This is us' they said.

Table 1 and 2 below illustrate the distribution of staff as well as of functions in between male and female employees at Grupo Texto Editores in December 2002 and October 2004.

Table 1: *Distribution of functions between male and female employees, December 2002*

Qualification level	Women		Men	
	Number	%	Number	%
Directors	0	0	3	2.4
Managers	6	5.2	9	7.3
Middle managers	5	4.3	6	4.8
Intermediate managers	13	11.3	18	14.5
Highly qualified professionals	36	31.3	19	15.3
Qualified professionals	28	24.3	27	21.8
Partly qualified professionals	17	14.8	14	11.3
Non qualified professionals	10	8.7	8	22.6
Total	115	100	124	100
Relative percentage		48.1		51.9

Table 2: *Distribution of functions between male and female employees, October 2004*

Qualification level	Women		Men	
	Number	%	Number	%
Directors	0	0	3	2.2
Managers	7	5.2	11	8.1
Middle managers	9	6.7	7	5.1
Intermediate managers	16	11.9	19	14.0
Highly qualified professionals	24	17.8	19	14.0
Qualified professionals	39	28.9	31	22.8
Partly qualified professionals	23	17.0	16	11.8
Non qualified professionals	17	12.6	30	22.1
Total	135	100	135	100
Relative percentage		49.8		50.2

Striving for quality and equality

The overriding strategic objective of the company is to manage quality at all levels, to ensure customer satisfaction and workforce pride in the job. In wanting to be the first and best in the business through the achievement of continuous improvement driven by client satisfaction, the company takes time to ensure that all errors are investigated and internal functions made easier through critical analysis. This approach resulted in the Grupo Texto Editores obtaining the Certificate of Quality in the ISO 9001:2000.

The 'Equality Standards' are contained within the company manual and are available to all employees. The standards are implemented both materially and objectively in all activities of the firm. No single employee should be discriminated against for sex, race, language, political convictions, ideology or social position as stated in Portuguese law.

The HR department is also responsible for the quality of management at Grupo Texto Editores.

Conclusions and observations

- Successful employee relations stem from the company's capacity to respond to the needs of the workforce and this can only be achieved if the company is capable of adapting to ever changing situations.
- The owner-created and sustained corporate culture at Texto Editores is the driver behind the development of a sensible gender friendly internal policy.
- In the case of Grupo Texto Editores' a works council was not found to be necessary because its management is ahead of the game and has provided for the correct level of care for the workforce, making the corporate social conscience part of the company's social culture.
- Grupo Texto Editores has become celebrated for its gender balance record, which it achieved, almost by default. Not consciously setting out to achieve a gender balance among the workforce, it recruited on the principle of hiring the best and attracting good employees through its forward looking HR policies. In this way, it achieved a gender balance and an enviable record of staff satisfaction. As envisaged at the outset, looking after the staff paid dividends with satisfied customers.
- Being national leaders in their field year after year means that Grupo Texto Editores remains competitive. Much of this success is the result of the sensible gender policy it has implemented within the company.

Mr Luis Pedro Nunes, Head of Global Human Resources operations for the Group, presented this case example at the company network seminar in Lisbon, Portugal, on 18–19 November 2004.

Danish Technological Institute: Paternity leave – a personal experience

Box 1: *Overview*

The Danish Technology Institute (DTI) case example describes the strategies of a well-established consulting firm aiming to become a preferred employer in a competitive labour market. It is also the personal story of a male senior consultant who, by choosing to balance his personal and professional life, has contributed to changing traditional perceptions and role models within his company.

This case covers the decisions he took to implement some of the flexible work choices available and his conclusions following the experience – an enriching experience for him both personally and professionally. The case example covers the legal framework of maternity and paternal leave in Denmark, and describes how legislation, societal culture and forward thinking mindsets can create the right basis for a balanced reconciliation of work and family life, while also enabling an organisation to become more competitive.

Company profile

The Danish Technology Institute (DTI) occupies a crucial position at the point where research, business, and the community converge. The institute's mission is to promote growth by improving interaction and encourage synergies between these three areas. DTI was founded as an independent institution in 1906 and is one of the oldest of its type in the world. It is an independent, not-for-profit institution approved by the Danish authorities to provide technological services to business and the community.

DTI employs experts with different backgrounds in 40 centres organised under the auspices of the six organisational units that define the main parameters for their work. DTI has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to innovation and to the task of improving the ability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to exploit new technologies and management tools. Customer activities and close cooperation with a wide range of enterprises account for the majority of the Institute's turnover of some €83 million.

Around 10% of DTI's turnover stems from international projects and activities. It now has almost 850 employees, making it one of the world's largest private institutes to supply approved technological services such as consultancy, tests, certification and training for companies and public-sector organisations.

As part of its strategy to become a preferred employer in the future and to compete with other respected consultancy firms in Denmark, DTI has embarked on a process of energising its image with more junior professionals. An increasing number of young people in Denmark prefer flexibility at work and the creation of a good work-life balance rather than higher salaries. For this very reason DTI has made flexibility part of its human resources (HR) policy as a way of remaining competitive.

For further information on the Danish Technology Institute, please visit the institute's website at <http://www.danishtechnology.dk>.

Danish legislative framework: An opportunity to increase competitiveness

The mission of DTI is to be the main service institute to Danish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and an important supplier of specialist know-how to large companies. It also aims to be a dynamic developer and mediator of new technological know-how to innovative Danish companies and a recognised service supplier in the northern and eastern European markets.

