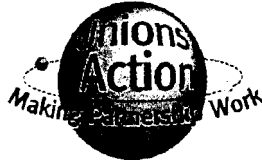


IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS



PARTNERSHIP in the WORKPLACE Guidelines for Unions



Adaptability, Flexibility and Innovation.

*The means by which the organisation can be made **more** flexible, innovative and adapt to changing market requirements. (Partnership 2000)*

Union Priorities

Unions should seek to enhance flexibility in positive ways (e.g, job enrichment, team working, skills acquisition) rather than negative arrangements (e.g. short term contracts, short notice transfers, part-time work). Innovation should involve all staff through structured mechanisms for improvements in product and process efficiency and the development of new products or services.

Example of Statement of Joint Objectives

Through continuous learning to ensure all can be flexible and innovative and adaptable to changing market circumstances.

<i>Suggested Agenda</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>
<i>Training</i>	◆ <i>Reduced 'lead times'</i>
<i>Flexibility</i>	◆ <i>Job enhancement</i>
<i>Marketing</i>	◆ <i>Multi-skilling</i>
<i>Product innovation</i>	◆ <i>Lower costs</i>
<i>Process changes</i>	◆ <i>New products /services</i>

<i>Co-operation with change including new forms of work organisation.</i>
<i>The mechanisms by which employees and managers can be continuously innovative and accept the need for change to remain competitive. (Partnership 2000)</i>
<i>Union Priorities</i>
<i>To assist that the enterprise remains viable and prospers and to link the issue of change with “Employee involvement for competitiveness” to ensure it is the subject of prior consultation and participation with worker representatives.</i>
<i>Example of Statement of Joint Objectives</i>
<i>To ensure ongoing competitiveness through continuous innovation, flexibility joint involvement and partnership.</i>

<i>Suggested Agenda</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>
<i>Quality and customer satisfaction</i>	● <i>Total Quality Management</i>
<i>Product and product innovation</i>	◆ <i>World Class Manufacturing</i>
<i>Changes in work organisation</i>	◆ <i>Autonomous team working</i>
<i>Involvement in the process of change</i>	● <i>Suggestion schemes</i>
	● <i>Joint taskforces</i>

<i>Problem solving and conflict avoidance.</i>
<i>Developing a co-operative culture which facilitates a non adversely approach to problems. (Partnership 2000)</i>

<i>Union Priorities</i>
<i>Recognising that disagreements and disputes can arise, even within a partnership arrangement, mechanisms should be established to facilitate resolution in a non adversarial way.</i>

<i>Example of Statement of Joint Objectives</i>
<i>To develop a culture and procedures which strengthens trust and partnership and allows problems and disputes to be resolved fairly and without damage to the fundamental interest of either side.</i>

<i>Suggested Agenda</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>
<i>Improved communications</i>	◆ <i>“Getting to Yes” training</i>
<i>Conflict resolution</i>	◆ <i>Structured resolution of disputes</i>
<i>Problem solving</i>	◆ <i>Greater openness and trust</i>

<i>Occupational Health and Safety and the Work Environment.</i>	
<i>Union Priorities</i>	
<i>To secure arrangements designed to make work safer, cleaner human centred and friendlier. To ensure Safety Representatives are afforded the necessary status and resources to be proactive in preventing accidents. To have workplace representatives involved in strategic decisions concerning safety and improvement to the working environment generally</i>	
<i>Example of Statement of Joint Objectives</i>	
<i>To develop and maintain working practices which minimises risk, monotony and discomfort and makes work more satisfying and rewarding and to improve the workplace environment and interpersonal relations</i>	
<i>Suggested Agenda</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>
<i>Risk and accident reduction</i>	◆ <i>Survey of attitudes to work and conditions</i>
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	◆ <i>Risk analysis and accident prevention</i>
<i>Stress at work</i>	◆ <i>Non adversarial settlement of injury claims</i>
<i>Workplace conditions</i>	◆ <i>Human centred work design</i>
<i>Facilities for meals and rest</i>	◆ <i>Health promotion activities</i>
<i>Sports and recreational activities</i>	

