

**Employment angles:** (legal tips from Ken Allison, a consultant and speaker who specialises in exploding the myths and removing the anxieties about employment law)

### **New Consultation responsibilities for small organisations.**

April 6<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> are the two dates in the year that the Government uses to introduce new employment legislation, and this April there were several changes that may affect small businesses.

- The regulations on 'Works Councils' are extended to organisations with 50 or more employees, but you do not need to worry about these unless your employees make a request to you to introduce a 'Works Council'. You should also take some advice about these regulations if you want to voluntarily introduce a consultation forum, perhaps because you want to increase employee involvement or improve communication.
- Also for organisations with 50 or more employees, the Pensions Schemes Regulations now require you to undertake consultation with your employees if you want to make certain changes to your pension schemes.

Other changes include some sex discrimination modifications to bring us into line with European legislation, and the most significant of these will give women on 'additional maternity leave' the right to their full contractual benefits other than pay from October 2008. We may also see some extension to the right to request flexible working for older children, and further protection for agency workers. These last two are still in the consultation phase, so may not happen until next year.

All reasonable efforts have been taken to ensure that the advice contained in this article represents both best practice, and the law as it stands at the time of publication. It should not be relied on as a substitute for taking advice about specific situations.

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