DTI endeavours to become an attractive partner to research centres, organisations, institutions and public authorities as well as private consultants. It is therefore an important link between the latest national and international trends and is characterised for being highly innovative and competitive. DTI believes that this can only be achieved if it employs the best possible professional staff in all age groups, who are willing to contribute to the organisation with skills, knowledge, experience and commitment. DTI has successfully retained its employees and has a relatively large number of long-serving employees. However, the challenge is that of attracting young blood to enable the organisation to become even more competitive.

Surveys indicate that DTI currently ranks number 69 within the top 100 companies for Danish students considering employment, while its main competitors are in the top 30. Company branding and marketing play an important role in this repositioning, but it takes a long time to change the traditionally dusty image of a knowledge-intensive service company. Therefore DTI has decided to pursue a strategy based on sound HR policies allowing its employees to balance their professional and personal lives through flexible work arrangements.

Recent surveys also indicate that nowadays salary is not the motivator for young employees in Denmark. This might be because of the relatively high national tax rates. Either way, young employees and jobseekers are placing a higher value on professional development and also the flexibility of their work/life choices.

Human resources policy of DTI

In order to meet the expectations and demands of potential new employees, DTI's more recent employment strategy has focused on the introduction of measures to ensure flexibility in work and private life and on the creation of opportunities for education and professional development.

For example, DTI offers 25 weeks fully paid maternity leave for women which is a little above the legal requirement and seven weeks paternity leave for men which is significantly above the legal requirement. The institute also offers other employee benefits such as subsidised fitness club membership, fixed two week education opportunities and assistance in 'quit smoking' programmes. However, competitors also offer similar benefits including health insurance packages

In the past women took all of the available maternity leave, but over the past five years, men have also begun to avail of their entitlement which has created more acceptance of the practice. Today, practically everybody takes the leave but with many men opting to take it on the basis of one day per week.

DTI sees to it that the details of maternity/paternity leave are arranged directly between the employee and the HR department. This ensures that all employees receive equal treatment with regard to leave entitlement and relieves line managers from the pressure related to this kind of decision-making.

More of a challenge for DTI is managing the reintegration of employees that go on leave. Experience shows that this is not an easy process for either party especially after a longer absence. DTI is currently developing new reintegration schemes, which include gradual adaptation, mentoring and guidance.

Legal framework in Denmark: The national context for ‘maternity leave’

The legal framework for maternity leave in Denmark is 52 weeks of total maternity/paternity leave. The mother gets four weeks before the baby is born and 14 weeks after the birth (a total of 18 weeks). The father gets two weeks when the baby is born, which he has to take immediately following the birth, otherwise this entitlement is lost.

In addition there is a further 32-weeks parental leave which can be divided between the father and the mother. The couple may even postpone 8–13 weeks of that parental leave to make use of it up to the ninth birthday of their child.

The financing of this parental leave is a guaranteed minimum per diem allowance from the government. Deals with employers may ensure that employees on leave receive their full wage and this is partly reimbursed by the State to the employer for the value of the per diem amount. The Danish norm for a working week is 37 hours. These options are seen as being more than just paid maternity leave but also the offer of an arrangement that enhances choice and flexibility for families – over a nine-year period.

In practice, use of this benefit is often gender-based with the mother taking the bulk of the leave not simply for health and recovery but also for economic reasons, since the man usually earns more than the woman and therefore it is more expensive for him to take paternity leave (see the report on **Women’s and men’s wages**¹, published in 2003 by the Confederation of Danish Employers). The advanced Danish legislative framework with regard to gender policies allows for employers to develop practices aimed at offering appropriate work-life balance for their employees.

Paternity leave – a personal experience

This case example describes the personal story of Jonas Svava-Iversen, a senior consultant at the Danish Technological Institute (DTI). Like most consultants, Jonas’ job is project-based and involves travelling abroad on a regular basis, thus making it imperative for him to be available to his clients rather than being part of a routine production process.

The presentation he gave in the framework of the seminar, referred to his own experience in choosing to take paternity leave, using the opportunities given to him by the Danish legislative framework and the competitive HR strategy of DTI.

Paternity leave for Jonas

When Jonas and his wife realised that they were going to have their first child they were both pursuing highflying careers and decisions on how to make use of the leave options available were taken jointly. Although childcare facilities are subsidised and provided for by the state and they could have opted for putting their baby in a daycare centre, the couple wanted their child to have reached a certain age before doing so. A further consideration for re-evaluating the standard ‘distribution of tasks’ was that the mother wanted to return to work at a specific time in order to influence some important decisions that were being made in her company, and which affected her own career. Both partners felt it necessary that paternity leave could only be taken with full salary compensation. Therefore, they decided to share the ‘burden’ within the given possibilities and Jonas arranged his paternal leave as follows:

He took the two weeks paid paternity leave when Hannah was born and a further seven weeks paid paternity leave and three weeks annual vacation leave when she was seven and a half months, a total of 12 weeks. Jonas received full support for his choices from his boss and colleagues. Some of them were even jealous thinking that he was about to undertake some sort of vacation. This was not the case and he certainly did not return to work ‘rested’. He was even frustrated and surprised that there was insufficient time for him to do all the things he had planned during the leave period.

