

Smooth sailing for CP Ships

After acquiring CP Ships, TUI AG decided to transfer the business to their other shipping company Hapag-Lloyd, headquartered in Hamburg. The impact of this decision was that CP Ships sites at Gatwick and Ipswich would close and there would be a reduction in staff at other operational sites in Liverpool and Glasgow.

The situation

In his search for an outplacement consultancy, Senior VP HR Europe, Bob Hickman, invited Chiumento to tender, having come across them at his previous company. As part of the selection process Chiumento presented to employee representatives and the HR team. The inclusion of staff at selection stage undoubtedly helped early buy-in by those affected, smoothing the way for the employer and Chiumento.

Outplacement assistance was for all levels of the 450 employees, from the operational staff to the Management Team. To ensure the best service possible, Chiumento set up two on-site resource centres – at Gatwick and Ipswich – to support non-management staff, the managerial grades were assisted with individual outplacement programmes. Additionally outplacement support for a Regional Director, based in Barcelona, was provided through our international partner group Arbora.

A flexible service

With staff leaving the business at different stages of the closure, Chiumento felt that flexibility was a key component of the service. Whereas some employees would have left by June 2006, the Finance Department for example, was required into 2007. To ensure they received as much benefit from the programme as the earlier leavers, Chiumento suggested they start their programme early, but with the option to put it on hold and re-start it further down the line. This option has been vital to keeping staff motivated and engaged in the business, whilst seeing their colleagues move on to pastures new. It has also allowed individuals more time to consider future career options and work towards their goals.

A good match

As ever, Chiumento took enormous care in ensuring a good match between consultant and each individual. Sarah Chiumento, Head of Outplacement & career transition at Chiumento adds “These careful matches were put to the test on a number of occasions when the senior teams had impromptu ‘corridor meetings’ where they compared notes on both their respective consultants’ approach and guidance! On only a couple occasions did we need to facilitate a change of consultant, based on the feedback from initial meetings, to ensure that the best working relationship was established in all cases.”

Different thinking

Paramount to the service offered by Chiumento was the ability to think laterally when advising clients on their next career move. A high proportion of employees, particularly on the management side, had significant long service at CP Ships. It was important therefore, to explore their options from different angles such as moving industry sector or setting up a portfolio career, and avoiding a blinkered approach. This different thinking is a fundamental part of the Chiumento approach and was vital in assisting non-management level staff too. This group of employees, many with mainstream shipping backgrounds, could struggle to find jobs in this industry in the Gatwick area – due to its location. Workshops therefore focussed on transferable

skills and different avenues to new roles, as well as interview skills, self-employment and managing finances. Chiumento also supported this group by contacting local employers and holding on-site recruitment fairs, which were well attended.

The results

The project was completed in 2007 and all staff were successfully resettled.

Bob Hickman, Senior VP HR Europe concludes, “The professional assistance offered to all staff by Chiumento has been an important aspect of maintaining morale during a difficult period for the staff. The success of the service is reflected in the take-up level and ability of staff to be successful in their job applications. A personal service is offered to all staff that demonstrates the strong commitment of Chiumento Consultants to see their clients successfully move on to a new career.”