Work

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WORK, EMPLOYMENT & THE WORKPLACE

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Work: Any human activity that requires effort & is unpaid for **e.g.** doing homework, household chores, charity work.

Employment: Any human activity that requires effort but **IS** paid for **e.g.** employees of firms.

Main areas of employment: Agriculture, industry, services.

The labour force: Those who are employed & those who are unemployed but available for work.

Unemployment
People are unemployed when they are willing to work for payment but cannot find a job.

Reasons:
• New technology replacing workers **e.g.** self-service checkouts
• Fall of the number of people employed in a main area of employment
• Firms reducing staff numbers due to competition.
• Economic recession.

How to reduce unemployment:
• Invest more money in job creation.
• Encourage more enterprise & self-employment.
• Buy more Irish-produced goods to create more jobs.
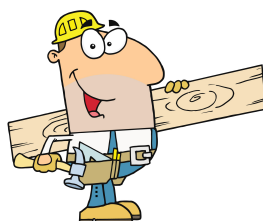• Introduce early retirement & job-sharing schemes.

Self-Employment
Reasons:
• Cannot find employment.
• See an opportunity to start your own business.

Rewards:
• You can make all business decisions — you don't have to answer to anyone as you are the only person involved in the business.
• You can keep all the profit after tax is deducted as profits don't have to be shared — you are the only person involved in the business.
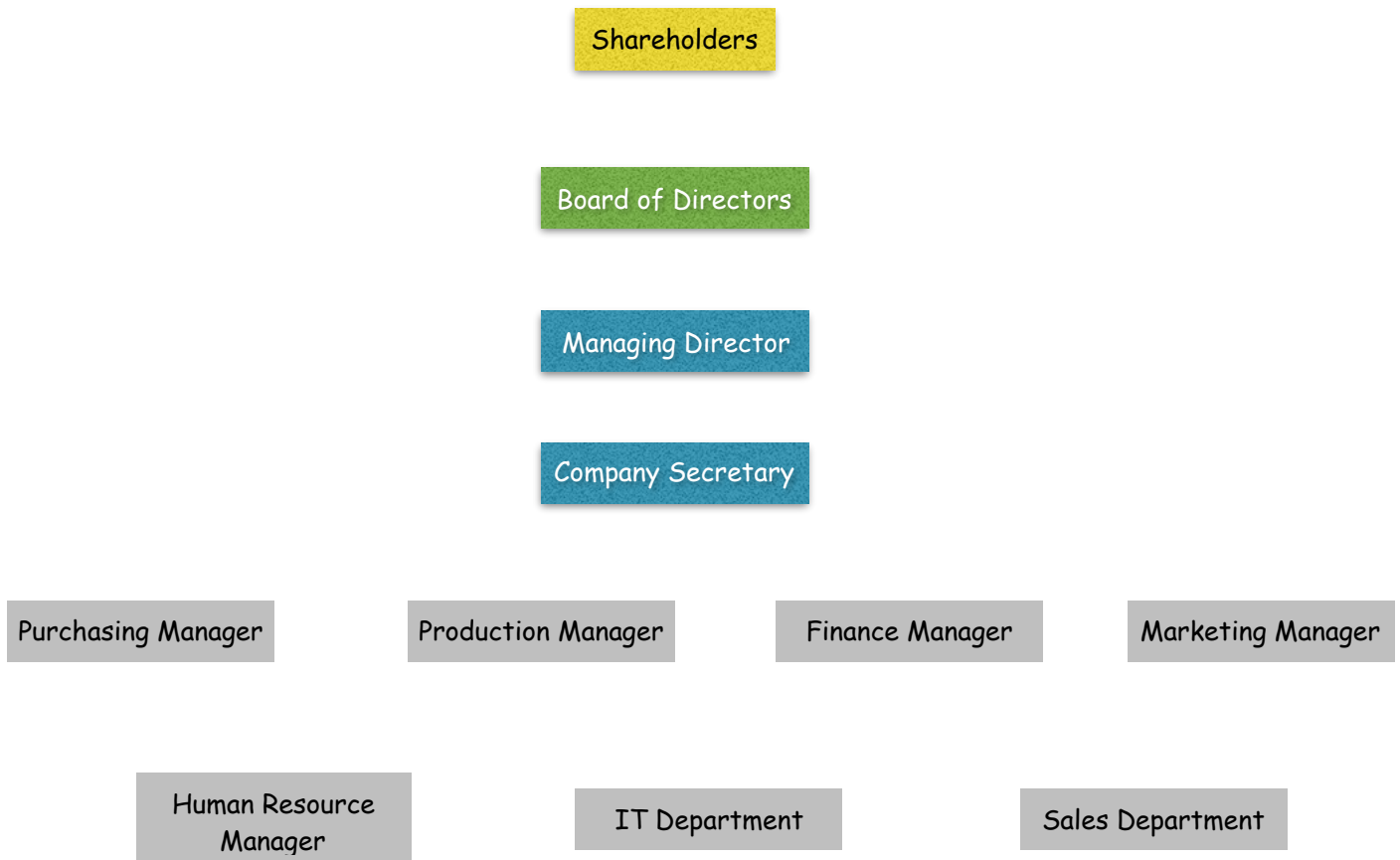• Self-satisifcation — if the business becomes a success.