¹ <http://www.da.dk/SuperShowDoc.asp?pid=20040401133643ILP>

Motivations behind the choices

In the first six months after a child's birth, the father usually does not feel as involved as the mother in the day-to-day chores. It is as if he is playing the role of 'spectator' or, at best, 'substitute' and is consequently 'not in the game'. The couple realised that it was important to reestablish some sort of practical balance in their relationship after the birth and this could not be done unless father and daughter got to know each other better or equally as well as mother and daughter.

New priorities

After the initial period of getting used to his new role, Jonas and his daughter had a wonderful time and got to know each other well. The 10 weeks flew by and during this time he discovered where his new priorities lay. When you have a first child, everything has to be redefined.

Jonas used the metaphor of a football game. Soccer matches are won in the 'midfield' and this period of getting to know each other was described as a 'midfield game'. After the initial period of the mother taking full-time care of their daughter, Jonas then got his opportunity to bond with her by caring for her full time and for 10 weeks in one stretch. They had got their 'midfield' together.

Afterwards: finding a new balance

Jonas found that a 10 week absence is sufficient to get 'out of the loop' and he even felt estranged on coming back to work, needing to fight his way back. However, he now feels that he is benefiting from the new situation and a better work-life balance. To some extent, he is now less available for the social life associated with the work environment but he feels he is able to prioritise more easily and effectively which leads to his being more efficient at work.

Reflections and conclusions

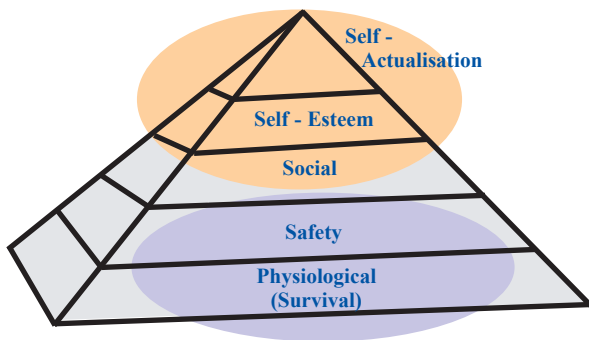
For the organisation

- DTI is in a highly competitive business sector and needs to focus very strongly on attracting and retaining its young employees. The competition is also aware of this and competes in a similar manner, enforcing DTI to continue to further develop its HR policies in order to remain ahead of the game.
- Future career opportunities and the possibility of truly influencing the balance between personal and professional life are now the two most important parameters when young people look for jobs in Denmark. DTI is aware of this and plans its internal personnel policies with this in mind.
- By allowing Jonas to benefit from flexible work practices, the organisation has now secured his commitment and intellectual capital for the coming years.
- The more flexibility that DTI is able to offer the less staff turnover it will have and, in turn, recruitment and selection costs will be kept to a minimum.

For the individual

- Essentially there are two very different ways in which maternity/paternity leave can be used:
 - to have a long consecutive period of time with the child during which a strong relationship can be established, or
 - to relieve the pressure of a hectic life where both parents are working and the child is in daycare.
- In this particular case, the choices were made based on certain values but it was found that these changed as the scenario developed and Jonas experienced the effects of his choices. He now knows that getting to know his daughter was 'better than work'.

- Should there be a next time, Jonas believes he would take more paternity leave, since the value of ‘slow time’ in the current fast track lives cannot be underestimated.
- Quoting Maslow’s ‘Hierarchy of needs’ pyramidal example, Jonas placed the family economic conditions at the pyramidal base (physiological/survival and safety levels) but posed the real question as being ‘What are our economic priorities?’ to point to the pyramidal apex of self-actualisation.



For society

- Society’s attitude to men’s role and responsibilities is changing. The process is slow and differs between cultures, but in the case of Denmark and, to a large extent due to its well-developed legislation, traditional perceptions are changing.
- Older members of society are beginning to understand the need for greater flexibility and equality as they come to face elder care issues or simply wish to pursue other interests. They are becoming more supportive of change.
- Increased public discussion on topics of gender balance, equality, retirement options etc will enhance acceptance in management at all levels.

Mr Jonas Svava Iversen, Senior Consultant for the Danish Technological Institute (DTI), presented this case example at the company network seminar in Lisbon, Portugal, on 18–19 November 2004.

Nestlé S.A.: Wallpapering over the imbalance

Box 1: Overview

The Nestlé France case example describes the challenge of achieving gender balance within a large multinational company whose current recruitment and training policies are seen by union representatives to discriminate against women in the organisation. Senior management appears not to recognise outside competition in recruiting suitable staff for the company, or the squandering of assets in its failure to promote women to senior roles. The company has a strong hierarchical structure and is very much managed from the top down, with senior management controlling staff issues and not always responding to the demands of female employees or their union representatives. In the past, this has resulted in an imbalance of salaries between the sexes, less training and promotion opportunities for women to senior positions. Furthermore, it would appear that recent measures to correct this constitute a case of wallpapering over the cracks rather than addressing real issues.

The case, as presented by a representative of the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (*Confédération française démocratique du travail*, CFDT), looks at the recent history of female employment in Nestlé France and the measures taken to improve internal policies in certain areas. It also includes the union's agenda for future action.

Company profile

Nestlé S.A. was founded in the 1860s in Switzerland, where it is still headquartered in Vevey, with its Central Training Center in Rivereine. The company has grown to become a major multinational with product lines that include pet foods, chocolate and confectionary, bottled water, ice creams and breakfast cereals as well as a wide range of services associated with its products. However its activities have not been limited to these areas, since it has also made strategic and profitable ventures into pharmaceutical and cosmetic sectors.

