

Bakery returns to profitability with the help of an interim

TURNING A COMPANY around from declining profits and low staff morale is a challenge that many organisations find difficult to achieve from within. The bakery division of a large food company was no exception.

The company needed to improve profitability, implement a £1.6 million investment programme and enhance customer service levels, at a time when morale was at an all-time low.

An interim manager was appointed who met the key criteria of seniority, proven track record and hands-on experience. He was previously manufacturing director of another large bakery in the same area of the country and knew its people and the relevant trade union.

One of the bakery's main problems was its site, which was split for production, process and packing. This meant that each factory unit operated autonomously, rather than working as a team.

The directors had clear goals and a timetable of what needed to be achieved.

Confidence grew quickly as the interim started work and staff could see the focus on team building. With a new system of accountability in the factory, waste was reduced and morale raised. Meetings were arranged with the trade union and a relationship was built up between the more relaxed, listening management and the workforce. This has resulted in a joint approach to resolving problems, and increased profitability and production levels.

The priorities were: to restore morale among management and the workforce, ensure customer service was improved, successfully manage day-to-day operations throughout the critical period of the capital project and return the factory to profitability.

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