



Better Staffing

For a Better BNZ

Finsec Staffing Solutions Proposal

2008



Introduction

Finsec members and non-members in the BNZ have regularly raised staffing issues with us over recent years. Over the last 10 years Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing numbers in the BNZ have decreased by 565¹.

Finsec has sought to take an evidence based approach to resolving these issues within the BNZ. We have conducted two major research projects to ascertain the exact nature of staffing problems in the bank.

Firstly, in 2006 Finsec commissioned an independent research company, AssessSystems, to measure the level of workplace related stress within the BNZ and find out the causes of stress.

This research reported (59%) of staff stated the lack of staff (full time and relief) as one of the causes of stress. Staffing was ranked second highest out of the top 10 stressors.

Secondly, late last year Finsec conducted a staffing survey across the BNZ where the majority of respondents (53%) identified staffing levels as a concern, describing them as borderline, unacceptable or in crisis; and in particular in the retail network where 56% of described staffing levels as borderline or worse.

We propose a number of solutions to address the issues of staffing levels within the BNZ and are open to discussion on other ways to explore and resolve this serious ongoing problem.

This document sets out our suggested solutions to the ongoing staffing problem. We believe that fixing staffing issues is beneficial to the bank, our members and the wider community. This report aims to highlight the mutual benefits of increasing staffing levels in the BNZ. We look forward to discussing it further with you.

Callum Francis
BNZ Union Council Chairperson

¹ KPMG Financial Institutions Surveys 1997 and 2006

Section One: Total Staffing Levels

Finsec's proposed solution

To increase overall staffing levels at the BNZ to those that existed at the year ended 1997 (5,197).

Rationale

This would enable staff to:

- Better meet the needs of existing and new customers
- Maintain and continue to provide quality service to a standard that does not negatively impact on customers, compromise work relationships and the interests of the community
- Deliver the increasing demands made by work intensification and work practices
- Assist in delivering the goals and objectives set by the bank
- Take leave at times appropriate to their circumstances

This would enable the BNZ to:

- Utilise the strengths of staff knowledge and expertise based on their relationship with customers and communities
- Better meet its legal obligations under the Holidays Act
- Take an active step to minimise work related stress

Proposed process

1. Finsec, in collaboration with the bank, will use a survey mechanism to identify sites that self identify as having inadequate staffing levels by the end of May 2008.

We will investigate the survey outcomes (on the basis of the most urgent examples first) with a view to identifying the causes of understaffing or the perception of understaffing and then identify and implement agreed solutions.

2. The bank agrees to consult with employees in all work sites where it proposes not to replace staff following attrition, prior to any decision being made

Objectives

- Parties to jointly develop a process to assist in identifying sites with inadequate staffing levels.
- Set up joint (BNZ & Finsec) teams to conduct interviews in sites identified as having inadequate staffing levels.
- Work through the findings and implement outcomes.
- Parties to develop a checklist for managers to work through when an employee resigns that leads to consultation with staff where a proposal is being considered to not replace a role

- Jointly develop specific questions on staffing to be used in the banks engagement survey and for the results of the survey to be shared

Section Two: Relief Cover

Finsec's proposed solution

The bank increase its relief cover to 35 days per FTE and implements increases to FTE complement or casual relief staffing levels (as appropriate) to ensure adequate relief is actually provided on a consistent and regular basis.

Rationale

This would enable staff to:

- Access annual leave at times appropriate to them
- Better cover the work of staff who are on leave

This would allow the bank to:

- Consistently maintain and meet the needs of customers
- Maintain continuity of customer relationships and experience
- Improve the quality service to a standard that does not impact negatively on customers, compromise work colleagues and the community
- Deliver the increasing demands made by work intensification and work practices
- Assist in delivering the goals and objectives set by the bank
- Utilise the strengths of staff knowledge and expertise based on their relationship with customers and communities.
- Retain and build the business
- Take an active step to minimise work related stress

Proposed process

- Parties to determine viability of establishing a specific internal relief team for BDS
- Parties to use the information from the results as outlined above to look at regions implementing dedicated relief pools (of permanent staff) for branch networks
- Bank to give an overview of the staffing methodologies utilised by each of the bank's businesses and discuss possible changes to the methodologies to achieve 35 days per year per FTE relief cover

Section Three: Training

Finsec's proposed solution

The BNZ becomes involved in the establishment of a finance sector Industry Training Organisation to lead skill development and training that are portable and recognised throughout the industry and improve existing training provided.

Rationale

This would enable staff in the finance industry to:

- Have recognised qualifications that are portable across the industry
- Deliver the responsibilities and accountabilities as outlined in position descriptions
- Provide an incentive to retain staff in the finance industry
- Instill in staff that industry training is an integral part of career development across the finance sector.

This would enable the bank to:

- Have highly skilled staff
- Better meet its goals
- Improve workplace productivity

Proposed process

Participate in either or both of cross industry or BNZ specific discussions about the establishment of a Finance Sector ITO.

In the retail network, staff will be allocated a specific period of time (one hour per week) away from customers for training on products and systems knowledge.

In BDS, staff will be allocated a specific period of time (one hour per week) away from processing of documentation for training on products and systems knowledge.

Objectives

- Parties to investigate the logistics of the impact on the business away from customers to do training
- Parties to explore the ability of utilising experienced staff to coach less experienced employees and the benefits of this will have for the bank

Section Four: Staff Turnover and Retention

Finsec's proposed solution

To implement a \$1000 a year retention bonus to incentivise the retention of staff and to minimize turnover.

To establish a joint investigative body with Finsec that looks into retention issues and develops additional mechanisms to reduce staff turnover and thus improve retention.

Rationale

This would enable the bank to:

- Retain experienced staff
- Reduce the costs associated with hiring and training new staff
- Improve customer service and better retain existing customers
- Improve the relationship with staff through addressing a long term serious problem
- Develop specific work programmes around the main causes of turnover that enable targeted solutions
- Find ways to fund (through possible turnover and retention savings?) further creative solutions to boost retention rates thereby giving BNZ potential competitive advantage and giving employer of choice initiatives further funding

Proposed process

- Introduce the \$1000 a year retention bonus via a jointly agreed variation to the collective agreement this year
- Set up a joint working group to investigate additional solutions to turnover and retention.
- The group will investigate successful ways (what's currently working and potential other options) of promoting low turnover and high retention
- Provide a qualitative analysis of policies and workplace practices that deliver low turnover and high retention
- Enable both the bank and Finsec to participate in a work programme that has a positive focus and demonstrate to staff and members alike their ability to work constructively together
- Active consideration of five weeks annual leave provision after five years of service

Objectives

- Develop a survey of staff seeking their views on what policies and practices actually work to deliver low turnover and high retention
- From the survey results, identify a minimum of three workplaces in each business area (geographically spread) where a team of bank and Finsec staff visit and run focus group(s) with staff to establish qualitative answers

- From those answers, identify initiatives which should be applied nationally and together priorities and timeframe implementation