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FOOD MANUFACTURERS TURN WORKING TIME CHANGE TO THEIR BENEFIT

An increasing number of food and drink manufacturers are incorporating new working time change management techniques into their day to day working to cope with the seasonal demands of the industry.

Typical results in the food sector have included time savings of 25 per cent in the day-to-day organisation of labour, manufacturing efficiency increasing by 30 per cent, production waste reduced by 50 per cent and short-term sickness absence cut by half.

Unilever, Bestfoods, Manor Bakeries, United Biscuits and Coca-Cola Enterprises, have all deleted 'recently' implemented specialist working time management solutions to increase their productivity and profitability whilst ensuring employees remain happy. This has been done in partnership with Working Time Solutions, the UK's leading working time change solutions provider.

Ciaran Murray of United Biscuits explains: "Working with Working Time Solutions allowed us to quickly and easily identify suitable shifts and shift patterns which will suit our businesses needs, as well as the work life balance of our employees. The system also allows for greater transparency for our staff - they can now see weeks in advance what their shift patterns will be, allowing them to plan their leisure time much more effectively. This all helped in selling the benefits of the new working time arrangements to our most important asset - our employees. As a business we hope to dramatically reduce and control overall costs and improve efficiencies through demand-led rostering techniques."

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Kevin White, managing director of Working Time Solutions continues: "Demand within different food industries can be very seasonal. Within some organisations demand rises from April and through the summer months and massively peaks between September and December to meet Christmas demand. Historically, temporary staff are recruited to meet this increased demand but problems and difficulties associated with short-term recruitment, including lack of training and high wastage can lead to decreases in productivity.

"Some companies just put up with the problem and continue to rely on overtime and agency staff. While they are often aware of all the associated issues, they don't feel like there is anything they can do about it."

"What we have been doing with our food industry clients is work with them to analyse and understand the demand profile for their product. Then, using our suite of software, create appropriate shift patterns to meet that demand. Typically, this gives the client a number of shift pattern options to explore as well as the ability to run 'what-if' scenarios.

"Colman's of Norwich have been using Working Time Solutions' systems and methodologies for many years and continue to reap the benefits. Due to better working arrangements, it found: "absenteeism has halved, efficiency has increased and waste is down from 5% to 2.5%."

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