

March 17th, 2009

C.A.T. Distribution #18

Job redesign has been the main topic for the past 2 weeks during negotiations. I didn't send out a CAT report last week because even though we discussed job cuts all week, there was no resolution as we weren't even close to any agreement.

Let me set the record straight about this; we are not in favor of job cuts in any way, shape or form, and we aren't going to do their dirty work for them by working out the details of a job cut. However; with that being said, we were recently forced to discuss this issue to establish some parameters in which the company needs to honor as their initial proposal was to cut people from a line of progression (with up to 30 years of service) and not give them any rights back to their job (because the company is eliminating the entire department). Without discussing this with the company, these people would have gotten screwed even more than they already have. In the case of the stock prep lines where the entire department is being eliminated, we were able to get a little protection for these employees (some reinstatement rights), as well as some compensation for loss of potential income being the company took their move-ups away.

Let me explain this a little better; the company is eliminating the entire stock prep department and initially had no intention of grandfathering anyone other than the stock prep operators which will eventually be placed in the machine lines of progression. This meant 24 people were not only having their jobs cut, but their entire department as well. Obviously this also means no reinstatement rights for these people, as there is no longer a line to be reinstated into. We had to do something for these folks. Both the committee and those from this department are catching some heat (from the floor) for discussing this with the company. I ask all of you to put yourself in the shoes of these people. I bet all of you would expect some support at the table and you would be correct in doing so. Once again I want to remind everyone that you need to express your frustration in the right direction and that direction damn sure isn't at your co-workers. We didn't ask to have these jobs cut; the company is shoving it down our throats. You will all have your say when it comes to a vote.

Please understand that discussing this topic doesn't mean we endorse job cuts. The company has the right to cut these jobs and redistribute the duties to other areas as long as they do it during negotiations (NOTE: they can cut jobs at any time if they are going to keep all the work within the affected department). We know for a fact these job cuts will be on the company's last, best, and final offer. Whether these job cuts are sustainable or not remains to be seen. I often say that a job will stand on its own merit. I've seen job cuts become very successful (that I originally thought could never work) and we've all watched the company cut too deep and had to reinstate a job (#3 coater utility for example).

We return to the negotiating table next Monday with meetings set for Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. Job cut discussions will continue when we get back to the table with lines of progression and flexibility to soon follow. We've got a battle ahead of us folks and while we are obligated by law to discuss these items at the table, we will be coming to you for the help we need to tell the company loud and clear what we think of their flex language, if in fact it is on their last/best/final. I've been telling you for years that negotiations would be tough when they got here and I'll tell you something else right now, they're going to get a lot worse before we're done. Hang in there with us and please attend information sharing meetings when we hold them. We had a nice turnout last week for these meetings at the hall. Remember, key information is shared at these meetings that is critical to our C-5 program. All C-5 Flyers are expected to attend in order to relay the verbal communication to their respective areas.

In Solidarity,



Bryon Branstrom