

Insight aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Occupational Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

This issue:

- Study others' WHS mistakes
- Manage social media risk
- Managing stress & wellbeing

Study others' WHS mistakes

It is sometimes very straightforward to identify and understand the cause of a workplace incident. If a power cable has been strung across a workplace, and a worker trips over it and is injured, there is little scope for confusion as to the reasons for the incident. In these simple circumstances, making changes to the workplace to prevent a recurrence is also relatively straightforward.

However, it is not uncommon for workplace incidents to result from a range of complex and potentially interconnected causal factors. In these cases, the accurate identification of causes, and the management of the workplace to prevent the incident from recurring in future, is much more difficult.

Well-crafted and fully implemented incident management procedures are an obvious way to manage this problem, along with developing a trained and experienced workforce. (Refer to related articles in [Insight](#) issues 43, 26, 25 and 24.)

Another, sometimes neglected, strategy to mitigate this problem is to observe the incident history and responses of other organisations across your industry and even in other industries which may not seem to be related but which may have some of the same workplace risks.



Monitoring incidents in other workplaces is an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others without experiencing the negative impacts directly. Comparing the experiences of other workplaces to your own can help identify a problem you may not realise existed in your workplace, or to realise that complacency has crept in allowing a previously well-managed risk to become dangerous. You may find that one or several causal factors in a documented incident exist at your workplace, which provides the opportunity to address

those weaknesses before they result in an incident. The observation of others can also call your attention to areas of regulatory non-compliance or WHS best practice that you may not have been aware your organisation was not complying with.

Incident information is available from:

- subscription to newsletters from safety regulators, industry and suppliers
- use of websites from safety regulators, professional bodies and industry
- participation in networking groups, seminars and industry conferences
- subscription to incident notification services offered by many safety regulators.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.

Manage social media risk

Social media has rapidly become a part of doing business in the modern world. From search engine optimisation activities through to direct marketing and customer contact, the tools of social media have become an important way for organisations to communicate with their customers or stakeholders.

However, the reputation and security risks posed by social media are also well recognised, and therefore handling social media interactions is not just the responsibility of the marketing department: senior management and risk management personnel need to be directly involved too.

Following are some of the issues of concern to organisations that can be raised by social media:

1. Defamation – an organisation can be prosecuted for spreading a libel (e.g. by tweeting or re-tweeting it on Twitter).

2. Control of communication channels – when an individual sets up an organisation's social media accounts (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Google+), that individual potentially has direct control over the account and its content unless the process is managed and monitored by the organisation.
3. Confidentiality – everyone in the organisation from the Board to the shop floor should be aware that comments made on social media are inherently public and the consequences of this need to be considered before releasing any post.
4. Brandjacking – this involves a third party acquiring or assuming the online identity of another entity in order to take or impact that entity's brand equity. These can be fake blogs, fake Facebook pages, tweets from a Twitter handle which has been formulated to look like it's from the entity etc.



Actions to be considered by risk managers and/or senior management to address these issues include:

1. Develop and implement social media policies reflecting the organisation's values and covering all likely risks from social media, and ensure that employees are aware of their responsibilities under those policies.
2. Ensure those authorised to post on the organisation's social media account are aware of the defamation laws and their potential impact on the organisation if breached and that documented processes exist to set out the requirements where multiple individuals have control of an organisation's social media account.

3. Institute monitoring processes on all social media channels used by the organisation to check and report on content being released from your organisation (and remember that the social media world changes quickly).
4. Ensure these monitoring processes are broad enough to also identify fake accounts which may appear on social media channels, which can be then intercepted, challenged by legal action etc.

Social media are a useful, and increasingly unavoidable, tool for contemporary organisations. Approaching the administration of them with a risk management mindset will help your organisation to maximise the opportunities arising from their use while minimising potential risks.

Please [contact QRM](#) for more information.

Managing stress & wellbeing



The Australian Psychological Society indicates that amongst the known features of a psychologically healthy workplace is the provision to employees of regular feedback and recognition from their employers. The wellbeing and stress levels of employees are shown to be improved if they receive this feedback.

However, late last year a [survey report](#) was released by the Australian Psychological Society indicating that more than half of working Australians reported that they did not regularly receive relevant feedback and recognition for their work.

The survey indicated a number of other measures indicative of a psychologically healthy workplace that

could help reduce the stress of workers, and in many of these factors the performance of managers and employers appears to leave significant room for improvement.

Not only is the health and wellbeing of workers impacted by this, but so is workplace productivity.

Respondents to the survey indicated a range of factors which influenced their sense of wellbeing and ability to manage stress. These included:

- an employer that values workers' contribution and cares about their wellbeing;
- a clear idea about what is expected of workers in their role;
- sufficient opportunities for learning and development;
- a supportive manager;
- an employer that provides regular feedback and recognition for employees' work;
- an employer that is serious about safety at work;
- an employer that supports workers with physical and mental health issues; and
- an employer that supports workers who need to deal with family demands.

Employers and managers should give consideration to the ways in which the organisation's policies, HR processes and manager attitudes may need adjusting to achieve better outcomes in relation to these factors. Not only will improvement safeguard the wellbeing of workers and help to meet PCBU obligations for the provision of a safe workplace, but productivity and turnover statistics are also likely to improve.

Please [contact QRM](#) for more information.

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