

The right people at the right time

Engineering services firm creates a flexible workforce with help from Hay Group

A Hay Group case study

Unable to respond effectively to changes in demand and with de-motivated employees, this engineering firm hired Hay Group to devise a strategic workforce plan that made it more responsive and reduced costs by over 15 per cent.

Employing 2,000 people, this engineering services organization maintains and manages vehicles and buildings as well as installing and testing engineering and control systems. Its “siloed” workforce meant that employees were frequently either under-utilized or working expensive overtime hours when demand for its services varied through the year. Surveys also showed that the workforce was de-motivated and managers did not feel empowered to make changes.

Hay Group’s solution was to take a “whole system” approach to the company’s workforce. We began by understanding the existing workforce in depth, reviewing jobs, HR policies and SLAs, mapping the company’s primary activities and analysing its demand cycles and capacity.

Using this knowledge we created a series of proposals designed to match the company’s workforce more closely to its needs. For engineering staff we developed a multi-skilling approach, so tasks that once needed several different people to complete could now be carried out by a single individual. This builds people’s skills while at the same time reducing costs.

We also established resource pooling and project-based working across engineering workforce groups, making it easier for the company to respond to changes in demand. New contract arrangements including annualised hours also aligned staff more effectively with workload. Finally, we modeled workforce demand and cost into the future to identify multi-million pound savings and support negotiations with trade unions.

Our proposals have been signed off by the company’s board and are currently subject to trade union negotiation. To date we have identified savings in excess of 15 per cent of current workforce costs.