

Shake-ups that leave us shaken but not stirred

John recently resigned from his job with a European airline because of the way it handled heavy redundancies in the wake of September 11. 'The whole experience was a disaster,' he says. 'I was one of the last to leave and now all the original group that I started with are gone.' John, who worked in the finance department, says the redundancies were announced in an unplanned way and the workload was redistributed without any consultation, let alone assistance or incentives. 'People were already overworked, but when they were also given duties above and beyond their job specification, they began to leave in droves,' he says. 'On top of this, the change was not communicated well. We should have been consulted.'

Workplace change has become a constant for most employees. Yet it often fails to achieve its stated objectives and has unforeseen consequences of the kind experienced in John's case. A new study by OPP, which specialises in applied business psychology, seeks to explain why. Poor communication is often to blame, as are change imposed from above and an absence of obvious benefits. The study, based on a survey of 1,001 people at all levels in large UK organisations, finds that workplace change has left 58 percent feeling demotivated and less committed. Fourteen percent have left their jobs as a result and 49 percent have considered doing so.