

November 09



CWU Business Focus

Welcome to the latest edition of the CWU's 'Business Focus', designed to provide branches and their members with an update on all things BT Business, and a report from the most recent branch forum; 11th November 2009.

As ever, we hope you find the following useful and informative.

Any comments, or suggestions for future editions can be fed back through your local rep or direct to the CWU team.

BT Business Service Operations

As reported in previous editions, the establishment of the BT Business Service Operation has significantly increased the remit of the CWU HQ team with responsibility for BT Business.

There are significant issues arising from this as the company review the organisation, identifying opportunities for streamlining through rationalisation and aligning these parts of the organisation into the BT Business model. There is a potential to impact on a whole host of areas including grading, attendance and resourcing, performance management and management style.

Some initial meetings between the CWU and BT have taken place, to identify and start to progress some of these issues, and further meetings are planned. Branches will be kept updated of progress as appropriate. What is clear is that there are a number of units and sites where significant grading anomalies exist. The Union is working with the company to identify the most urgent priority areas.

In parallel to resolving grading issues we will also be reviewing documentation on Job Standards which should outline the expectations for each role and form the foundations for the establishment of transparent performance measures, and ultimately, management styles and behaviours.

Some provisional meetings have already taken place and further meetings are scheduled in what is likely to be a significant piece of work in progress over the coming months. The team intend to work closely with branch representatives to ensure our understanding of the nature and complexity of each of the roles.

Business Sales: Attendance Review

The attendance review in Business Sales which took place around this time last year resulted in significant upset for a number of members in Business Sales. Most if not all of these issues were eventually resolved, but we were clear to the company that we would expect to see the broader benefits for our members in terms of a fairer distribution of attendances and confirmation that the resource distribution more closely aligned against call traffic. Delegates at this year's CWU Conference

also called for a review of attendance arrangements which was consistent with the company's policies on equality and work/life balance.

The Union has been calling on the company for a while to set up a meeting to review attendance arrangements on this basis. The company have delayed meeting so far, asserting that it has taken some time to get everyone on the new attendances and wanted time for the schedules to 'bed in'.

The company have now agreed that the time is right for the review and we are hoping to meet with the company before Christmas.

In the meantime, the team in CWU HQ have asked branches for any evidence which indicate a continuing problem with unfair distributions, and unbalanced wait times.

A number of examples have already been sent in, but if you have any other points of concern, please let us know.

GET IN TOUCH

**Contact your local CWU Representative through the usual channels
or email the National Team direct: ralldritt@cwu.org**

A Conclusion on Business Sales Interim (BSI) Grade

Negotiations on the Business Sales Interim (BSI) Grade, established as an interim measure following agreement of the Retail Sourcing Strategy agreement, has finally been concluded after 3 years of discussions.

After a lull in the discussions after the first year or so, the Union and BT renewed their focus to resolve the interim arrangements earlier in the year. As reported previously, this was sparked in part by a change in approach within BT Business that recently saw individuals being moved from one CP5 sales graded role to another sales role only to be re-graded to BSI. Resolving these issues became interdependent on resolving the interim nature of the grade. After several exchanges of correspondence and further discussions, the Union exhausted all avenues of further negotiations and came to what we believe was the best result we could achieve last month.

The interim arrangement was established back in 2006, during negotiations on the BT Retail Sourcing Strategy. At the time, the company proposed that Business Sales should be matched to 'Foundation' (A2CC: current salary max £16,926) and 'Core' (B1CC: currently salary max £20,530). To avoid undermining progress on the rest of the discussions

the union and BT agreed to 'park' negotiations by establishing the BSI grade. Since then, the Union has been pursuing a higher pay range for the role despite the company having little difficulty recruiting and retaining staff at this level. The company have also cited automation and operational changes which they believe have gone some way towards reducing the complexity of the role.

In light of this, the Union rejected proposals to reduce the pay range, but have accepted that the company will not improve on the current pay range offer for the role and the Executive have accepted that there is no value in further discussion.

Effectively, this means the permanent pay scale for BT Business Sales new recruits will be set at the current rate which is equivalent to the maximum of B2P (current salary maximum £21,234), retaining the contractual right to earn 35% of the maximum rate for the grade for on target performance.

The Union has also clarified the legacy status of existing sales grades for future

non-voluntary internal movements within the company. This means that any individual currently on a sales graded contract (CP4/5 for example) who is asked to move to a new sales role, will retain their existing grade on a 'legacy' basis, rather than move to BSI. Non-sales grades moving into Business Sales at the request of the company will re-graded to BSI, but will be receive pay and pension protection, maintaining their take home pay. Any bonus earned will be calculated against the maximum of the BSI Grade, but will result in an overall increase in take home pay.

The Union recognises that some members will be disappointed that we were unable to increase the pay range for BSI however, previous company evaluations were at a much lower rate of pay. The protracted discussions have meant that BSI grades have been subject to ongoing uncertainty, which has now come to an end.

The protection of those with legacy status and the return to legacy status of those that had it removed end the uncertainty for the CP5 population also. Any remaining issues should be dealt with locally in the first instance and escalated to CWU HQ as appropriate if they remain unresolved.

Towards a COP on Trident and Visualisation

Two outstanding issues for the team have been to secure a code of practise on screen recording (Trident) and to resolve branch concerns about the public display of performance results in the sales centres.

Trident

A code of practise on call recording already exists, but this doesn't cover of elements that are specific to screen recording. The union has put together a lists of points that it would expect to be covered and contained in the code. This also includes reference against the potential mis-use of recordings by the company. Screen recording is a tool that is increasing in its usage and the code of practise currently being pursued mirrors those already adopted in other lines of business.

Visualisation

The union recently came to an agreement to limit the display of performance results in BT Retail Customer Service following the initiative to display all individual RFT results which very quickly became termed the 'Wall of Shame'.

Some Business Sales sites have followed a similar route raising some concerns from Sales advisors and their branches. The difference in BT Business is that this does not appear to be a national initiative and branches were tasked with undertaking local negotiations on the issue with varying results.

As a result, the union are looking to pursue a policy with the company outlining a general harmonised approach, focussing on team/site performance and recognition of positive results without publicly detailing any individual results.

Once agreed, the code of practise and the policy on visualisation will be made available to all branches and their members.

Payplan and RFT

In communicating the successful decision by BT Business not to pursue clawback of bonus as a result of breakage on Acquisition in Q1, the union indicated that the level of breakage and costs to the company in managing this was something the company would be looking to pursue at a later date.

Subsequently, the company have come back to the union with proposals which could result in bonus payments being impacted by performance against RFT measures; something the company are calling an 'Advisor Quality Incentive'.

Talks are at an early stage, though the company have indicated they will want to move on this quickly. The union have responded to this initial approach with a list of concerns. A key issues for the union is to make sure that any 'incentive' should be just that. We are keen to ensure that individuals are not penalised by having bonus withheld for genuine sales achievement.

Branches will be kept fully up to date with progress on the discussions as they continue.

We hope you find this briefing useful, and of interest. As ever, if you have any comments you wish to make on any of the articles, please contact your local representative or Branch Secretary, we would very much appreciate your input