

The high performance workplace

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Capgemini UK plc

The long-standing consultative 'Forum' structure at Capgemini ensures two-way dialogue on a broad range of topics that support employee engagement in dealing with a workplace agenda that is increasingly influenced by the workforce.

Company Structure

With approximately 60,000 employees worldwide, Capgemini is a global leader in the IT Services marketplace. It employs 9,000 people in the UK, working in business disciplines which are divided into Consulting, Technology and Outsourcing.

Consulting Services contributes to the business transformation and economic performance of organisations, based on in-depth knowledge of client industries and processes. Technology Services designs and integrates technology solutions, and transforms technical environments. Outsourcing Services takes charge of clients IT resources and offers a range of services requiring expertise in IT systems management and business process management.

Outsourcing includes a separate service line, Aspire. This is a strategic partnership between Capgemini and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs which, due to the scale and complexity of the programme, constitutes a single integrated business.

Consultation in the Workplace

In the UK, Capgemini's principle consultative mechanism is 'Forum' which has evolved over the last 7 years and integrates both union and non-union bodies.

The Forum approach is a joint partnership, encouraging all employees to have a say in how the company is run and encourages two-way communication. Robert Ingram, vice president for human resources, advised that "the normal approach in Works Council sessions is one of 'joint problem solving' where all try to understand the issues, appreciate one another's views and try to find a solution which works for all."

Forum meetings take place regularly and after every consultation, detailed notes are issued to the relevant constituencies. This regular communication is an example of how active consultation is working in Capgemini (see structure chart overleaf).

Business information

Company: Capgemini UK plc

Business description: Consulting, Technology

and Outsourcing Company

UK Headquarters: Woking

Employees: 9,000 UK employees

Sites: Main offices are in

London, Woking, Telford, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Rotherham, Sale, and client offices

nationwide

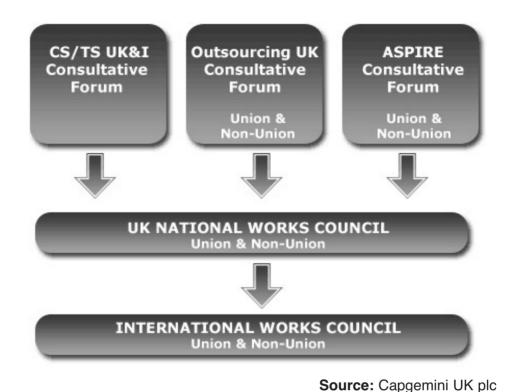
Evolution of the Forums

A number of factors prompted the company to establish Forum in 1999. Robert Ingram suggests that changes in the structure of the company, the drive for good practice and legislative compliance, were all factors in its development. "Forum demonstrated that the company was committed to consulting with its workforce on matters of concern to them and the business," says Robert Ingram.

Capgemini has had employee representation, since 1964, when Hoskyns (previous Company name), established Outsourcing Services. In the early days this consisted of a number of formal recognition agreements with a range of trade unions, usually as a result of employees being outsourced to Capgemini.

In 1999, following consultation with employees, Capgemini adopted a more inclusive philosophy and established a Forum, which at that time did not have a union presence. This was developed using the Works Council model which had been successfully established by Capgemini in the Netherlands.

Over the years, Forum has evolved and reshaped itself to accommodate organisational change and the diversity of the workforce. In 2004 a significant



organisational change resulted in each business area having its own Forum consultative body, structured to fit the particular needs of the relevant business area.

The structure chart shows the individual Forums which are in operation today. The overall objective of the consultation model is to have Forums which meet the needs of the different populations.

Formal written governance agreements have been signed with all consultative bodies and these agreements provide the framework for consultation.

Local Forums

The objective of the local Forums is to have, for consultation purposes, a single consultative unit which fully supports the business and employees within that business area.

The local Forums consult on local issues and support local consultative arrangements. The representatives work within the business discipline that they represent and have a close affinity with the commercial objectives and culture of that business unit, ensuring they can meaningfully represent their constituents.

Within Outsourcing Services the model now includes two representatives from Amicus,

formally bringing union and non-union representatives together for the first time.

The TS/CS UKI Forum consults on behalf of employees in Capgemini Consulting, Technology Services, Headquarters and Ireland. There are no union representatives on the UKI Forum.

Since July 2004 when the Aspire service line was created and around 2,300 employees joined Capgemini, a third representative organisation has been in existence. The Aspire Forum has 8 representatives, 4 of which are from the Public & Commercial Services (PCS) Union.

