

Creating

SUSTAINABLE CAREERS

Be proactive,
seek an alternative, and
take charge of the change



Centre for Economic Development,
Transport and the Environment

TAKING CHARGE OF CHANGES IS A JOINT EFFORT



“More dialogue and cooperation between company management and personnel is needed in companies to manage change effectively,” Urpo Salkoaho says.

Government support for training efforts designed to help employees through company downsizing or restructuring is significant, up to 80 per cent of the training costs.

● Whether a company is experiencing growth, development or a major transition, the best way to take charge of the changes is to involve both company management and personnel, and to be as proactive as possible, says *Urpo Salkoaho*, training and education specialist at the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Pirkanmaa.

In companies going through a major change, negotiations held pursuant to the Act on Co-operation within Undertakings generally focus on the number of employees to be made redundant or laid off, and on the compensation payable to the affected personnel.

“However, another way of interpreting the Act would be to actively seek alternative solutions beforehand, to prepare for changes and to secure jobs. This requires more dialogue between management and personnel as well as efforts to identify alternative solutions, in other words empowerment, mutual trust, and measures designed to maintain the professional competence and employability of personnel. In the end, it’s all about improving the quality of working life.”

It is easier to get through bad times when the lines of communication are open and joint efforts can be made to identify optimal solutions. This could mean acquiring skills that will bring in new work for the company, or offering employees assistance with training and re-employment or support for those who plan to start their own business.

“Why is it better to be proactive and to make the career change as quickly as possible? Because the longer you are unemployed, the less likely you are to be re-employed.”



“TE Offices offer advice and help employers and employees manage the change. The sooner we are called in to help them get through the change smoothly, the better,” says Johanna Ahlgrén-Holappa.



Tools and assistance are available

● The local Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre) and local Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices) play a crucial role in change management. The local employment authorities would prefer to launch cooperation as soon as the company begins to anticipate changes, which is often long before any changes actually take place.

“Companies don’t have to work out the scope of the required changes on their own; we are here to help. We maintain confidentiality in everything we do, which is why companies trust us,” says *Johanna Ahlgrén-Holappa*, director in charge of employer services at the TE Office in Tampere.

Dismissals are the most difficult situations for companies. One of the tools available during the mandatory negotiations required under the Act on Co-operation within Undertakings is change security, an arrangement designed to improve cooperation between employees, employers and TE Offices and to help employees find new jobs quickly. The change security specialists at TE Offices offer companies advice before the co-operation negotiations are launched, and provide information on training and other services. Through this cooperation, they hope to get a clear picture of employee skills and competences.

“We ask companies to provide information on the skills and competences of the employees affected by the co-operation negotiations, and it is important to give a detailed description. For us, it is useful to understand the industry-specific competences that are becoming available in the job markets. This information helps us direct employees towards new jobs but it is also important for companies who are considering setting up in the region and who will be actively involved in the recruitment of new personnel, and for those seeking to attract new business to the region. Knowledge of the competence pool that is available locally could help enhance the vitality of the entire region.”

Everything starts from an action plan devised to promote employment, and ideally this plan lists training initiatives and other active measures promoting employment. Training here refers not only to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge but also to coaching, job-seeking skills, support for career choices and incentives for entrepreneurship. The change security specialists help employers prepare these plans. The HRV Services and outplacement services provided by the employment authorities are also available for a separate fee.



"In an expert organisation, it is important to offer opportunities for professional growth. Our employees have been highly motivated to sharpen their expertise," Johanna Pystynen says.



● Cybercom Finland has responded to the challenges in the ICT industry by renewing its organisational structure and by focusing more sharply on strategy work.

"One of the key tenets of our strategy is stronger competence development. For our personnel, this means more extensive training opportunities and better anticipation of training needs," explains *Johanna Pystynen*, Cybercom's HR specialist.

Cybercom has set up special workgroups for strategy deployment, one concentrating on competence development. At the workgroup's decision, an individual development plan will be prepared for each employee that supports the employee's personal career path as well as company objectives.

"From our perspective, the SPIRIT professional development programme for the ICT industry was launched at the

perfect moment. It involved preparing a company development plan that backs up our strategy. This plan serves as the basis for a two-year training plan and for personal development plans for each of our employees. SPIRIT is an important part of our larger competence development project."

