

HR SOLUTIONS

Striving for light at end of the tunnel

By Dermot Corrigan

The economic downturn in Ireland has led to difficult decisions having to be made in many different organisations. Overseeing these changes placed a burden of responsibility on HR managers across the Irish economy, said Adrienne Davitt, managing director, Davitt Corporate Partners.

"Managing redundancy or restructuring is a critical challenge at the moment," said Davitt. "Letting people go is one of the most stressful and demoralising aspects of this challenge. Even among our multinational clients we have seen cuts implemented across departments and all areas of the business. We see managers facing a hugely changed landscape in terms of delineated roles, prioritisation of resources and delegating within already overloaded teams."

Davitt said that, while difficult decisions were unavoidable in many situations, it was

important managers carried out their duties in a professional and sympathetic manner.

"My advice for companies is to continue to invest in their people to the best of their ability," she said. "The economic realities we are facing have taken a huge toll on remaining employees in terms of morale, optimism and resilience. However, I am a great believer in people's ability to survive and Irish businesspeople are no exception."

"Despite everything, all of our clients have tried to assist their employees as much as they possibly can in these difficult times. Not just HR, but all functions, should continue to pay attention to the human cost and ultimately help us recover," she said.

Davitt Corporate Partners is an organisational psychology consultancy established by Davitt in Dublin in 1999. "We are a relatively small team of highly experienced work and organisational psychologists and HR professionals who work in partnership with our clients to deliver bespoke services to improve business performance using proven



Jonathan Logue, Amber Hanna, Stewart Beamont, Adrienne Davitt, Andrew Harley, Aoife Harrington and David Keane of Davitt Corporate Partners

psychological solutions," she said.

"Our psychologists work

primarily from Dublin; however, we have two senior associates in Britain and

psychologists in Cork and the south-east of Ireland.

As many of our clients are

international, we regularly work outside of Ireland and have strong strategic business

partners in Britain, Europe, Australia and the US. Our clients are in all industry sectors and we work primarily with business leaders."

The firm offered a varied range of services which could be tailored to the particular requirements of each client, said Davitt.

"We consistently seek to bring the latest thinking and research in a practical way to our clients," she said.

"We offer psychometrics for selection, executive assessments and large-scale assessment centres. All our staff members are trained in executive coaching and solutions-focused counselling. We are licensed to use all occupational assessments for selection and development."

We have successfully set up and run Global Leadership Excellence programmes with some of our multinational clients over the last number of years."

Demand from clients for restructuring, outplacement and career advice services was particularly strong at present, said Davitt.

"We offer career counselling and outplacement services,

and have been working on redundancy and restructuring for many years prior to the current climate," she said. "We have seen an increase in demand for outplacement services and work around personal resilience."

We work in partnership with clients to create high-performing team environments through our bespoke selection services to ensure that the best people are matched with the best available roles to assist the business in continued development and growth."

Davitt said that she expected clients to face similar challenges well into the medium term. "I see the challenges of our current situation continuing well into the next 12-18 months," she said.

"All Irish organisations are working incredibly hard to adapt to these especially challenging times. Continued adaptation and a renewed focus on growth will inevitably have to happen."

New trends, developments and solutions in the market will include renewed investment and support for those being asked to work longer and harder, and for less remuneration."