

USING PARTICIPATORY ERGONOMICS TO DECREASE INJURY COSTS AND INCREASE PRODUCTION – A CASE STUDY EXAMPLE AT BENEDICT INDUSTRIES.

Health and Safety

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1 Introduction & Background

The “don’t make yourself bloody useless” Participative Ergonomics (PE) Program was developed by the NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council and NSW Trade & Investment, Mine Safety to tackle the issue of the high number of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) within the NSW extractive sector.

This holistic program encompasses key ergonomic principals and a strong communication strategy to assist in the reduction of musculoskeletal injuries. The program uses researched innovative messages that are designed to gain cut through directly with the workers on preventing MSD’s as well as support a site based PE program.

The program engages workers as task experts and equips them with the knowledge and tools to identify hazardous manual tasks and provide solutions to eliminate or reduce the hazard.

2 The Don’t Make Yourself Bloody Useless Creative Resources

It was identified that effective communication would be the key factor to the success of the PE program. As such, the original aim of the creative component of the campaign was to deliver an effective message highlighting the need for workers to get involved with finding better ways to do manual tasks.

The ‘bloody useless’ communication strategy was developed after extensive research that included direct discussion with workers at a number of coal, metalliferous and extractive sites in NSW. The research indicated that above ground safety is spoken of as an individual responsibility but at the quarry face workers operate in team and the culture is team and mate driven.

This campaign goes past the plethora of safety message at a quarry site and provides a single, powerful and consistent message that will provide ‘cut through’ and be retained by the target audience. As a result, a number of video and posters resources were developed in consultation with Cat. Dog Research and Creative.

Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia (CCAA) provided assistance and support to the department in developing these resources. An example of a poster image is located in Appendix A.

3 Participatory Ergonomics at Benedict Quarries

The “don’t make yourself bloody useless” participatory ergonomics program was completed at Benedict quarries from July 2013 to October 2013. The program which was coordinated from the Menangle quarry site included representatives from Menangle, Appin, Mittagong and Moorebank Glass & Gravel.

The site based program consisted of six sessions and utilised the concept of workers as ‘task experts’. With the assistance of several site champions the program identified Benedicts ‘gut busting’ activities and then utilised the hierarchy of controls to implement the necessary changes in order to reduce the hazardous manual components of the task.

The workers, supervisors and managers identified and assessed a number of hazardous manual tasks within the operation. From the commencement of the program right through to the last coordinated session, the participants were fully engaged with the program. The participants consulted with their manager and fellow workers and as a result many controls were implemented during the program. As well as targeting MSD risks, number of the controls also decreased operational down time and increased production.

4 Conclusion

The PE program was a success at Benedict Industries. A number of wins were achieved by the Benedict team and the commitment provided by management contributed to the success of the program.

With the assistance of CCAA, and the IQA, the program will be implemented at other extractives sites within NSW.

The roll out will be supported with the “don’t make yourself bloody useless” communication resources and facilitators guide with these resources will be freely available at no cost to any operation regardless of jurisdiction or sector.

This information is available by accessing the website or contacting NSW trade & Investment, Mine Safety or the NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council.

Keyword: Musculoskeletal disorders, quarries, participatory ergonomics and communication resources.

Appendix A