Risks:
• **Unlimited Liability** — if the business fails, the person who set it up on his/her own may lose their private assets to cover debts.
• One person cannot be successful in all aspects of a business & may make some bad decisions.
• May have to work longer hours — may affect family life, stress.
• Unstable income — profits may rise & fall.

Work
Organisation of the Workplace

Shareholders

Board of Directors

Managing Director

Company Secretary

Purchasing Manager   Production Manager   Finance Manager   Marketing Manager

Human Resource Manager   IT Department   Sales Department

Types of jobs
- **Services** — providing a service to individuals or to other businesses **e.g.** teacher
- **Administration** — having a management/supervisory role.
- **Artistic/Creative** — using one's imagination/creative abilities **e.g.** artist
- **Technical** — understanding how things work **e.g.** computer programmer
- **Manual** — physical work **e.g.** builder
- **Clerical** — office work **e.g.** secretary

Types of skills
- **Unskilled** — no qualifications & training **e.g.** farm workers/painters
- **Semi-skilled** — trained to do a particular task **e.g.** taxi driver, bartender, retail salesperson.
- **Skilled** — trained in a trade, served an apprenticeship **e.g.** electrician, carpenter.
- **Professional** — professional qualification **e.g.** teacher (degree)

EMPLOYERS & EMPLOYEES

Employees

- An employee is a person hired by someone else to do paid work for them **e.g.** teacher, sales assistant.

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
To work in a safe, clean & healthy workplace.	To do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay **e.g.** be punctual (on time)
To receive a fair wage for work done.	To keep all confidential business information private outside of the workplace.
To receive equal pay & equal promotion opportunities as others.	To obey the rules & regulations of the business.
To join a trade union.	To co-operate with the employer & fellow employees & to be courteous to customers.
Not to be discriminated against on grounds of gender, religion, sexuality, age, etc.	

Employers

- An employer is a person who pays others to work for them.

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
To run the business as he/she sees fit **e.g.** to decide on the objectives & policies of the business.	To provide a safe, clean & healthy workplace.
To select suitable employees	To pay agreed wages.
To dismiss dishonest/unsuitable staff.	To obey all employment laws **e.g.** minimum wage (€9.25 per hour)
To expect loyalty from staff **e.g.** an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.	To give employees a contract of employment in writing.
	To treat all employees equally regardless of gender, religion, sexuality, age, etc. (An **Equal Opportunities Employer)**

Procedure for employing staff

1. Draw up the job description. Make sure to describe duties/responsibilities of the job, skills/ qualifications required.
2. Advertise the job **e.g.** radio, newspapers, shop window.
3. Short-list the candidates & interview them.
4. Select the most suitable candidate & prepare an employment contract.
5. Introduce the new employee to the firm (**induction**), organise training, register them for tax & PRSI.

Work

Calculating wages
- **Time Rate** — employees are paid a certain rate per day/hour **e.g.** minimum wage is €9.25 per hour.
- **Piece Rate** — employees' gross pay would depend on the number of items produced **e.g.** €x per item made.
- **Commission** — income is calculated as a percentage of the value of sales **e.g.** 10% of value sold
- **Basic Pay** — the amount of money earned for working a contracted working week.
- **Overtime** — pay at a higher rate per hour for working in excess of the normal working period **e.g.** time & a half, double time.
- **Benefits-in-kind** — a form of non-cash payment for work done **e.g.** company car, subsidised meals.

Income tax forms
- **P60** — a document received by an employee at the end of each tax year, showing **gross pay, tax & PRSI** deducted during the year.
- **P45** — a document given to employee who is leaving the business. It shows **gross pay, tax & PRSI** paid to the date of ceasing employment.
- **P12** — the taxpayer's income tax return for the year, acts as an application form for a **tax credit**.

