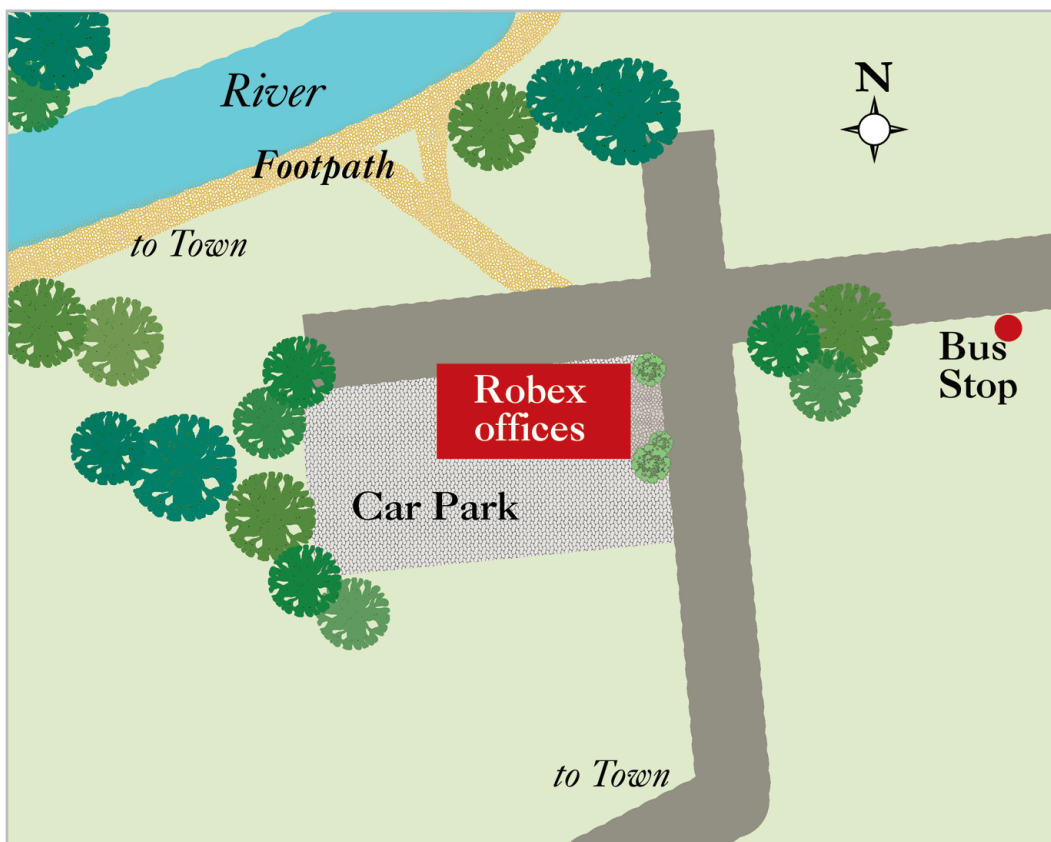


Introducing Change

Team Brief

Robex Software International has its Head Office on the outskirts of Blackwillow, a town about 70 minutes by train from London. The offices house 200 staff: 40% female, 60% male. The office is a 15 minute walk along a riverside footpath from Blackwillow train station which lies on the main London to Cardiff line. Buses from the station stop 50 metres from Head Office.



Robex is about to make some changes. No jobs are at stake and no salaries will be affected but the changes will impact on staff working conditions.



You represent a team of independent consultants who have been tasked with implementing three new changes.



- 1** Currently the dining room is on the ground floor and is available for all staff. A large kitchen serves hot and cold lunches from 12 noon till 3pm. There is also a salad bar and the opportunity to purchase snacks such as fruit, chocolate, tea, coffee or soft drinks. No alcohol is sold. Staff pay for their food at the checkout although prices are subsidised by Robex. The dining room is large with approximately 12 tables each capable of seating up to eight people. It is used throughout the day for informal staff meetings and sometimes for meetings with visitors from outside. On the ground floor there are a number of meeting rooms where more formal meetings are held as well as a separate conference hall.

