Case Study - Implementing Change

In attempting to increase productivity Jane decided she needed to make some changes to the processes and procedures in the banqueting team and reorganise the layout of the service area. Her goal was to cut the time it took to serve food and clear up after service was completed.

She spent 2 weeks monitoring the work of the team and identified that some staff worked hard doing manual jobs and cleaning during service intervals whilst others ‘pretended’ to be busy doing smaller jobs such as polishing cutlery. She noticed that it was always the same staff doing the same jobs.

Jane did not consult with the staff until she had decided that she would implement the following changes:

1. Change shift patterns – change from one 17:00-24:00 shift to two shifts 17:00-22:00 and 19:00-24:00 to allow shift one to lay up before service and shift two to clear up after service.
2. Form teams of staff for shift one and shift two
3. Allocate jobs within shifts on a rota basis to ensure all staff do all jobs.
4. Reorganise the service area to make more space – move service ovens to the one end of the service area (the opposite end to the service door) and the storage and sinks at opposite ends of the service area.

Jane went ahead and had the service area reorganised. Then she met with staff to tell them about the changes and to her surprise they were very negative. They didn’t want to work in teams on shifts or lose two hours pay. They were surprised that the jobs were being allocated on a rota basis as they had discussed job allocation before with a previous manager and decided that as long as everyone was happy doing the same job this could continue. Jane was having none of their arguments as she insisted the rota was in the interest of flexibility.

All changes were implemented with immediate effect, however the consequences were disastrous. The teams began fighting, the late shift begrudged the early shift as they had the ‘easy’ end of the shift and seemed to make more mess than usual as they didn’t need to clear up. The quality of work reduced and accidents increased as food was being carried from the ovens at one end of the service area to the service door.