Employee Records
Employers keep records on all employees
Why?
- To use as a reference if an employee leaves their job.
- These records are needed for promotion/dismissal purposes
- PAYE & PRSI records are compulsory.
- Required by law.

What is included in these records?
Personal details — job application form — CV — job performance — behaviour — contract of employment — PAYE/PRSI records.

CVs
A **curriculum vitae** is a short account of one's career and qualifications prepared typically by an applicant for a position.

Information on CVS:
- Personal details
- Educational achievements
- Work experience details.
- Interests/Hobbies/Achievements.
- References from past employers.

PRSI
- Pay Related Social Insurance
- A contribution towards a social welfare benefit that may be claimed in the future.

Benefits:
- Maternity Benefit
- Illness Benefit
- Dental Benefit
- Jobseeker's Benefit

Formulae
Gross Pay = Basic Pay + Overtime + Commission, **Net Pay** = Gross Pay - Deductions

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

- The term used to describe the relationship between management & employees in a business.
- If industrial relations are good, workers will be well **motivated** & **productivity** will be high.
- If industrial relations are poor, employees will **not be motivated, will be absent** & **will not be productive.**

Trade Unions
A trade union is an organisation set up by workers which represents them in the workplace. It speaks on their behalf with employers on various issues **e.g.** pay/working conditions

Functions:
- To protect its' members rights.
- To negotiate fair wages & salaries for members.
- To negotiate suitable working conditions for members.
- To negotiate with employers if a dispute occurs.
- To protect members from unfair dismissal.

How to join:
- Contact shop steward (union representative)
- Fill in application form.
- Pay annual subscription.

Benefits of joining:
- Higher standard of living for members — better wages, working conditions, etc.
- Greater job security.
- Protection against discrimination/unfair treatment.
- Supports members involved in disputes with employers.

Shop Steward:
A shop steward is the local union representative, elected by union members, who acts as a link between the employees and the management. S/he negotiates with management to ensure that agreements are kept. S/he organises meetings of union members to keep them up to date with developments & also recruits new members.

Duties of a shop steward:
- Represents members in their dealings with management.
- Recruits new members to the trade union.
- Collects union subscriptions.
- Passes on information from Head Office.
- Gives advice to members on industrial relations issues.

Types of Trade Unions

General Unions	Members come from a variety of occupations.	SIPTU (Services, Industrial, Professional & Technical Union)
Industrial Unions	Represent all workers in an industry.	IBOA (Irish Bank Officials' Association)
Craft Unions	Members have a trade/craft.	Brick & Stonelayers' Trade Union.
White-collar unions	Members are professional	Teachers — ASTI (Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland), TUI (Teachers' Union Ireland)

Work

ICTU — **Irish Congress of Trade Unions:** the governing body of trade unions which represents all trade unions in negotiations with employers & the government in relations to pay & working conditions.

IBEC — **Irish Business Employers' Confederations:** represents all <u>employers</u> in negotiations with trade unions & the government.

Human Resource Manager/Personnel Manager: employed by the employer to recruit new employees, organise their training & deal with their problems. S/he aims to sort out problems with unions before industrial action takes place.

Disputes & Strikes

A disagreement between employees & management.

Causes:
• **Pay** — employees looking for extra pay for extra work done **e.g.** teachers want extra pay for teaching new Junior Cycle syllabus changes.
• **Working Conditions** — employees want better & safer workplaces.
• **Unfair dismissal.**
• **Unequal treatment.**
• **Redundancy** — employee are being dismissed from work as there is no work available, they dispute over who is dismissed first.
• Employees are **disallowed to join trade unions** by management.

Types of strikes:
Official — approved by trade union.
Unofficial — not approved by trade union.

All-out — all unions in the firm stop work in support of the striking union.
Work to rule — employees go to work but only do the bare essentials.
'Sit-in' — employees sit in, in the premises where they work.
Picketing — people stand outside a workplace in protest to try to persuade others not to enter.

Resolving an industrial dispute:

1. Worker & supervisor discuss the issue.

2. Shop Steward & Manager discuss the issue.

3. Trade Union Official & Manager discuss the issue.

4. **Conciliation** — a third party brings the parties involved together to find a solution **e.g.** Workplace Relations Commission — offers advice, investigates disputes.

5. **Arbitration** — Another third party decides on a solution, the parties generally accept this **e.g.** Labour Court — investigates disputes & investigates breaches of codes of practice.