Running a kitchen on site has become prohibitively expensive. Various schemes have been tried in the past to make it more cost effective but none has had any significant effect and it is now deemed necessary to make better use of the space. It has been decided that the kitchen and serving counters will be closed down and removed. It is now February. The dismantling will take place during August when a lot of staff are away - so from 1st September no food services will be available on the premises. The dining room will still be available for staff to use for tea and coffee and they can of course bring their own lunches and snacks to consume there.

- 2** The second change is linked to the first. In a bid to retain more staff who sometimes leave to care for their children, the company wants to replace the kitchen area with a crèche. It is hoped that this change will encourage staff to stay on and will also cut down on absenteeism associated with child-minding arrangements outside work.
- 3** The third change relates to the car park. The company is trying to be 'greener' and more environmentally aware. Energy-saving changes have already been made in the area of heating and hot water. A new 'green' roof has improved insulation and helps with drainage and rainwater collection for use in the grounds. In addition, staff are encouraged to make changes to their daily routine - switching off unnecessary lights, using a minimum of water for washing and not leaving computers and other equipment on stand-by overnight. But now the company wants to take this a step further and end the tradition of free parking in the company car park. It is hoped this will encourage those living in the locality to walk or bike to work (many already do) and those from further afield to use buses or trains. The train station is very close to the offices.

It is hoped that by charging for parking the number of cars will drop. This could also help reduce traffic congestion in the morning and evening - and would contribute to the traffic-reducing scheme that a number of major employers in the area have already signed up to. It is thought that charges will be in the region of £3 per day. There will be no charge for motorbikes, cycles or scooters.

Your task then is how and when to announce and implement these changes. No one within the organisation (except top management) knows anything about these changes though you understand that there are strong rumours that as a result of the current downturn in sales many jobs will be lost. This is simply not true at the present time, nor is it likely in the immediate future.

Departments at Head Office

(number of staff per department)

Finance	24
Human Resources (Training)	8
Sales & Marketing	52
Personnel	18
R & D	42
Distribution	30
Building Maintenance	19
TV Department (internal)	7

Each department has a Senior Manager in overall charge with either two or three Assistant Managers. It is known that some managers are sympathetic to certain issues. For example Ted Nandini from Building Maintenance has fought hard to get the company to see the advantages (both economic and in terms of PR) of the 'green' approach to design. He has the support of Rachel Skolaski in Finance and Hatti Jones in Distribution.

Cathy Patel and Elena Gardener from Personnel together with Charles Simkiss from HR have, you know, been lobbying for some time for a crèche.

Kurt Beckman and Sophie Peloczek from R&D are keen cyclists and you know they would support the car parking issues as they have a real 'down' on cars and car congestion.

In-house Communications

Robex has a number of in-house communications systems. These include:

- A newsletter published once a month with news about the company, its products, its progress, its staff and its competitors.
- Intra-net used for major internal communications.
- Standard email.
- Wall mounted screen in the dining room showing 24 hour news channel (volume control, low) but can also be used by Directors to get across key messages.
- Various notice boards around the building.

The Task

Use the questions below to structure your approach to introducing change to the organisation. You may decide not to introduce all the changes; you may decide to stagger the introduction of the three changes or you may decide to introduce them all at the same time. Whatever the case you need a plan of your approach, your strategy and the timing. You can produce your plan in whatever form you want - either as a verbal report on your ideas or role-play the way that you would actually present to the staff themselves (using a flipchart). These questions may help you structure your ideas and/or your presentation.

- 1 What are your objectives?
- 2 Who will you involve in the process?
- 3 What dates are crucial and what will happen on each date?
- 4 What communication methods will you use and when?
- 5 What problems do you anticipate?
- 6 How will you circumvent the difficulties?
- 7 What are the benefits of the change and what are the disadvantages?
- 8 How will you 'sell' both of these issues?
- 9 Who is your audience and how will you reach them?
- 10 What will you do if there is resistance to the changes?
- 11 How can you minimise resistance?
- 12 Who are the key influencers that will ensure the project succeeds (or fails)?

