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Welcome to the first issue of *Insight* for 2017. *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:



## Do standing desks mitigate the risks of sitting?

In recent times much has been written about stand up desks with 'sitting' seen to be the new 'smoking' in terms of health risk.

Studies have shown that if you exercise for an hour a day, but sit for the remainder, that single hour doesn't necessarily counterbalance the eight hours of sitting; in much the same way that running for an hour doesn't negate a cigarette smoked.

Research shows that extended sitting and a sedentary lifestyle can result in health issues including obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Studies also seem to indicate that whilst converting to standing desks can reduce musculoskeletal stress, like any other risk mitigation they can also bring about additional risks.

The first, and most obvious risk in converting to stand up desks is the risk of changing to a new position too quickly, without the necessary training or adjustment. This could bring about other strains or musculoskeletal stresses. In this respect, workers should gradually build-up standing time over a period and not try to stand for a full day.

The second concern relates to commitment over time – whilst standing desks provide a way for workers to vary their posture and switch between sitting and standing, they have to actually be used to be of any benefit, with some studies suggesting that people start out with good intentions when using a stand up desk but then default back to sitting once the novelty wears off.

Thirdly, remaining for long periods in any one posture is unhealthy, and this also applies to standing to work for long periods. It is more tiring to stand meaning people can fall into poor posture through fatigue and increase

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their risk of new injuries. Standing to work requires approximately 20% more energy than sitting and whilst this is generally perceived as a positive, it may not suit all people, especially those with pre-existing musculoskeletal conditions.

Another factor in relation to standing is the additional stress on legs and feet. Standing can increase the risk of varicose veins, which should be assessed for any individual converting to a standing desk. In addition, to minimise fatigue, the surface the worker stands on needs to be correct, with anti-fatigue mats and anti-fatigue footwear considered.

Ergonomic considerations are also important. For example, the performance of many fine motor skills, such as the use of a mouse or other such office equipment, may be less effective when people stand rather than sit. Correct, individualised, ergonomically-sound set up of new standing workstations is critical to manage this.

Finally, studies have shown that standing in itself is insufficient; it is movement and regular change of posture that is important to get blood circulation through the muscles and to minimise the risk of musculoskeletal injury.

These factors would suggest that like any other risk, the controls around sitting and sedentary work are not necessarily obvious and that the best solution would be to assess the risks, in consultation with affected workers, and implement the necessary controls. This would mean that rather than simply buying stand up desks and offering them to workers, an ergonomic risk assessment should be undertaken and controls implemented to reduce the risk, rather than simply provide a one size fits all approach that may introduce new risks.

Please contact QRMC for more information or for specialised assistance with workplace ergonomic assessments.

## Cyber Security, Enterprise Risk and Suppliers

The disruption to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 online Census last year raised the general awareness of cyber security as a risk to organisations across Australia.

In another awareness-raising incident, in the United States in December 2013 it was reported that Target had information of 70 million people stolen including credit card details, names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. Target reported a loss of $162 million in expenses across 2013 and 2014 related to this data breach.

It was later alleged that a Target heating and air conditioning contractor's (HVAC) system had been hacked and the contractor's password provided a conduit to Target's secure systems that were used to process customer payments. A seemingly impossible scenario and a risk that, in all probability, would not appear on a risk register or risk heat map for many organisations.

With contractors and suppliers having access to clients' systems, the number of cybersecurity incidents involving suppliers has increased. In many cases organisations have implemented controls and undertaken assessments on their suppliers, but for most organisations the risk a supplier poses is generally expressed in contractual terms relating to the ability to

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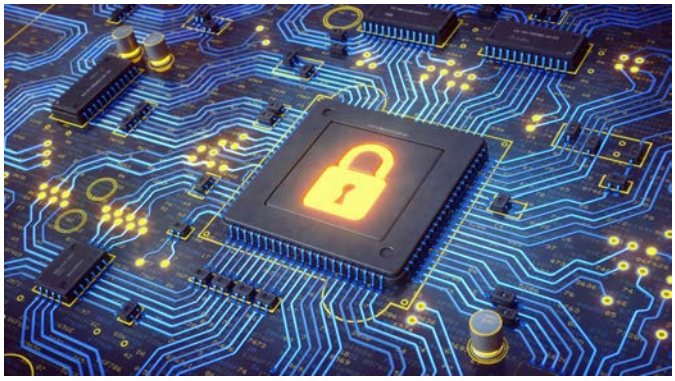

provide goods or services, rather than any direct interaction with core systems.

If the risk is examined at all, suppliers will often only be assessed and report on their cyber security risk when it comes to their own experienced incidents and breaches, and may not consider the controls they have in place to manage their own information security and the management of their sub-contractors in relation to cyber security.

In order to better manage supplier cyber security risk, organisations should consider the following:

- Inclusion of cyber security risks, including contractor and supplier cyber security risks, within the enterprise risk enterprise risk analysis process
- Ensure a planned and coordinated approach to assessing and inducting suppliers
- Develop and implement a proactive supplier assessment and monitoring program based on the risk to the organisation
- Ensure suppliers are aware of and report cyber security incidents to the organisation promptly
- Develop training and awareness programs to raise employee awareness of cybersecurity risks to help prevent, detect, and manage the risks
- Develop contingency plans and response strategies for cyber security risks
- Include reports from senior management to the board on the organisation's cyber security risk profile, including supplier risks as well as the resultant systems to manage those risks.

Please contact QRMC for more information or to assist with the review of enterprise risk registers and contractor management.

## Getting the most from Audits

Many Managers think of an upcoming audit and cringe. Some put on a brave face and focus on the lessons that can be learnt. Others may respond by looking to book in their annual leave!

There is no denying that audits have negative connotations for many people, especially if they have been on the receiving end of a punitive and unhelpful audit approach.

However, if the approaching audit is considered slightly differently, by actively seeking out and promoting the positive findings emanating from it (in the report and in the exit meeting), the organisational buy-in and benefit exponentially broadens.

While the audit process should be a balanced 'snapshot in time' of the organisation, with an equal focus on the positives and the shortcomings, the opportunity to learn is better received when delivered via a positive message – for example:

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- sharing a process that a business unit is doing particularly well
- recognising an isolated pocket of innovative risk control

These positive examples may be hidden from view from Senior Management or other parts of the organisation, and they provide an opportunity for good work to be adapted more widely and turned into a new organisational standard.

Within mature and well-developed management systems, identification of positives is one of the most important purposes of an audit, as opposed to a single-minded focus on picking up every failure.

There is indeed also some short-term workplace benefit from the mere implementation of safety, quality and environmental audits; workplaces usually get a bit of a tidy-up and it becomes the focus of toolbox talks and management meetings for a little while. However, the 'tick-n-flick', 'show me the paperwork' compliance check provides minimal benefit, whereas a well-conducted systems audit should facilitate organisational learning and improvements.

The audit report and exit meeting should lead with these positives, specifying the area that they relate to. By providing a more balanced approach, the auditor will build a stronger engagement with the auditee's personnel, and this will drive better audit outcomes.

When selecting an external auditor, expectations in regard to their approach to the audit process should be made explicit. Selection of auditor can be made dependent not only on their qualifications and experience, but also their balanced focus on not simply identifying deficiencies, but also recognising good practice and promoting opportunities for improvement.

Please contact QRMC for more information.

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