National branches of Nestlé have considerable freedom for interpreting the managerial guidelines, which, among other things, is reflected in the diversity of its local websites. In 2003, the group employed 253,000 staff, operated 115 plants, with worldwide sales amounting to €57.8 billion. Nestlé has proved to be a highly resilient company having survived consumer highs and lows following two world wars and, more recently, having had its company practices questioned with regard to its lack of social responsibility. By improving its business practices and HR policies the company has recovered from these setbacks and remained a leading player in the food and drink sector.

Its slogan is: *Nestlé: Good Food, Good Life.*

- Nestlé's business objective is to manufacture and market the company's products in such a way as to create value that can be sustained over the long term for shareholders, employees, consumers, and business partners alike.
- Nestlé claims not to favour short-term profit at the expense of successful long-term business development.
- Nestlé recognises that its consumers have a sincere and legitimate trust in the behaviour, beliefs and actions of the company and its brands. More importantly, it is acknowledged that consumer satisfaction is fundamental for business success.
- Nestlé believes that, as a general rule, legislation is the most effective safeguard of responsible conduct, although in

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certain areas, additional guidance to staff in the form of voluntary business principles is beneficial in order to ensure that the highest standards are met throughout the organisation.

- Nestlé is conscious of the fact that the success of a corporation is a reflection of the professionalism, conduct and the responsible attitude of its management and employees. Therefore recruitment of the right people and ongoing training and development are crucial.
- Nestlé continues to maintain its commitment to follow and respect all applicable local laws in each of its markets.

The company's European Works Council is currently attempting to create and introduce more gender friendly policies for the group to enhance career development prospects and work-life balance.

About Nestlé France

Nestlé France is headquartered in Noisiel in the Marne la Vallée department beside Paris. In 2003 the company employed a total of 18,576 people in 35 plants spread throughout the country, and generated sales of €6.5 billion. Its slogan reads: '*Ensemble, mieux manger, mieux vivre*'.

Nestlé France is unionised and the major union, the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (*Confédération française démocratique du travail*, CFDT), is active in representing the interests of its employees. CFDT and the other unions represented in Nestlé have set up a working group on gender issues, mainly consisting of women, which is due to hold talks with management in December 2004 and January 2005. It is hoped that negotiations will be furthered at European Works Council level.

For further information about Nestlé S.A., please visit the group's website at <http://www.nestle.com>. For further information on Nestlé France visit <http://www.nestle.fr>.

Challenge of achieving gender balance at Nestlé France

Status of professional equality at Nestlé France headquarters

In 2003, Nestlé France had 1205 employees at its headquarters of which 57% are women:

	Men	Women
Managerial	407	290
Supervisory	77	318
Clerical	23	36
Average salary [□]	€4,432	€3,721

This balance and overall statistics pattern, though reflecting the situation in 2003, has not changed significantly in the past 10 years. It illustrates that overall there are 25% more women than men in managerial and supervisory grades yet their average salary remains 17% lower.

French legislative framework for professional equality

Since 1950 considerable legislation has been passed in France, aimed at barring discrimination on gender. The Bill of 1972, included in the National Work Code, established equal pay between men and women. In the early 1980s, further bills integrated professional equality between men and women as a solid principle, binding on all employers. These

measures were reinforced in 2001 and the formal process of social dialogue in the workplace was legally established. Today, there is a legal obligation on companies to produce a comparative annual report on the social contract according to a series of defined indicators. This report must be made available to the workforce.

Nowadays annual negotiations on pay, working hours and work organisation must also include consideration of professional equality. When collective agreements are reached they last for three years and must cover collective equality at all levels and in all areas. All companies with over 200 staff must have a professional equality commission and because of the obligation to obtain detailed information to establish where equality lies, the company must supply this together with the relevant comparative information.

Since the 'Equality Label' was established, unions and works councils have a legal base from which to negotiate. Their need is for political will and for social partners' assistance in the negotiations.

French law therefore appears to have put in place a legal framework for the advancement and employment of women in all sectors. However, in Nestlé France there seems to be little evidence of professional equality and gender balancing or, indeed, a genuine will or awareness of the need to introduce it. When benchmarked against its major competitor Danone, Nestlé France falls behind.

Slow way forward towards a professional equality at Nestlé France

In 1992 only 10 per cent of managers were female since the general opinion of senior management was that a manager's life was not compatible with the life of a mother. The French Confederation, CFTD, decided to take this argument to the courts, focusing on the issues of lack of training and promotion policies for women. Issues quoted included those of training sessions and other meetings being called after 5 p.m., which made it easier for men to attend, thereby giving them more opportunities for developing their careers and thus opt for a promotion.

Employee survey in 1999 – highlights and results

In 1999 CFDT carried out a social survey of employment conditions at the Nestlé France headquarters in Noisiel. The expressed objective of the report was to ensure a better future in employment for future generations. This survey covered jobs, their objectives, duration, organisation and working conditions. It further covered training policies and promotion, reconciliation of work and family life balance and the role of secretaries.

Higher average pay for male workers

The survey highlighted discrepancies in average salary between men and women and while employees of both sexes were hired at the same pay levels, the larger male percentage in senior roles meant that the balance became skewed against the female worker. Male employees were enjoying a 16% salary difference excluding stock options, car benefits etc.

