South West workforce under pressure as employees face climate of change
Investors in People UK urges bosses to actively manage change to maintain productivity

In an increasingly challenging business environment, the biggest change expected by employees in the South West during the next twelve months is an increase in their workload, according to new research released today by Investors in People UK. The research also reveals that employees are already likely to be feeling the pressure, with over half (56%) saying that they have seen an increase in their workload over the last 12 months.

Reflecting the tougher business conditions predicted, the research – carried out by YouGov for Investors in People UK, which works with organisations to improve performance – reveals that 64% of employees in the South West anticipate they will experience some changes in the workplace over the coming year, including increased workload (39%), a new manager (11%), news they may lose their job (11%) or relocation (13%).

The research also found that many employees are concerned about their employer’s ability to manage them through these periods of change. Although 41% of staff with a line manager felt confident that their organisation would make the right decision for the future success of the organisation, half (50%) felt that their organisation wouldn’t listen to their views, and a third (32%) said they wouldn’t feel confident they would be informed of change in a timely or appropriate way.

The research shows that employees in the South West want to be managed in a personal way – the majority (73%) want to hear news of change that affects them via a one-to-one meeting with their boss. During a period of significant change:

- 77% of employees want their manager to provide all the information available so they can draw their own conclusions
- 72% would like their manager to seek their views and listen, yet only a third (34%) think this would happen;

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1 Employees in the South West in organisations with two employees or more.
2 CBI news release, 13 August 2008: http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/e94565ce8cce74b8802574a40049ce b7?OpenDocument
3 Indicates one or more surveyed changes.
• 64% would like their manager to offer them support, yet only a third (33%) think this would happen.

Worryingly, 56% of employees say the most common sign of change in their organisation is an increase in meetings happening behind closed doors or hushed conversations.

The research highlights the importance of employers’ actively managing change in the workplace to ensure it doesn’t have a negative impact on motivation and productivity.

Commenting on the findings, Simon Jones, Chief Executive at Investors in People UK, said:

“To ensure productivity and motivation levels do not suffer in the current climate, it’s important that employers in the South West actively manage change in the right way. With almost two-thirds of the workforce expecting to experience a change in the workplace in the next 12 months bosses must pay heed to employees’ views on how they’d like to be kept informed in times of change.”

“The research suggests employers can make all the difference by delivering news of important changes to their staff via a one to one meeting, by seeking views and listening to feedback, and by offering support, whatever the changes being implemented. This is vital information for managers who are making tough business decisions and need to ensure they take their people with them, to deliver the best results for their employees and the organisation.”

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact the Investors in People press office on 020 7544 3118.