<i>Composition of the workforce.</i>	
<i>Issues relating to the employment of atypical workers. taking account of such factors as competitive pressures, flexibility and security of employment. (Partnership 2000)</i>	
<i>Union Priorities</i>	
<i>To minimise the extent of temporary part-time or fixed term contracts whilst affording the company the necessary flexibility to cope with occasional or seasonal demands and market changes.</i>	
<i>Example of Statement of Joint Objectives</i>	
<i>To provide terms and conditions of employment which fairly balance employees desire for security, rest and recreation and time for personal and family commitments with the business needs of the organisations.</i>	
<i>Suggested Agenda</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>
<i>Extent of requirement for non-permanent contracts</i>	• <i>Conversion of temporary to permanent positions</i>
<i>Pensions and other benefits for non-permanent staff</i>	• <i>Improved benefits package for part-time, temporary and fixed term contract staff.</i>

Representational arrangements.	
<i>The role of the union and employee representatives and facilities for effective representation. (Partnership 2000)</i>	
Union Priorities	
<i>To have the union fully recognised and afforded the necessary facilities to allow for active involvement in the companies development. To secure agreed arrangements which provide workplace representatives with the time and other resources needed to carry out their functions effectively. To ensure the union is given access to company information and is consulted in advance and in good time concerning proposed changes like & to impact on employment, working arrangements or conditions and earnings.</i>	
Example of Statement of Joint Objectives	
<i>The establishment of a partnership between the (employer) and the (union) based on trust, co-operation and the provision of all reasonable facilities to allow the union and its representatives to participate positively in the companies development and improve the efficiency of its representative functions</i>	
Suggested Agenda	Possible Outcomes
<i>Facilities for union involvement</i> <i>Employee Representative facilities</i> <i>Structures for collective bargaining and grievance handling</i> <i>Representatives training</i> <i>Arrangements for union consultation and information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Adaptation to LRC Code of Practice on Employee Representatives</i> ◆ <i>Joint "Getting to Yes" training</i> ◆ <i>Improved Management / Union liaison</i> ◆ <i>Union subscription 'check-off' facility if not already provided</i> ◆ <i>'Fast track' negotiations to avoid damaging delays</i> ◆ <i>Economic literacy training for representatives</i> ◆ <i>Union input to induction training</i>

Forms of Financial Involvement.
Union Priorities
<i>To secure arrangements for profit sharing, employee share participation or other agreed forms of gain sharing which permit workers to share in the benefits of the companies success.</i>

Example of Statement of Joint Objectives	
<i>To give employees the opportunity to participate as equity stakeholders in the company.</i>	
Suggested Agenda	Possible Outcomes
<i>Arrangements for financial involvement by way of:</i> <i>Equity share options</i> <i>or</i> <i>Profit sharing</i> <i>or</i> <i>Performance based bonus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Free shares</i> ◆ <i>Profit related bonus</i> ◆ <i>Option of converting bonus to shares based on approved plan to provide tax benefits</i> ◆ <i>Group performance related incentive bonus scheme</i>

Training, personal development and support.

Enhancing competence, flexibility and innovation through skills development, professional training and assistance (Partnership 2000)

Union Priorities

The union should request the company to improve opportunities for individuals, through training and promotion, to develop personally and professionally Both the content and amount of training, including apprenticeship training where appropriate, should be discussed as well as opportunities for **educational leave** and payment of fees.

Workers experiencing personal difficulties because of drug or alcohol dependency, bereavement or marital problems should be assisted through an independent and professional **employee assistance programme**.

Example of Statement of Joint Objectives

“To permit all employees to develop to their full potential in a work environment that is supportive and protective of all.”

Suggested Agenda	Possible Outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/> Training for career development 7 Promotional opportunities 9 Protection against bullying or unfair treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Rights to personal privacy 3 Employee Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Career development training ◆ Employee assistance programme ◆ Apprenticeship quotas ◆ Educational leave ◆ Family support measures ◆ Privacy and data disclosure ◆ Procedures for combating bullying

Equality of Opportunities.

Consideration of equal opportunities and reconciliation of family and work responsibilities. (Partnership 2000)

Union Priorities

To have a positive action programme agreed and implemented which overcomes any imbalance or disadvantage suffered as a result of gender, disability or other factors.