National and International Works Councils

The UK National Works Council (NWC) is a body made up of nominated representatives from each of the local Forums. The NWC Forum consults on matters which have implications across the UK and Ireland, e.g. policy and health and safety. It adopts the same approach to collective consultation that works across the local Forums.

The International Works Council operates from the global company headquarters in Paris. One or two representatives from the UK NWC attend these meetings.

Consultation arrangements

Structure: A two-tier arrangement (local Forums and NWC) of employee representatives

covering all employees. Representatives are elected and sit on their relevant Forum for an agreed tenure of either 2 or 3 years. Additional trade union representatives

are elected by their own members.

Union role: Amicus (in Outsourcing) and PCS (in Aspire). Both are represented at a national level.

Frequency of meetings:

Local Forum meetings take place either monthly or bi-monthly. They vary depending on the agreed timescales detailed in the local consultative agreements.

NWC meetings are held bi-monthly.

Representatives: Employee representatives are elected by constituency in each discipline. There are

usually three to five constituencies per discipline and some constituencies have more than one seat. Three representatives from each local Forum attend the NWC. Senior

managers attend all Forum meetings.

Consultative Approach

Employee representatives are consulted on all company issues that are important to employees. "Senior managers are fortunate to have a relationship of trust with their Forums in which the company can have open and confidential discussions at all times when managers are forming their plans and strategies," says Robert Ingram.

The local Forums consult specifically on their own business areas. Matters covered include topics of strategic importance, commercial and financial updates, development of HR practices and local employment matters.

The NWC consult on matters such as:

- organisational change
- pay policy
- company policy
- training and development
- expenses
- buildings
- HR systems
- health & safety

The NWC are not a body for escalation by the local Forums, unless it is apparent that a matter for consultation is of national interest.

Elections

Elections take place annually and the seats up for election are dependent on tenure. All employees

have an opportunity to vote and can stand for a seat if they meet the required criteria. Both Amicus and PCS elect their own representatives.

All representatives receive detailed training on their role and further training is offered throughout their term, as and when appropriate. Union representatives also receive additional training from their union.

Building Engagement

Each local Forum has a Chair who co-ordinates with the NWC Chairperson. The NWC Chairperson works closely with the company to organise NWC meetings and manage the workload of the other NWC representatives. The NWC Chair also coordinates the development of an annual framework of objectives at national level and supports the local chairperson in forming their own local objectives.

In consultation with the workforce, eight national objectives were agreed at the end of 2005. These included more effective two-way communications between representatives and their constituents, a staff opinion survey on reward and flexible benefit issues, induction training for all new starters, and the review of a series of policies including out-of-hours working and changes in base location.

This process not only makes the NWC and the Forum model more accountable to the workforce, but means that the representatives are also driving key elements of the consultative process within a positive framework, and with a clear mandate for change.

Moving forward

The representatives work hard to maintain regular contact with their constituencies, organising on-site surgeries and regular email communications. Senior managers believe that consultation leads to better decisions; however, the ongoing challenge is to encourage local managers and the wider workforce of the importance of Forum and to help the constituencies understand the difference that it makes. In 2007 all Forums will be developing and refining the communication model to ensure there is regular consultation with all employees.

In 2006 a number of excellent consultation activities took place on performance related pay, the application of voluntary redundancies, vehicle fuel payments, age discrimination, flexible working, corporate social responsibility, health and safety and pensions. The representatives will be developing the consultation model and local agendas by ensuring that they are proactive in addressing workplace issues as well as effective in consultation with managers at a strategic level. "All the Capgemini Forums bring real value to all. Indeed, we have got used to expecting them to bring ideas and improvements that we would not have thought of," says Robert Ingram.

The High Performance Workplace

This case study forms part of a project entitled 'Adaptable Enterprises'. The project includes educational and networking activities on: high performance working, healthy working and

performance, the future of work and organisation, and intellectual capital.

This research is conducted by the UKWON, coordinated by the IPA and supported by the European Social Fund. Further information is available from juliet.webster@ipa-involve.com

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This case study was researched and written by Lisa Connellan, Employee Relations, Capgemini and Robert Stevens, Research and Information Manager, IPA. The views in this case study are those of the participants and may not reflect those of the IPA.

IPA support

Capgemini employs the IPA as an independent observer during elections and to advise on good practice. The entire election process is managed on-line from nomination to voting, with extensive procedures designed to ensure one-person-one-vote security. Effective communications also form a key element of the election process. Detailed and timely information is provided to ensure maximum participation.



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