

# Introduction

## Managing the People Side of Change

In various communications during 1988 and 1989, a good deal of coverage was given to the concept of Job Design or Job Redesign in the light of the changes that technology would bring to the workplace. We have learned that managing technological change including job design – like so many other aspects of good management – is largely a matter of applying known skills to new situations.

Every technological breakthrough has required the allocation of tasks and the redistribution of skills within the workplace. In office-work in just one hundred years, we have gone from hand-writing, to clumsy manual typewriters, to good manual typewriters, to electronic and memory typewriters, to word-processors to world wide communication linkages of personal computers. Today everyone in the organization is being affected by the introduction of technology.

More recently, Public Service 2000 in its program of Renewal of the Public Service, is introducing a number of major innovations in respect to the way the Public Service is managed which are impacting equally with technology on people and the jobs. We have to transform ourselves into an organization which focuses the skills, judgement and adaptability of individual employees on the essentials of service and on more collaborative action. The result is a vision of client centred service provided by people who are valued as the most important asset in the Public Service.

To that end, greater authority is being delegated closer to service delivery points; managerial processes are being simplified; employees will be recognized more for their skill levels than for specific categories of work; there will be greater career opportunities and flexibility in deployments in the service; the organizational hierarchies will be flattened, emphasizing a new requirement for team work and co-operation in the performance of tasks. There will be an underlying requirement throughout for equity in the workplace. We must also adapt to a continuous learning culture which places a high value on learning and career development.

Against this myriad of changes and as a consequence of the introduction of technology, we are finding ourselves in a much more competitive labour market for people with the prerequisite skills. At the same time, we are subject to increased pressure and expectations as managers and supervisors. Our world is changing rapidly, globalization of world economy means increasingly tough competition for markets and investments. The Government Service, like the private sector has to develop new approaches which will free up and channel employee skills, creative energies and judgement. Resources are strained and adding new resources will not be an option.

Some things, however, do not change: the needs of individuals for physical and psychological comfort in their lives and in their workplace, the need for security, the fear of change and apprehension about the future, and fear that obsolescent job skills may lead to redundancy. The management of change, particularly where it involves changing roles through the redesign of job packages and the redirection of workflow, requires managers to manage proactively with intelligence, tact, and sensitivity.

This booklet is designed to help you with this task. It is laid out as follows: