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WHAT'S EVERYONE ELSE DOING?



A healthy workplace is good for business

CASE STUDY – JOINERY PRODUCTS



Joinery Products is a family-owned business based in Devonport on the north-west coast of Tasmania. The business was established in 1956 and specialises in built-to-order quality kitchens. The company employs approximately 40 staff, all of whom live locally, many with young families.

Joinery Products has recently built on its previous strong involvement in health and safety by developing some initiatives around staff health and wellbeing.

Joinery Products' interest in health and wellbeing was sparked by an initial visit from local WorkCover Health and Wellbeing Advisor Samantha Forrest in November 2011. Sam originally made a presentation to the health and safety committee, and staff engagement and management support quickly snowballed from there.

As a first activity, Joinery Products entered a local corporate step challenge event, raising an unexpected and overwhelming response from staff. Among stiff competition from other businesses on the north-west coast, the company took out first and second prize for the largest number of steps taken over a five-week period. This success generated further interest from staff and some very positive local media attention.

The business then sponsored two members of staff in a local cycling event, purchasing outfits and providing entry fees. This support continued to build enthusiasm, and the business realised the potential for their role in increasing staff awareness on health and wellbeing issues.



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The role of the health and safety committee was soon expanded to include health and wellbeing. Expressions of interest were sought for additional members of the committee to cover the expanded role, and three further committee members were found. This ensured that health and wellbeing was firmly on the agenda of management, and had a sustainable future within the organisation.

A needs assessment was also conducted so that staff could have a say in the future direction of the program.

To date, one of the most exciting projects is the development of a multi-purpose room for staff. The company originally had plans developed to extend their on-site showroom, but in the wake of their health and wellbeing success, these plans were modified to include an additional room. Ideas for this room are to include a kitchen and tearoom, where staff can prepare their own lunch, the installation of a healthy vending machine, and the inclusion of some basic gym equipment. It is envisaged that this room will also be used for staff training and as a meeting room, as well as a place to display health and wellbeing information on an ongoing basis.

One of the key drivers for the increased focus on health and wellbeing is the program's ability to increase the retention of good staff. The employees of Joinery Products are all leaders in their field, and the company are very keen to keep them in the local area. Joinery Products want to give something back to their employees, in return for doing such a fabulous job.

Future ideas in the health and wellbeing arena include a health and wellbeing library, and a focus on mental health, particularly depression in young males, a group that makes up the majority of the company's workforce.

'We realise that mental health is a major issue for young men, and it's not something they can easily talk about. We want to build a culture of understanding and openness, and if any of our employees find themselves in a difficult situation, they can come and talk about it with us', said Belinda Hingston, Finance and Human Resources Manager at Joinery Products.

Workplace health and wellbeing is now firmly in the company's business plan, making it a sustainable part of the company's future.

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– Belinda Hingston
Finance and Human Resources Manager



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