

# CRIPPS SEARS & PARTNERS

## 40 | CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS OF SUCCESS

### HR Networking Forum, Aberdeen

16.05.16 – MINUTES

- Discussion began with the work carried out by Scottish Government's Energy Jobs Taskforce, key question being whether industry can learn lessons from the past so as to mitigate the effects of the downturn.
- Measures short of redundancy covered: sabbaticals, changes to terms and conditions, job shares, lay-off, short-time working, redeployment, buying of extra holidays, focus on internal recruitment. Varying levels of success encountered. Benefits and challenges of shared services programmes debated (reduced costs and overlaps vs local knowledge gaps).
- Group considered what steps employers were taking to mitigate effects of redundancies. General recognition of success of outplacement programs in helping employee with CVs, interview skills, job agencies here and abroad etc. Partnership Action for Continuing Employment ("PACE") recognised for good work it is doing, being of particular help to employers with limited HR resources.
- Principle of loaning out skilled employees to other businesses mooted, with the emphasis on retaining those in whom the employer has deeply invested. Could be on a managed basis, paid/unpaid. Mention made of perception that other industries not always welcoming to those with oil and gas experience, with suspicion being that when things pick up the employees will be away. Need for buy-in from other sectors.
- Concerns that industry losing staff at both ends of the career path. Older workers who have been laid off not looking to return. Graduates not incentivised to start a career in oil and gas in the current climate. Some employers looking more to use apprenticeships than graduate schemes in order to make use of the vouchers for apprenticeship training under the new levy scheme.
- Question raised as to what HR will do to support employers when projects come back onstream. Concerns that lessons have not been learned from the 1980s, i.e. that there will be a race to sign talent pushing wages through the roof with the obvious knock-on effect on operating costs.
- Discussion of principles mooted at Tier 1 Contractor Forum. Hope is that contractors will commit to (informal) code of conduct for when things pick up: refraining from poaching staff, inflating rates etc. Reliance being on trust between parties of a similar mind. Worry that if investment not made into graduate schemes this will encourage employers to take their recruits from competitors.

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- General acknowledgement of “survivor syndrome”, i.e. the guilt of being left in post when others losing their jobs, mixed with the strain of taking on additional duties. Focus must be on management:
  - maintaining a confident leadership style
  - treating staff with respect
  - promoting a positive message
  - supporting clear lines of communication throughout the business.
- Need for allowing skilled employees access to internal training programmes (which they have a hand in designing) together with a clear path for career progression.
- Referendum not currently a focus for employers – no strategic plans formulated in light of possible Brexit. Discussion of what Brexit might mean for UK employment laws in terms of e.g. TUPE Regulations etc.
- Further discussion on rules regarding ability of international employees to gain hold of UK employment law rights.

**Notes recorded by Andy Atwell 2016**