



CONRARDY furniture is a family owned business employing 15 people. All employees have long-term contracts. A good working relationship has been built up between the owners and the staff.

An inclusive policy

The ethos of the company is to involve employees in the planning and decision making process to give them a sense of ownership. All staff members meet on a weekly basis to discuss the planning of the week ahead. These meetings also provide an excellent opportunity for discussing new ideas and looking at ways of improving the site, for instance creating a better system for storing stock, improving equipment and creating more effective work systems.

Looking after employees' interests It is important to balance the demands of working life with the needs of employees. Being flexible suits both the employer and the staff. One example of flexibility working for everyone occurred during a recent slack period. Staff were given the option of taking unpaid leave, although there was no pressure whatsoever on anyone to do so. Four staff members chose to take extra leave.

When the factory is very busy meeting large orders, staff are under immense pressure. Ways of alleviating stress have been looked at carefully. Employees have the option of working overtime, dead-

lines are discussed with customers to see if these can be extended without causing inconvenience, sometimes extra workers are drafted in to spread the workload.

Creating a happy working atmosphere

Efforts are made to create a pleasant and positive working environment. Staff tend to be more motivated and productive when they feel that their wellbeing counts.

Staff enjoy activities together outside the workplace. For instance, the company organised mountain bike rides during the summer. Other summer activities include long weekends away where staff enjoy activities like sailing. Events like these serve a dual purpose – staff have a good time and strengthen their personal relationships which subsequently helps them work together more effectively as a team.

Every Friday the plant shuts at lunchtime, so employees have the benefit of an extended weekend break. At the end of each working year, a party is laid on for staff.



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Training and qualifications

The company is committed to improving staff skills. The owner attends seminars and there is ongoing training for all staff members too. Specialist instructors are brought in to teach correct lifting techniques when moving heavy loads. This is carried out under the authority of the government accident insurance organisation Association d'Assurances contre les Accidents (AAA).

There is also a commitment to the continuous improvement of working conditions (including upgrading equipment) and work flow. This area is looked at regularly and a number of improvements have been made.

Working equipment

Efforts are made to ensure that the working equipment is in good order. Improvements have been made to the storage racks to make product handling easier and to avoid excessive strain; lifting equipment has also been introduced to cut down muscular-skeletal problems.

Responsibility for OHS matters and environmental issues

The entire team shares the responsibility for OHS matters and training is given. Access to relevant

health and safety services is provided and information is gathered through specialist magazines, exhibitions and via the media. A risk assessment booklet written by the AAA is given to every worker when he or she starts the job. There is no statutory requirement to supply personal protective equipment, but the owner covers 50% of such costs.

Tropical hardwood isn't used in the company's manufacturing processes because of the environmental impact of using this kind of raw material

How are health and safety related behaviour patterns dealt with? Smokers have the right to tobacco breaks, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Six workers decided to stop smoking on their own volition, but with encouragement from the company. Problems with alcohol are dealt with in an open and honest way. Three staff members had drink related problems and both the owner and their co-workers helped them through their difficulties.

Specific welfare related activities

The owner of the business has a strong social conscience and is concerned with the welfare of staff. Good employee health is not looked at purely from a physical point of view, but also in terms of wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction goes hand-in-hand with good health. It is also clear that a good working atmosphere is good for business. While welfare measures cost money, these are more than outweighed by the benefits.

Customer satisfaction is also crucial to the success of the company. Customers' opinions are sought and heeded. If any complaints are received these are reported immediately and dealt with. Complaints are very infrequent though.

Better health – better business

Generally speaking, employees enjoy good health. There is very little occupational illness and absenteeism is low. Health and welfare related activities have improved business results.