Difficulty of re-entry after leave

The survey also brought to light that little consideration was given to women wishing to re-enter the workplace following the 12-month maternity/care leave offered. Re-entry into the work environment was found to be difficult. Women were often penalised and experienced a blank year in professional development, sometimes even losing their original jobs and excluded from promotion and bonuses. In many cases departments had downsized putting new job openings at a premium, and there was an overall reluctance to accept women.

Lack of opportunities for women at supervisory and management levels

Training and development programmes were felt to be mostly aimed at men. There were no women on the management board and, in comparison to men's salaries, those of women appeared to be decreasing. Male salaries were substantially higher than women's. There has been some progress, albeit slow, and it is felt that it will take another two generations to achieve full professional equality at Nestlé France.

Management response

The figures and outcomes of the survey were presented to the Nestlé France management who agreed to adopt a series of measures in order to improve the situation for the female managerial and clerical staff. Those promoting female rights felt they had made the inequalities obvious and demonstrated that the company was failing to tap into 50% of its human potential by its treatment of women. Thus, the company was failing to recognise the important contribution this percentage of staff could make to the competitiveness of the group. The measures introduced by management appear to indicate that there had been some elements of discrimination.

Secretarial staff at Nestlé France headquarters

The same survey looked at the conditions of some 137 secretaries and here the main findings were disquieting. They felt demeaned at having to carry out menial tasks and only simple duties for their bosses. Prospects for promotion or bonuses were rare and additionally, there were little or no career development opportunities for secretaries. Furthermore, secretaries were not subject to annual staff appraisals. The survey indicated that older female workers had gradually accepted this discriminatory situation and did not feel the need to fight it. Younger women, not yet aware of any discrimination in the early part of their careers, often did not realise the extent of the problem until they became mothers and encountered it. Thereafter while devoting themselves to family concerns or trying to achieve a proper life-work balance, they often had neither time nor energy to fight discrimination.

Box 2: Career development for secretaries

The case example of Addenbrooke's hospital, also presented in the framework of this seminar (see below), shows that secretaries can advance in their careers and become successful in other positions if given the right training and coaching. In this context, the case presenter of Addenbrooke's started employment as a secretary, then a period with flexible working hours for child caring and is now working full-time as human resources manager at Addenbrooke's.

Box 3: Uncertainties of investing in young male and female employees

A seminar participant representing Roche Diagnostics highlighted research results of his company showing that it is not only young women who leave the company for maternity leave and who represent an uncertain capital investment. It is often young males who believe that job-hopping every three years is essential for career development and thus leave the company, thereby becoming an even more costly capital investment. This confirms that many of the negative connotations surrounding the hiring of women of child-bearing age are based on misconceptions and that there can be equally negative connotations when hiring young men.

Progress and recent improvements

In 2003, five years following the original 1999 survey on the Noisiel staff, some improvements can be observed.

Female managerial staff

Positive discrimination measures have been put in place to favour women and the glass ceiling has been raised. Some high-level female managers have been appointed and there is now one female board member. Salaries have been increased thus addressing the differential with male pay by initially giving women greater increments. Training periods

at the Nestlé Training Centre in Switzerland have been applied equally for men and women. At the same time, mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that equality is respected, including not only an even allocation of training budgets and salary rises but also changes in job grading and rewards.

Secretarial staff

For the secretaries, a reclassification of their posts has been developed and a training policy has been put in place to reflect specific needs as well as the development of general skills. An annual appraisal scheme is now carried out and consequently more attention is paid to requests for career development. Secretaries have direct access to information through the introduction of computer information systems, which help to make them more assertive and better informed.

Role of the European Works Council

In Nestlé Europe there has been a greater awareness of gender issues. Gender equality in the workplace was first dealt with by the European Works Council in 1996. Since then there has been a 'Declaration of good intention' with regard to gender balance and equality, though it is fair to say that little has happened in this respect at other European branches, with the exception of France. There has been an improvement in the rate of female employment with management statistics reporting that female numbers currently stand at 34% overall with 27% in management grades.

In 2003, an agreement on professional equality was signed by Nestlé and two other unions, though not by CFDT which believed it to be merely a declaration of good intentions that did not go far enough. CFDT is willing to continue the fight. Six years after the 1999 survey there is still not a formal agreement signed between Nestlé and CFDT. Future negotiations are being assisted by the creation of a restricted Working Group – comprising mainly women; this group is set to meet with management in December 2004 and January 2005 with the aim of coming up with concrete proposals for the next European Works Council.

Conclusions and reflections

On management

- Nestlé has until now not been in the forefront of pursuing gender balance or even professional equality among its workforce. As a paternalistic company its management has probably not yet felt a competitive need to pursue a more positive and proactive policy. However, inside forces and the persistence of the trade union movement inside the company, may well inspire management to take on board the issues of equality and gender-balancing at all levels.
- So far competition in recruiting externally has probably not been an issue, and as a result Nestlé is not yet pressed by outside influences to change its attitude rapidly. However, societal change will be likely to influence top management to adopt greater equality and gender friendly work arrangements.

Box 4: The role of top management

This issue was commented on by a seminar participant representing another successful French multinational company – Total. Her organisation had experienced a similar scenario to Nestlé where middle management within Total had adopted a comparably disinterested stand. However, top management have been sincerely interested and concerned in the whole issue of gender and work-life balance and commissioned studies, which are likely to result in policy changes being announced shortly. The company has been seen to respond to legal requirements and new legislation as well as to internal pressure.

