

# Interest Based Problem Solving

## *A New Tool for Negotiating Workplace Change*

**S**uccessfully implementing workplace change requires the handling of inevitable conflicts of interest in a way that solves problems and improves relationships. Above all it requires agreements that people will own and implement. Current national agreements require many important changes to be implemented 'through partnership'. But for many managers and union representatives this begs the question: *how?* Round table partnership discussions, valuable as they are, can be ineffective in the handling of complex issues around which different interests emerge. A more structured approach is often needed.

Interest based problem solving or bargaining is a method for handling issues or changes around which there are different interests and points of view. It allows the parties to acknowledge their differences and to build solutions around them. It does this while avoiding the adversarialism of traditional industrial relations. Parties can use interest based problem solving within their industrial relations systems or in their partnership systems.

This workshop offers a comprehensive introduction to the ideas, methods and tools of interest based problem solving or bargaining. Participants will experience taking an issue through the interest based sequence from start to finish using the different problem solving tools required. There will be ample time to reflect on and discuss the methods and tools being used. Participants will also receive a comprehensive manual for use back at the workplace.

### THIS PROGRAMME WILL BENEFIT

- HR and IR Professionals
- Trade Union Representatives
- Facilitators
- Partnership Committee Representatives
- Line Managers Responsible for Organizational Change
- OD Practitioners and Change Agents
- Training Managers



## Programme Content

This programme covers:

- When to use the most common approaches to joint problem solving in the workplace: traditional negotiations, 'round table' partnership discussions, structured problem solving such as 'six steps' and interest based problem solving or bargaining
- How an interest based approach differs from these other approaches and when it is useful to use it
- How interest based problem solving or bargaining works
- Practice in assessing when to use different approaches
- Practice in the interest based sequence: focussing an issue, identifying separate and common interests, generating options to satisfy these interests, evaluating options using objective criteria, reaching consensus on the preferred options.



The programme is highly interactive and uses a variety of methods—presentations, plenary and small group discussions, extended role plays and table exercises—to explore ideas and to practice skills.

**Workshop Presenters:** John O'Dowd Consultants Ltd have extensive experience in the development of partnership and have pioneered the introduction of interest based problem solving in Ireland using an approach developed by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in the USA. Workshop presenters are John O'Dowd and Gerry O'Sullivan.



**Venue:**  
**Dates:** For details contact John O'Dowd  
**Cost:**

*Accommodation not included.*

## BOOKING FORM

Please complete this form and return to John O'Dowd Consultants Ltd, Trevet Grange, Dunshaughlin, Co Meath or please confirm booking to [johnodowd@eircom.net](mailto:johnodowd@eircom.net) or to 01 8257261.

Name: .....

Title: .....

Organization: .....

Contact Details: .....

*This workshop is also available as an in-house training programme. Please contact John O'Dowd.*