To have working times and workplace facilities reviewed with a view to balancing individual needs in terms of childcare or other family responsibilities with customer / company requirements

Example of Statement of Joint Objectives

To make equality opportunities a cornerstone of the companies approach to recruitment, training and staff promotion and, within the limits of commercial and customer needs, to permit flexibility in working time and leave arrangements to facilitate personal and family needs.

Suggested Agenda	Possible Outcomes
Equal opportunities Training to overcome disadvantage Accessibility and employment of persons with disabilities Working time arrangements Compassionate leave entitlements	Positive action programmes Workplace childcare facilities Voluntary quota of employees with disabilities Flexi time Code of practice on compassionate leave arrangements

Paths to Partnership

Topics for discussion at company level

The following pages list items which are recommended in programme 2000 as appropriate for management union discussions at enterprise level. These items are a menu and the choice of issues and the manner they are dealt with will depend on current arrangements in the company and the priorities of the union(s) and the employer. However, a refusal to enter into constructive discussions on these issues would be a breach of the agreement.

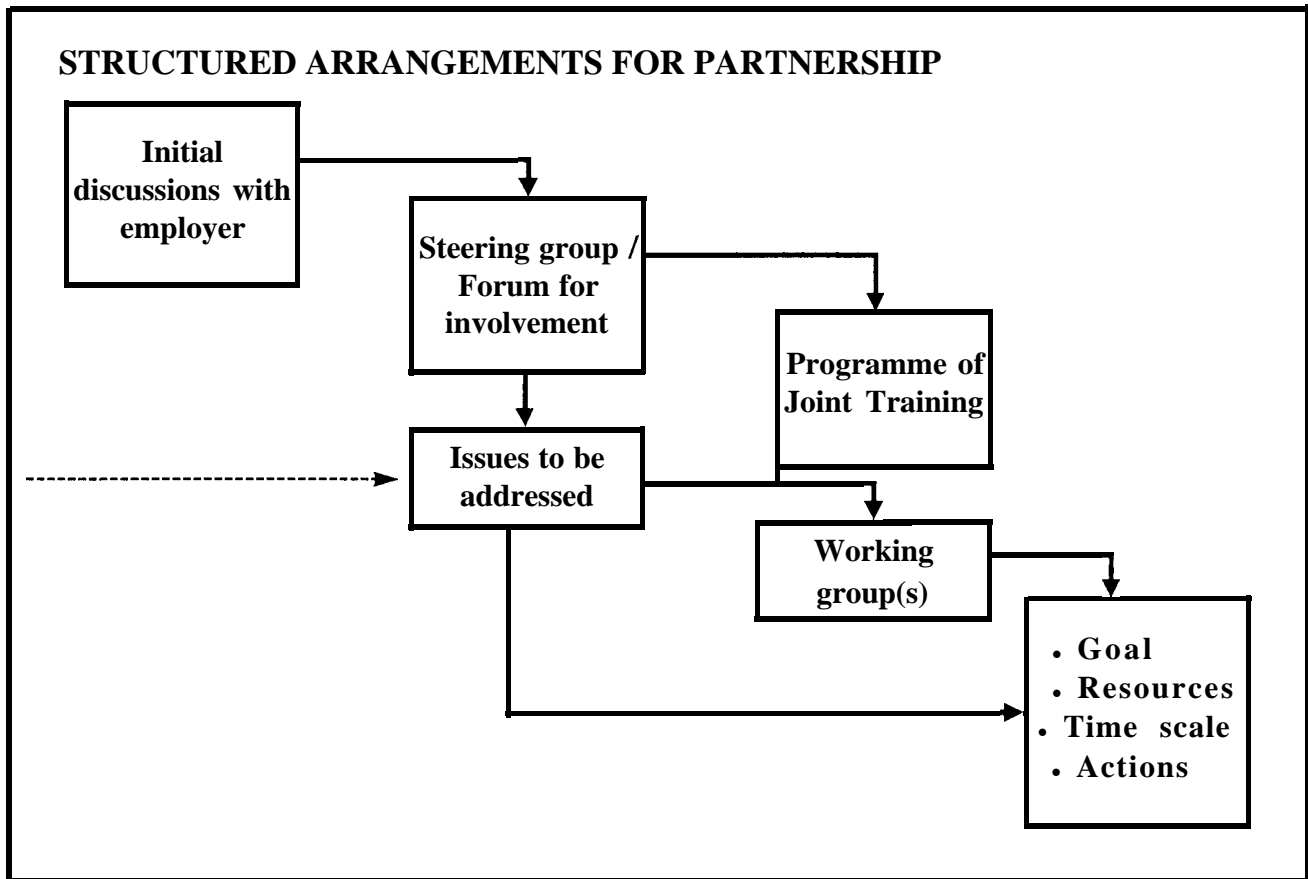
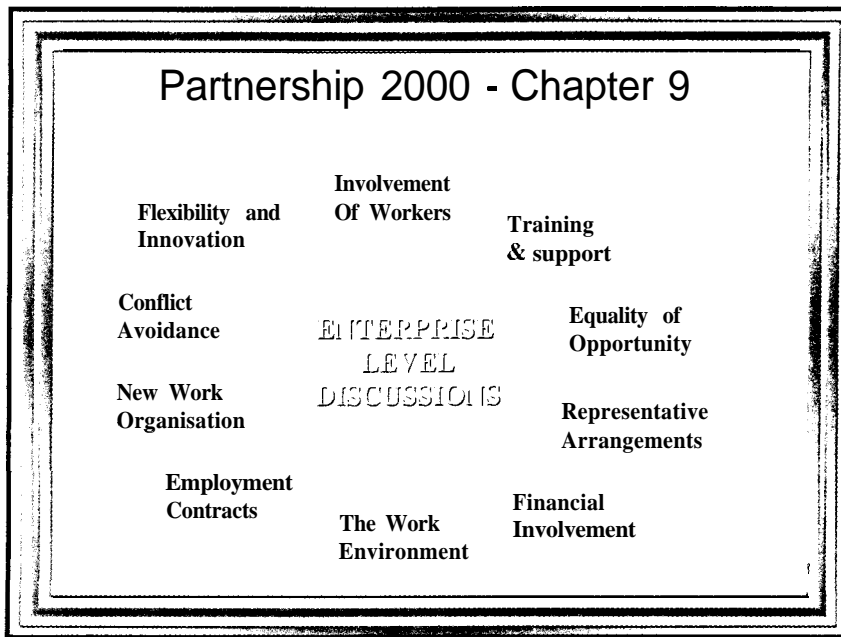
The text in the first box under every item is taken from Partnership 2000. Congress advise follows containing likely priorities for unions, suggested joint objectives in respect of each issue and a possible agenda and outcomes.