On opportunities for change

- Training policies should no longer be developed according to gender but according to the job itself and to the long-term professional development potential of the individual.
- Professional gender equality is still very much the issue and considerations such as paid paternity leave and the acceptance of men sharing in childcare are still causes to be fought.
- Acknowledgement of the need to balance training and career development for both men and women.
- Without appropriate family support structures in place, advances will be hard to achieve. Unions are to stimulate societal change to enhance the provision of more nannies, while more facilities are required for childcare, with flexible opening hours.
- Temporary professional retirement has to be recognised as a norm for either mothers or fathers when children are growing up and it must become accepted that fathers take on similar responsibilities to mothers wherever possible.
- There cannot be real equality in employment if paternity leave is not granted and paid.
- While progress is being made, the process to achieve full gender equality at Nestlé France is considered by the unions to be slow and will continue to be so.
- By not addressing this issue, the company risks failing to achieve an obvious competitive advantage over its rivals.

On the individual

The female employee stands to gain when:

- Women alter the mindset that ‘working well’ is sufficient when they have the opportunity to consider ‘working to do more’.
- Women are prepared and willing to take on more professional roles.
- It is important to raise awareness about the problem at an early stage so that concerns can be voiced in a stronger and more united manner.
- Personal and professional development and reconciliation of work-life issues should be demanded as a standard practice by female and male employees.

Ms Jocelyne Banfi, full time representative of CFDT vis-à-vis Nestlé France, presented this case example at the company network seminar in Lisbon, Portugal, on 18–19 November 2004.

Addenbrooke's Hospital: Flexible working policy as a competitive tool

Box 1: Overview

The Addenbrooke's case example describes the external circumstances leading to the introduction of a flexibility policy at Addenbrooke's hospital and the positive impact this has had on the work-life balance of their employees. This case illustrates how a UK National Health Service (NHS) hospital innovatively competes for staff in a highly competitive market. It also shows how a medical consultant managed to develop and advance in her career while coping with a chronic condition that could have deprived her of her job, thanks to the flexibility offered by Addenbrooke's.

Company profile

Addenbrooke's Hospital is a prestigious three-star NHS Foundation Trust, the Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, based in Cambridge in the United Kingdom (UK). It has a budget of over £300 million, administers around 1,100 beds and employs over 6,500 staff dedicated to the provision of a wide range of clinical and non-clinical services. Addenbrooke's hospital is a leading international centre for biomedical research and medical education, and shares its site with the University of Cambridge, the Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, the British Heart Foundation and Glaxo SmithKline. The hospital is a national and regional centre for cancer services, liver transplants, organ transplantation, neurosciences and genetics. It carried out 85 kidney transplants in 2001.

Addenbrooke's serves as the local district hospital for 0.5 million people who live in the Cambridge sub-region and surrounding district. It provides comprehensive, acute and maternity services. In 2003–2004, some 61,910 men, women and children were treated as inpatients in the hospital's wards. There were 62,684 accident and emergency attendances, 385,249 visits to outpatient clinics and over 5,000 babies born at the Rosie Hospital, part of the Addenbrooke's group of treatment centres.

Addenbrooke's vision statement sets out that

the trust will be an academic clinical centre of international stature, contributing to the health and well-being of the communities they serve through the provision of care; the generation of new knowledge; and the education of healthcare staff.

The Trust believes to have exceptional opportunities in order to generate public benefit, by driving forward a dynamic interaction between clinical care, education, research and economic contribution. The key components of this vision are the international importance of its achievements and the excellence of its academic reputation coupled with high-level research partners, which include the UK's top-rated university and leading Medical Research Council (MRC) units.

The scale and intensity of the interaction between clinical service, education and research are further enhanced by the close co-location of these activities on a shared campus, which has the scope for major expansion. This mix of beneficial elements enables the vision and strategy for expansion of the site into the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Its location is at the heart of the Cambridge sub-region, where a cluster of biomedical and technical companies are based. This means that active and close relationships can be developed between the hospital, research institutes and education authorities, thus working in true local partnership spirit.

Cambridgeshire is a fast growing area with high living costs and high employment levels. The area hosts many large private organisations such as Glaxo, the Wellcome Foundation, research institutions and IT companies, most of which pay substantially higher salaries than the NHS. There is, therefore, a need to be creative and innovative to attract and retain staff at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Education, training and development of employees are seen as key to the delivery of service priorities.

The hospital's employment policies are subject to the UK Employment Act 2002. Thus it is obliged to provide parental and emergency leave and give consideration to flexible work policies. Furthermore, the NHS wishes to be seen as a model employer. Meeting the workforce demand requires staff to work in new and different ways – nurses taking on extended roles, for example. The hospital also needs to be open for longer hours.

For further information on Addenbrooke's Hospital please visit the Trusts website at:
<http://www.addenbrookes.nhs.uk>.

Work-life balance in the healthcare industry: Flexibility as a competitive tool

Employment legislation in the UK is enshrined in the Employment Act of 2002 under which all companies are obliged to provide parental and emergency leave and to give consideration to flexible work policies. Addenbrooke's Hospital is no exception to these requirements.

The NHS considers itself to be a model employer and as such has adopted the slogan '*More staff working differently*' signifying its approach to flexible working, extended leave opportunities and the facilitation of re-entry to employment. It is understood that if staffing levels are to be maintained and turnover kept to a minimum, embracing flexibility is a crucial strategic decision in this process.

