

*Banca Agrileasing forms part of Cooperative Credit. 14 branches operate throughout the country. Banca Agrileasing was set up twenty years ago and offers exemplary financial options specifically aimed at meeting the needs of SMEs and craft enterprises.*

242 people are employed at the bank. Nobody works night shifts and 15% of employees work part-time. All have a degree or have had some form of specialist training.

#### ***Maintaining good communications***

Although members of the organisation only meet face-to-face once a year at the AGM, regular contact is kept up via the intranet. Keeping these communication channels open is seen as an important element in the successful running of the business.

At the AGM, the president runs through the main issues to have faced the company throughout the year and talks through the projects planned for the year ahead. These future aims and objectives are communicated to every employee before the meeting via the intranet. This gives everyone plenty of time to assess these proposals and make a contribution at the meeting if they want to.

Regular contact between the branches is also kept up via a twice monthly video conference, e-mail and a net newsletter.

Staff contributions are very welcome. All the employees are

encouraged to voice their opinions on how the organisation operates and to make suggestions as to how the workplace could become safer and healthier on a daily basis. All these suggestions are registered by the "Prevention and Safety Service" (SPS), and immediate action is taken to see what can be done to make the necessary changes. More complicated issues are discussed in detail before they can be put into practice, but things still move along quickly. Responding speedily to improvement suggestions is essential if the process is to maintain its credibility.

The SPS is also responsible for explaining the implication of new health related laws and regulations to staff. It produces comprehensive information leaflets that are distributed to all employees. The service also directly manages part of the intranet, providing a site where employees can access information on health and safety issues and guidelines relating to these matters.

#### ***The role of health at work: how it affects the enterprise***

Last year the organisation made a commitment to reduce smoking among staff members. Information leaflets were handed out, meetings



organised and stop smoking programmes set in motion. Those who preferred to do so could attend an external quit smoking programme.

Emphasis is also placed on continuous training and a budget is set aside each year for courses and educational programmes.

Creating a pleasant working environment is a major issue too. The company is keen to ensure that the workplace is a safe, healthy and enjoyable place to be in order to get the best out of staff.

A number of facilities are provided. A canteen/catering service is available at each branch and special dishes can be prepared for those who request them. Sports facilities and relaxation areas are offered as are medical services.

If employees are off sick for a long time, efforts are made to find appropriate roles for them within the workplace that suit their state of health. For instance, it is possible for individuals to work part-time if the demands of working a full day are too great. Staff experiencing personal problems are also dealt with sympathetically. Last year one employee was allowed to work from home for a while and the company set up all the equipment to make this possible.

The role new technology plays in promoting health and safety is also looked at closely – for instance IT

makes it feasible for people to work effectively from home.

The company extends its health promoting activities to the wider community. A large proportion of employees belong to the Red Cross and the organisation sponsors a number of this charity's initiatives. The company also works closely with the fire service and the police to maintain the highest standards of security.

#### ***Looking at positive results***

The company recognises that its workforce is its most valuable resource. It also firmly believes that a happy, healthy motivated workforce is something to be aimed for. Its philosophy is that satisfied workers produce better results. Motivated workers are also a crucial factor in keeping customers satisfied and for generating and maintaining new business. Implementing a policy that safeguards the health and well-being of employees reaps positive economic benefits.

No structured analysis of employee and customer satisfaction is undertaken, i.e. via questionnaires. However, as both these elements are considered to be so vitally important, they are under constant scrutiny, albeit informally.