<i>Employee involvement for competitiveness. .</i>
<i>Opportunities for employees to be involved in, and contribute to, meeting the challenge of global competition. (Partnership 2000)</i>

<i>Union Priorities</i>
<i>The goal should to achieve agreement with management on structures which permit workers and their representatives to be consulted and involved in decisions affecting their future. Involvement should be both direct and representational. Workers, working in team based systems, can be given more direct autonomy over their own work organisation and priorities. At strategic level workers representatives, including Union Officials, should be consulted and involved in decisions relating to work organisation, competitiveness, investment and other issues concerning the future development of the enterprise. This will require specific arrangements for representative participation. How detailed these arrangements need to be will depend on the size of the company and its current culture and procedures.</i>

<i>Example of Statement of Joint Objective</i>
<i>“To create a partnership based on trust involving openness, consultation and participation between management, workers and their representatives on matters of common interest and mutual gain especially the means by which the companies competitiveness can be enhanced.”</i>

<i>Suggested Agenda</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>
<i>Information disclosure to all employees</i>	◆ <i>Staff Briefings</i>
<i>Information to Union reps</i>	◆ <i>Participative Training for Reps.</i>
<i>Consultation arrangements</i>	◆ <i>Joint Problem Solving Taskforces</i>
<i>Structures for representative participation</i>	◆ <i>Enterprise Council</i>
<i>Autonomous team working</i>	◆ <i>Self Directed Team Working</i>



The structure described above is appropriate to medium sized and larger sized companies. The Steering Group would normally be composed of the Senior Union and Employer Representatives. In addition to steering and monitoring the project, it could act as a forum for involvement on major strategic issues facing the company. Working groups would be set specific tasks, perhaps related to one or more of the menu of items listed as appropriate in the Programme. They would be given clearly defined goals and resources to fulfil their tasks which would lead to actions to implement the goals set.