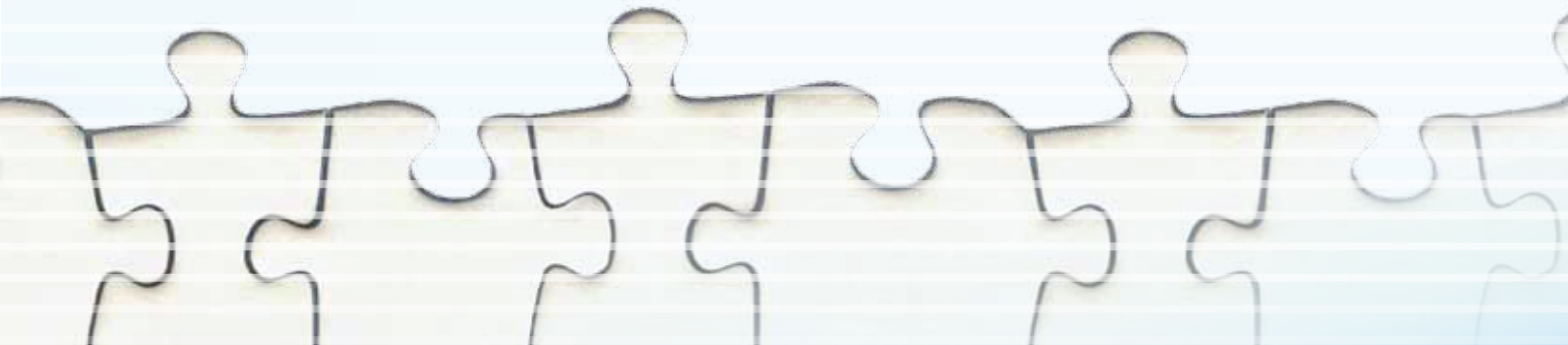
"Being a service company, skilled workforce is of crucial importance to us. We have to be able to anticipate future needs and to maintain a high level of competence," Pystynen stresses.

"Training increases competence, but it also drives motivation and commitment. We believe it improves employee satisfaction. With these elements in place, we can retain our employer attraction as well as our competitiveness in the future."

Cybercom Finland • A service company that provides software development services for leading ICT, industrial, finance and media enterprises and for the public sector. • Approximately 300 employees in Tampere, Helsinki and Turku.

What are the future requirements?

Cybercom Finland is taking action to develop skills and competences





“In the process of preparing the company development plan, we compile information about training needs, build a process for competence development, and explain the content of the training sessions. Joining the programme is very easy,” Karri Inkinen (front) and Juha-Pekka Onnela say encouragingly.

Company development plan - a systematic process

● No one can predict the future, but the company development plan prepared as part of the ICT Future training package of the SPIRIT programme helps prepare for what lies ahead. It offers a clear picture of competence development needs, provides tools, and makes the necessary steps more concrete and easy to understand.

“We ask companies to identify the business areas that they consider will be important in the next two years, and then link competence development efforts to those areas. The corporate development plan is a systematic process for competence development, and it ensures personnel are trained precisely in the areas that are crucial for the company,” says *Karri Inkinen*, Development Manager at Edutech, the Centre for Continuing Education at Tampere University of Technology.

“The personal development plans prepared for each employee are designed to support the companies’ development goals. By acquiring strategically vital skills, employees can strengthen their own position as valuable resources,” explains *Juha-Pekka Onnela*, ICT Future Project Manager at Hermia.

The process begins with the company completing an assignment, which helps to identify the future directions of its business operations, and the skills and competences required. The next step is to define the competence areas in need of development. Based on this information, Edutech prepares a proposal for the company. The outcome of the process is communicated to personnel, who then select the appropriate training sessions from the SPIRIT offering.

Inkinen and Onnela both stress that the preparation of development plans starts with company needs, and the process is kept short and simple. What makes this programme so attractive to companies is the extensive - and expandable, if necessary - training selection and the substantial financial support provided by ELY centre.

Professional development TARGETS

● In the future, stricter requirements will be placed on the targets and impacts of the training programmes which are customised to address company needs and are co-financed with the employment administration. Training must be linked to the company's strategic development plan, and companies are required to have a more clearly defined idea of what the real development needs are and how much they are prepared to invest themselves.

The perspective will gradually expand from competence needs and programmes designed to increase specific skills to cover the entire working life process, i.e. ways of improving employee skills, management, work process flexibility, supportiveness and employee well-being.

To prepare for and assess their training projects aimed at long-term development, companies should ask themselves the following questions:

Change: What technological or operational change is to be expected in the future that is essential for the company?

Innovation: What is the driving force behind the change, what is its innovative strength?

Productivity: What can be done to make work more efficient and productive?

Well-being in the workplace: What can be done to improve workflow and job satisfaction?

Professional development: What is the best way to develop competence, competence management and work processes?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CHANGE MANAGEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT:

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SPIRIT

- **ICT Future training session.** For more information please visit www.hermia.fi/spirit
- **Professional Development programmes**
- **Protomo StartUp coaching programme for entrepreneurs**
- **RecruIT events**
- **Career guidance and counselling.**

Half-day seminars offering informative summaries of the training contents and future competence needs are also in the pipeline.



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