The publication 'Learning together – Working together' (2001) sustains this flexible work approach. The booklet sets out a lifelong learning strategy for the NHS showing that recognition of education, training and staff development is fundamental in the ability to deliver service priorities. As such, it promotes diversity and flexible routes to training.

Addenbrooke's and work organisation benefits: a work-life balance

Addenbrooke's staff benefits include ways of working that fit in with the employee's personal responsibilities and needs. The hospital also pays attention to ways of making their employees' working life easier, more enjoyable and healthier. They believe that their staff should work in an organisation that provides:

- Flexible working
- Family friendly leave schemes
- Access and information about childcare and other support
- Staff health and welfare
- Staff development
- Accommodation services
- Financial advice and assistance
- Excellent on-site facilities.

The managing Trust has taken positive and energetic steps to invest in work-life balance and career progression and believes it is these policies that are attracting and retaining staff in a highly competitive market.

Addenbrooke's hospital has already received two important awards in recognition of their positive working practices: the NHS *Equality Award* in 2000 and the *Improving Working Lives* in 2003, both of which are quality standard recognitions in promoting flexible working, childcare and time out schemes. The hospital has the largest day nursery in the NHS and a further purpose-built nursery will be completed in 2005. Employees can leave their children with trained play staff who run a varied programme of activities and outings.

Retirement options are also flexible. The 65-year age limit can be extended subject to health clearance. This is seen as important in the context of an ageing workforce. The Trust also offers additional staff benefits including help with housing, work for disadvantaged people and an in-house temporary staff agency (staff bank). As a result of these employment measures, the hospital has seen a reduction in sick leave, staff turnover and a sense of an enhanced quality of life.

Addenbrooke's competitive employment situation

Striving to be an employer of preferred choice in a competitive environment

Cambridge is a fast growing county with many large private employers capable of paying top wages. Unemployment is low and there is high demand for staff in many areas. Living costs are high with long distance commutes and a transient workforce. Thus, it is imperative for Addenbrooke's to remain an attractive employer, by offering work-life advantages to draw new staff.

Living up to its vision, the Trust has invested in a flexible working policy which is key to its expressed objective to be a viable and preferred employer. As a result of these policies, the Trust has been reasonably successful in attracting and retaining staff during difficult times.

Addenbrooke's flexible working policy

The following measures offering flexibility at work have been adopted:

Flexible work

In 2001, the Trust introduced its policy on flexible working in order to ensure a better synchronisation of living and working rhythms. All staff can apply for flexible work time and it is available in a variety of ways from compressed hours to self-rostering, annualised hours, job-sharing schemes and working only in school-term time. There is also an official appeal process to ensure that all staff are treated equally and fairly. The need for flexible working is not confined to childcare alone but also extends to the care of elderly parents and even grandchildren.

Time out

'Time out' schemes are available for one full year after an agreed amount of regular service. It is available for childcare, elderly or dependants' care, travel purposes, voluntary work and study periods. This is taken in the form of unpaid leave. Upon return to work, the process is regarded as continuous employment.

Maternity leave

Mothers in the UK are entitled to six months paid leave. UK law requires an employer to provide six weeks only at nine tenths of full salary and the remainder at £100 per week. Addenbrooke's offers eight weeks on full pay, weeks nine to 22 on half pay plus £100 and a further four weeks at £100 each. Addenbrooke's human resources (HR) advisors act as

mediators during the leave period and ensure the mother remains in regular contact with the hospital and her colleagues, as well as being invited to all regular social functions.

Paternity leave

This leave is offered for a period of up to 12 weeks, with two weeks on full pay and then as part of a time-out scheme. The statutory minimum is two weeks at £100 for the first two weeks only.

Parental leave

Unpaid leave for parental reasons may be taken for up to 13 weeks for each child up to the age of 14, or 18 if the child is disabled. The maximum allowance is four weeks per year for each child.

Emergency leave

Leave is allowed when arrangements breakdown on the day when a child, elderly person or the carer is sick. Two days on full pay are allowed for this and unpaid leave for further days. This also applies to emergencies. If the problem is ongoing, then flexible hours or annual leave options are invoked.

Flexible retirement

There is the option to retire at 65 but the work-life can also be extended subject to health clearance, done every six months. As part of the 'Improving working lives' policy, retirees are offered these options: winding down-stepping down and retirement-and return to work

Further support

Adoption leave – which mirrors maternity leave and normal leave – is also granted for in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and other fertility treatment. This is up to three days on full pay.

Other benefits

Employees are given a minimum of an annual appraisal interview and a new pay structure is being introduced that will further enhance the recognition of skills.

Continuous improvement

The Trust has recently carried out a staff survey to which 2,490 staff responded (43% of all staff). The object was to take a snapshot of staff attitudes to their employment conditions so an assessment could be made as to the current situation and how this could be improved. This has resulted in the provision of learning opportunities for all in the 'Learn direct' programme as well as assistance in the form of a £5,000 loan for first-time house buyers to enable them to move or live in the region. The programme also includes improved access to funds for disadvantaged workers and a 'staff bank' which is an in-house temporary agency giving employees the opportunity to work in different departments, be they nursing or administrative.