4. **Secure commitments and a clear jointly agreed statement of objectives** with regard to Partnership. A time scale and resources to be employed for the process should be agreed. This should include arrangements for joint training.
5. **Negotiate structures for involvement / participation** appropriate to the size, structure and culture of the employment in detailed discussions with the employer. Below is a graph giving an example of a structured approach to developing partnership.
6. **Monitor developments** within the companies you have responsibility for and evaluate and report on progress.

Structuring Partnership into the Organisation

Policy Commitment

The achievement of a culture of partnership should be the stated aim of both the company and union(s). A commitment to this effect should be stated in the 'mission statement' of the organisation and in all policy statements.

Aims and Strategy

A set of goals should be agreed annually combined with a strategy to achieve them. The approach should be as inclusive as possible to ensure all workers and management are aware of developments and can make an input to the process. The strategy should involve a joint monitoring process.

Structures

While Partnership 2000 does not proscribe any particular structure it is nevertheless essential that the process be structured and resourced. The approach to involving workers and their representatives will have to be agreed if mechanisms are not already in place to cater for it. A suggested structural approach is illustrated overleaf.

Issues

The strategy should focus on issues which will be the subject of partnership during the year. Chapter 9 of partnership contains a suggested list of issues (summarised in box below) which can be used as a guide. These issues are elaborated on further later in these guidelines. Depending on the size of the company, working groups can be asked to progress a specific issue within a given time scale.

Driving the Partnership Process Forward

The process needs to be driven by key personnel on the management and union side. Senior Management and Union Official(s) should be the principle advocates and 'trustees' of the project. The administration of the process should be the responsibility of key workplace representatives and managers. The selected individuals must be given appropriate training.

Involving Workers

Partnership, to be successful, must involve all workers and be perceived by them as beneficial. Workers must be given more autonomy over their work arrangements, either individually or in teams. They should be consulted about, and involved in, the development of partnership structures. Workplace representatives should be given training to develop the communications and presentational skills needed to keep members informed.

Local Area Partnerships

Local Area Based Partnerships exist to assist unemployed workers to find employment and generally to encourage local employment initiatives. Companies involved in developing an internal partnership process should ideally develop links with any Area Based Partnerships in their locality or liaise with local County Enterprise Boards. Trade Union nominees sit on both Area Partnerships and County Enterprise Boards. Union and workplace representatives should encourage and actively support such links and make contact themselves with the union nominees on the local partnerships.

Congress Objectives

Congress aims to ensure the process leads to:

- (a) the widest possible diffusion of the Partnership concept
- (b) greater union involvement within companies in managing change and better facilities to represent members
- (c) a meaningful improvement in working conditions and rewards for workers

Requirements

The achievements of these objectives requires:

- awareness by workers and their representatives of the benefits of a Partnership approach
- an understanding by officials and lay representatives of how Partnership operates and the knowledge and skills to negotiate on the issue
- appreciation by employers of the benefits of Partnership leading to a receptive attitude to new initiatives
- identification of models of good practice
- support from a National Centre for Partnership and directly from Congress, IBEC and the Government.

To assist in meeting these requirements, Congress will provide training for Officials and Shop Stewards on the subject. This will involve dedicated courses and the integration of the subject into all representative training. Congress will review partnership developments nationally and internationally and, in co-operation with the National Centre, provide on-going information to affiliated unions.

Recommendations for Union Action

Congress recommends that unions adapt the development of workplace partnerships as a key objective of their activities over the next three years. A senior official, or officials should be given responsibility for progressing the issue.' The union should set itself a goal of establishing a partnership process in a majority of the workplaces in which the union has representation during the period. Officials should be provided with training and, if appropriate, supplementary guidance and support.

The union, in consultation with Congress, should develop a training programme for officials and lay representatives on partnership strategy.

