

voaded!

 **connect**
the union for professionals
in communications

Union Newsletter from Connect & it's members in **Vodafone Retail**

Issue 2 - Winter 2002

www.connectuk.org

Welcome to *voaded* - the Connect Union Newsletter for **Vodafone Retail**. Our aim is to provide an open, informative and lively forum to air your views and concerns about the issues that matter to you in Retail. The issues covered in this edition are those most commonly raised by people working in Vodafone shops. This is your newsletter. So, if you feel strongly about something and would like the issue to be covered in a future edition, please let your nearest Connect contact know. Or you can email your Connect team at vodafone@connectuk.org

In this issue: Staffing / Breaks / Winning an Independent Voice at Work

GIVE US A BREAK!

This company, like every other mobile company has been through some difficult times of late. However, what has kept the good ship Vodafone afloat and made this company what it is today - more than anything else - is the hard work, loyalty, commitment and talent of it's workforce. We - the people on the frontline - in Vodafone shops have shared the pain of the last 2 years more than most!

The vast majority of Retail staff are proud to work for this company. However, after all we have been through and all that we have done for Vodafone, some payback is overdue. The countless, stressful long days worked without breaks and continual unpaid overtime which the majority of us do, cannot go on forever. The absence of a bonus structure that recognises and rewards loyalty and hard graft adds insult to injury!

In some shops, managers and their staff are at breaking point. Targets in most areas are being hit and the busi-

ness is getting done. But, not without some cost. Many feel that loyalty has been exhausted or taken for granted. Working from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. 5 or 6 days a week without being able to take proper breaks has become the norm in many shops. There is little or no cover for staff absence. At times in some shops where staffing is so low, there have only been one or two trained members of staff on-site. This makes it impossible to take breaks. Having a shop staffed by only one person is also totally unsafe. It is hard to believe that the UK's premier mobile company is being run in this manner.

By law we are entitled to take a break. However, we all know what the current reality is. The unofficial explanation seems to be *'well this is Retail - what do you expect!'*

Though the employment of temporary staff is normal and can help during the build up to Christmas, it is hardly the answer to a much wider problem. The root cause of this problem is a lack of fully trained, permanent staff. This situation is unacceptable. It is also a total nonsense!

Our real company assets are out there - on the front-line - in the shops. Imagine a Premier League football club only fielding half a team because it only employed eleven players. The other half were injured or ill. How do we think that team would do, and what would the effect be on the players morale? Staffing has been raised at many levels of the company. However, little appears to have been done. Is anybody up there really listening to us?

SO, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THIS?

The only way we will ever have a proper, independent voice at work - and some influence in what goes on, is through our union. But to get this - more people need to join up. It may sound daunting at first, but look at it this way. If every member in Retail recruits another member into Connect then we double our member-

ship and so on. This is a very effective way of building our union. Make sure everyone in your shop has the opportunity to read this newsletter.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Connect can organise off-site meetings after work if people want to know more about the union. Joining is easy, confidential and can now be done on-line through the union web-site.

MORE CHANGES TO COME?

Who knows what's around the corner? What we do know is that if we all stick together and join the union, there is a much greater chance of one big collective voice being heard by the people that matter, than individual moans and groans. Think about it!

We DO have a union!

Yes! We do have a union here. Connect is not yet recognised by Vodafone, but we are a growing union across the Mobile & Telecomms Sector. Connect's campaign and the role it has played in helping and advising members in Retail with disciplinary and grievance cases is already influencing the Company's attitude. But we can have a lot more than this for our £5 per month! Connect negotiates on pay and other terms & conditions in companies like **BT and O₂**. If more people in Retail join the union, then we have a chance of winning 'union recognition'. This means having proper negotiations on matters like your pay, hours and holidays plus meaningful consultation on issues like staff training. Much better than any focus group!

50% + 1 = UNION RECOGNITION

The Employment Relations Act (1999) gives workers the right to have their union 'recognised' by their employer where a majority (50% + 1) of people in the 'bargaining unit' are in the union, or where a clear majority vote for it in a ballot. For a ballot to happen, at least 10% of people in the 'bargaining unit' need to be union members. The bargaining unit does not have to be the whole company. It could be a division, sector or even a large site. Food for thought?

Fact: 44 of the top 50 companies in the UK recognise a trade union.

More info:

Connect, 30 St. Georges Road,
Wimbledon, London,
SW19 4BD

Mobile / Text:
Lauren, 07718 626 012
Tony, 07764 232 305

Connect Helpdesk:
0208 971 6060

Connect Fax:
0208 971 6002

E-mail:
vodafone@connectuk.org

Internet:
www.connectuk.org

**Connect - Your Union - Your Voice -
Your Choice!**