

What does it mean to be told that the company you work for is going to issue a consultation on job structures?

If the economic climate has hit the company you work for hard, then you may find that they start to talk about making changes to the way that the company is run, the way that people fulfil their jobs and indeed, the jobs that people hold.

Any discussion about change can make you feel nervous or worried. Change will inevitably bring confusion and fear. But change can also bring opportunities – it all often depends on your attitude to the change that is presented to you.

If the company you work for is committed to its decision to make changes to the way that the business functions and operates, and if this change could have an impact on the job that you fulfil, then they will often commence a programme of consultation with you and all other affected staff. This consultation programme is likely to follow the following structure:

- An initial verbal briefing to inform you of the changes that are being discussed at senior management level.
- A written consultation document which outlines very clearly what the proposed changes are going to be. This can include new structures that may appear to reduce the number of jobs within the company. It could also include information about reduced hours or differing job responsibilities for individual job titles.
- A period of time is then usually made available for individuals to respond to the consultation. As a potentially affected individual, you should be provided with the name and contact details of the person to whom you should send your comments, and the date by which your comments should be sent in.
- A collective response to all of the feedback comments received in light of the consultation document will then be written and agreed by senior management, and this will be sent out to all affected individuals.
- A timetable of action will be released. This will let you know when the changes that the consultation is proposing will be put into place.

One of the obvious changes or consequences that comes out of a consultation such as this is that jobs are removed from the newly proposed structure. This ultimately means that there will be less posts available within the company and that some individuals will have to be made redundant. However, it also means that anyone whose job does not appear in the new structure is entitled to apply for any of the roles that are going to be put into place in the new structure. And so this can be a time of real possibility and opportunity for some, and there is the chance to apply for a job that is more senior than your current role.

It is important to keep yourself informed about the consultation process and the options available to you. If you approach the consultation in a proactive way you will find that the outcome for you is likely to be much positive. Try to also remember that no one enjoys having to go through a consultation process – not even the individuals running it. So channel any angry energy into a positive determination to seek out opportunities and succeed.