Addenbrooke's benefits result in a reduction in sick leave and staff turnover

Addenbrooke's hospital has benefited considerably from concentration on staff issues and flexibility. There has been a reduction in sick leave from 5.3% to 4.11%, and staff turnover has been reduced from over 20% in 1997 to 14.95% in 2004. Furthermore, the Trust has also gained in productivity and competitiveness due to this drop in absenteeism.

In general, it is recognised that flexibility schemes at work are not just for maternity and childcare but to improve quality of life for all. Flexible working has had the unforeseen benefit of relieving the pressure on use of office space and car parking and overall employees' quality of life has improved.

Flexibility at Addenbrooke's – an individual success story

Flexible working and the possibility of creating a better work-life balance has had a great and positive impact on the lives of Addenbrooke's employees. This case example is the testimony of Dr Sarah Booth, a consultant in palliative care, who helped to develop the organisation's flexibility policy through a personal situation.

Dr Booth, herself, has a serious medical condition that can be debilitating but can also go into remission enabling her to work normally. Dr Booth could have accepted the diagnosis of her condition and retired from her profession. However, she felt that she still had an important professional contribution to make and did not wish to retire early.

To illustrate her story Dr Booth gave some key personal milestones:

- 1991 Marriage
- 1991 Diagnosis of her medical condition
- 1993 Birth of first child
- 1995 Birth of second child
- 1998 She became a senior registrar in the year of her marriage and moved to Addenbrooke's, starting her employment as a consultant in palliative care.

When interviewed for her job at Addenbrooke's, her disability was not referred to (and cannot legally be so in the UK) but the possibility of flexible working-time for a medical consultant was discussed. Although some colleagues felt that her senior job should not be undertaken on a part-time basis, she has received considerable support from her colleagues, most notably male ones.

Her flexible arrangements are not fixed and her physical condition can dictate her working patterns. Addenbrooke's attitude in offering flexibility to achieve a suitable work-life balance enabled her to remain in a senior position. As a result, she is now able to dictate her own life-work balance and continue to perform in her post.

Towards a better work-life balance for all doctors in the NHS

The culture of medicine is rapidly changing in relation to societal developments and increased patients' expectations who require more than merely medical skills and technical expertise. Today's patients also desire empathy. At the same time, medical practice is under greater scrutiny from outside agencies which makes the introduction of a number of different employment options a necessity.

Traditionally doctors working in UK hospitals, especially at junior level, work long shifts over many consecutive days. However, the medical staff at Addenbrooke's have now begun to request flexibility at work with the need for a better work-life balance. In supporting this, Addenbrooke's hospital organised a high-level seminar on the subject and published a series of recommendations on part-time employment and flexible working for hospital consultants. This is now with the National Health Executive.

Working arrangements for consultants are currently based on a five-day week, although the days are seldom from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Addenbrooke's proposes several different types of contracts which can be negotiated:

- Part-time, centrally funded such as a training post
- Part-time, research (Doctor Booth managed to obtain special funding for herself in this respect)
- Part-time, consultant post
- Full-time with flexibility
- Home-working days
- Full-time plus
- Possibility of annualised working (number of hours agreed for a given year)

There can be the option under the flexible schemes for one day to be taken working at home. In Dr Booth's case she gave up one day's pay for being at home in order to help fund the training of another staff member. Irrespective of which flexible working arrangement is agreed, one 'Team Day' is required during which all team members are present for the whole day.

Dr Booth's example proves that professional personal ambition, the desire to work and the need for flexibility are not incompatible. She contends that a better work-life balance is necessary for all doctors if they are to survive fruitfully in clinical work today. Addenbrooke's hospital already recognises this need. The NHS will need to develop and promote a variety of working patterns in order to retain highly-skilled staff throughout their careers, whatever their other commitments. Planning and financial investment in the different ways of working is needed to change accepted practices whilst still maintaining high professional standards.

Conclusions

For the company: Competing for the best employees

- Addenbrooke's operates in a highly competitive job market and needs to create and promote unique working opportunities to attract and retain staff, as well as to bring back staff who had previously worked in the NHS. Addenbrooke's offers flexibility to medical, nursing and support staff and has been successful in competing for and retaining qualified staff. The outcome of this process has been a substantial reduction in sick leave and an increase in productivity and competitiveness.
- As well as being recognised within the NHS as a model employer, Addenbrooke's is now perceived in the labour market as an attractive place to work. It has achieved this by listening to the needs of employees and putting into practice work arrangements, rostering, and other hygienic factors to ensure that potential workers with the right skills would be able to fit into the culture and environment. Thus, the hospital allows employees to work as flexibly as they need to and without discrimination.
- Organisations need to understand the importance of working closely with employees, so to enable them to give of their best regardless of their other commitments.

For the individual: Taking responsibility to create a good work-life balance

- Dr Booth's case illustrates that professional personal ambition, desire for work and personal commitment are not incompatible with the need for flexibility. Perseverance was instrumental in her creating a personally acceptable work-life balance. However if she had pursued her objectives in a less receptive environment, she would possibly not have succeeded.
- This case also demonstrates that personal career development contributes to a more motivated staff, higher degrees of loyalty and better performing workplaces.
- Flexible work practices to reconcile work and family life often translate themselves into a higher level of productivity by staff and, in turn, into more competitive organisations.

Ms Judy Wallace, HR Manager at Addenbrooke's Hospital, and Ms Sara Booth, Medical Consultant in Palliative Medicine, presented this case example at the company network seminar in Lisbon, Portugal, on 18–19 November 2004.