

Appendix. The COOKIZ Case

Research design and methods. Data were collected by one of the authors during four visits, of one week each, to the headquarters and three plants. Most data were thus collected from July 2013 to December 2013, during which time she conducted a total of 69 in-depth interviews (on average, 20 at each of three industrial sites and 12 at the headquarters) with line and technical workers, top and middle management. Archival data were also gathered, such as local documentation and newspaper articles.

Case description. COOKIZ is an industrial biscuit manufacturing group based in France comprising, at the time of data collection in 2013, approximately 750 people working in five plants. Consequently, employees are mainly line workers or technicians, as well as agro-food engineers and middle (plant and production) managers in each plant, but also include administrative staff, support functions managers and top managers at the headquarters. COOKIZ products – breakfast snacks, sweet and salty biscuits – are exclusively sold under retailers' brand names, ranging from discount to gourmet stores, making COOKIZ one of the top players in their industry. Founded in 1883, the company went from being a single-plant, family-owned, local business to a multiple-plant industrial group after it was sold to a private equity fund in 2001. It then acquired two competitors in a series of buyouts (in 2006 and 2009). Following declining results, the original plant was downsized in 2002. This decision sparked violent confrontations with local unions, fed up of years of authoritarian and paternalistic rule. In 2006, looking to boost production and foster a common 'culture of innovation', the newly appointed CEO decided to try a more 'bottom-up approach'. A transformation process, inspired by 'liberation management' (Getz, 2009; Peters, 1992), was launched. This process was widely publicized as COOKIZ boasted two-figure growth for 10 years, with revenues growing from €50

million in 2002 to €250 million in 2013. The ‘liberation’ involved significant organizational and managerial changes (see also Author’sOwnWork, XXXX). Line management jobs were ‘suppressed’, and their former responsibilities shared among self-organized line workers, gathered in ‘autonomous production units’.