Guidelines for Officials

Officials should seek to progress partnership within companies they service sequencing actions as follows:

1. **Secure training** for themselves and other key representatives.
2. **Determine priorities** for the particular employment following discussions with workplace representatives and members generally
3. **Initiate discussions with the employer.** When claims are being made for the implementation of the pay and conditions of employment terms of Partnership 2000, the employer should be informed of the unions requirement to have arrangements for Partnership discussed and meetings should be arranged for this purpose.

Partnership is 'Win- Win '

Workers gain from their rights and aspirations being given concrete recognition by their employer. Better working relations and improved working conditions reduce stress and permit greater openness and information. Successful company partnership can result in greater job security and a share in increased profits through agreed gainsharing arrangements.

The employer *benefits* from the commitment by workers and their unions to improving efficiency and competitiveness. The enterprise and ingenuity of all workers is more likely to be harnessed to organisational goals. Other potential benefits can arise from good industrial relations, higher staff morale, lower absenteeism and staff turnover.

Partnership 2000 - Suvvort for Partnership at Company Level

No particular model for partnership is advanced in Partnership 2000. It is a matter for individual companies and unions to determine the precise mechanisms and structures by which a partnership process will be developed. The object of the agreement is to provide a framework, support and monitoring for local partnership developments by way of:

Training

Detailed training *on* partnership will be provided for key union officials and tutors. Joint training will be provided to workplace and management representatives.

Promotion

The partners to Partnership 2000 are committed to promoting employee involvement and partnership.

Information and Support

Unions and employers will have access to information, technical assistance and support. This will include the dissemination of best practice.

Monitoring

The process will be jointly monitored.

National Centre for Partnership

The National Centre for Partnership has the task of fostering local level partnership and co-ordinating and assisting with many of the above activities.

Objectives of Company Partnership

The objectives of company level partnership, as stated in Partnership 2,000 are:

- to enhance the prosperity and success of the enterprise
- to create the basis and arrangements for discussions of major decisions affecting the organisations future, including future economic security
- to engage all stakeholders ideas, abilities and commitment and
- to enhance the quality of the working environment

Within those broad objectives a number of topics are recommended as appropriate for discussion at enterprise level. These are listed in page 6 onwards under the heading "Paths to Partnership - Topics for Company level Discussions"

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Partnership at the Workplace

Guidelines for Unions

What is Partnership ?

The development of Partnership at company level was a key Congress objective in the negotiations for Partnership 2000. Chapter nine of that agreement outlines the context and parameters by which company level partnerships are to be developed. The agreement on pay and conditions between Congress and the employers states that the chapter should form the basis for discussions on partnership at enterprise level between management, employees and trade unions. These guidelines provide guidance to unions on how such discussions should be approached and structured.

Partnership 2000 defines partnership as:

“an active relationship based on recognition of a common interest to secure the competitiveness, viability and prosperity of the enterprise. It involves a continuing commitment by employees to improvements in quality and efficiency; and the acceptance by employers of employees as stake holders with rights and interests to be considered in the context of major decisions effecting their employment.

Partnership involves common ownership of the resolution of challenges, involving the direct participation of employees/representatives and an investment in their training, development and working environment”.

Partnership involves a culture of enterprise through joint involvement which takes account of worker as well as employer needs. It is a process, not an end product. The process involves improving relationships, developing trust and arrangements for participation. Partnership is not some idealised state of harmony, nor does it require a total absence of differences or disputes. Unions and employers represent different interests which can conflict. The challenge is to utilise an approach to the resolution of any conflicts, taking into account the fundamental interests of both sides, without damaging relations and, wherever possible, by focusing on common interests.

What constitutes partnership?

The following characterises a partnership approach;

- ⇒ The Union is recognised resourced and involved in the Company’s strategic development
- ⇒ Workers participate, through their union representatives and directly, in decisions affecting investment and employment prospects, work organisation, working and employment conditions
- ⇒ Management accept workers as stakeholders in the company with rights as well as responsibilities
- ⇒ There is openness and trust between management, workers and their representatives
- ⇒ A problem solving approach is used to resolve disputes and conflicts of interest
- ⇒ Workers accept the need for change to ensure company competitiveness and employment security
- ⇒ There is a culture of quality in respect of products, customer service and internal relationships
- ⇒ The improvement of the working environment is a parallel objective to total quality
- ⇒ Workers share in the benefits of the companies success