

Integrating Health & Safety into Human Resource Management practice

After a number of years experience in health & safety management the author has come to the realisation that for health & safety to be successful it must be integrated into organisation's Human Resource Management practice

Quotable Quote

"A health & safety problem can be described by statistics but cannot be understood by statistics. It can only be understood by knowing and feeling the pain, anguish, and depression and shattered hopes of the victim and of wives, husbands, parents, children, grandparents and friends, and the hope, struggle and triumph of recovery and rehabilitation in a world often unsympathetic, ignorant, unfriendly and unsupportive, only those with close experience of life altering personal damage have this understanding"

There are far too many people who have their life permanently altered (terminated or impaired) in Australia every year, sadly we do not really know how many. There is some evidence to suggest that the incidence of some life altering personal damage is getting worse not better (Geoff McDonald & Associates, Brisbane).

Damage to people from work falls naturally into one of three Classes.(Geoff McDonald & Associates)

- **Class I damage** permanently alters the person's life and subdivides into
 - fatal
 - non fatal
- **Class II damage** temporarily alters the person's life
- **Class III damage** temporarily inconveniences the person's life

Focus on Class 1 Damage

The report of the Industry Commission 1995 indicates that safety in Australia is fundamentally a Class 1 problem (87% of occurrences were Class 2 with 18% of cost, 13% of occurrences were Class 1 with 82% of cost) This report further strengthens the argument that instead of concentrating on reducing the number of Lost Time Injuries we should be focusing on Class 1 damage reduction. (Geoff McDonald & Associates, Brisbane)

Boosting Productivity Within a "Zero Personal Harm" Framework

Health & Safety management needs the following to be successful, there must be extensive efforts to integrate Human Resource Management practice into safety.-

Development of a robust Safety Management System guided by the lessons from the paper "What Makes a Safety Management System Fly"(see web-site ohs change.com.au)

Using data on Class 1 personal damage occurrences to guide your safety efforts

Recruitment, selection and retention of excellent staff

Excellent leadership / build trust between all levels of personnel/ Rewards for excellent performance and lesser rewards for those that are really trying

Well thought out regularly reviewed Vision, Mission and Goals

Excellent teamwork

Management of Organisational change (When introducing change remember "People support what they create")

Excellent communications, employees really value face to face communications from their supervisor

Role modelling by supervisors and managers is important
Clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities that are reinforced
Regular, rigorous audits of key functions
Short, succinct written procedures for key tasks (use diagrams, pictures, flow-charts wherever possible)
An excellent performance appraisal process that targets key performance areas
Written management plans for key performance areas
Benchmarking against the excellent performers
Excellent management of time (succinct correspondence, minimum of meetings etc)
Management & supervision that is in close contact with the coal-face
A sensible Quality Assurance system that actually adds value to the enterprise
Excellent learning programmes guided by a detailed Learning Needs Analysis