

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

This issue:

- ISO 45001 - *WHS Management starts at the 'Top'*
- System Implementation or Skills Transfer

ISO 45001 - *WHS Management starts at the 'Top'*

ISO 45001's discussion of 'Top Management' – *the person or group of people who direct or control an organisation at the highest level* – requires a visible and demonstrable involvement in WHS. No longer can the responsibility for safety be delegated to the safety professional: it needs to be owned by top management and they need to demonstrate a commitment to WHS.

The new Occupational Health and Safety Management System Standard, ISO 45001:2018 applies world-wide, and while still voluntary, its framework of requirements is considered the international best-practice standard. In practical terms, it is similar to the current Australian Standard, AS/NZS 4801, but it includes a number of inherent improvements for the management of WHS within its restructured framework of Management System requirements. It also represents the first time there has been international agreement on a safety standard.

In the standard, the discussion of top management's demonstration of leadership and commitment comes before the discussion of a WHS Policy (inferring that the signed Policy Statement is not enough). The opening requirement in Section 5.1 – Leadership & Commitment



is that Top Management takes overall responsibility and accountability, followed by another dozen requirements, including the incorporation of WHS in the overall management system.

This 'top-down' approach to managing WHS drives top management to demonstrate rather than delegate. Top management should be seen by all workers as being actively involved and demonstrating their commitment. Management are required to be true safety leaders in terms of protecting workers and improving WHS performance.

Clear and consistent leadership is required, and it must be seen across all areas of the organisation.

These requirements mirror the requirements of AS/NZS ISO 9001:2016 Quality Management Systems and AS/NZS 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems, in which Top Management are required to demonstrate their commitment to Quality and Environmental management.

Arguably the most important requirement of top management is to define (and communicate) the responsibilities and authorities for the various roles within the WHS Management System, and to hold these various roles accountable. ISO 45001 qualifies this statement with a note detailing that while responsibility and authority can be assigned, the ultimate accountability lies with top management.

ISO 45001 has also strengthened its position in relation to Management Review to drive Continual Improvement. The Management Review process is another top management responsibility. Our article in next month's *Insight* will explore this in detail and correlate it with the WHS Legislation's Due Diligence requirements.

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

System Implementation or Skills Transfer

With organisations facing ever-increasing pressure to analyse the cost-benefit in every area of their business, the cost of management system implementation is often overlooked, or at best combined with the cost of the



system development. However even the most well-developed management system will not be fully effective unless it is presented to the people who are responsible for implementing it in a way that will facilitate success.

More often than not, when a management system is developed, or redeveloped, it is simply 'handed over' to end users or included as some form of induction training, with little thought given to the process of learning transfer. The key objective of a management system should be to guide activities and behaviours. If this is the case, consideration needs to be given to how workers are introduced to the management system and more importantly what will make them engage with, and implement, the requirements of the system. It is about ensuring that effective learning takes place.

To consider this from a 'training' perspective, if we are to view learning as a strategic asset that enables organisations to develop their people to be their competitive advantage, the fundamental consideration then needs to be about sustaining the impact of their

learning subsequent to the learning intervention, so as to ultimately transform behaviours: enhancing personal, and thereby organisational, effectiveness. This is the essence of learning transfer.

In order to ensure effective transfer of learning in this instance, one needs to consider the following:

- **Cognitive ability** – The ability of the worker to comprehend, learn from experiences, reason and remember.
- **Motivation** – The worker's internal drive towards and perseverance in achieving their goals.
- **Self-efficacy** – The worker's perception of their own ability to perform a given task.
- **Perceived utility of training** – The worker's perception of the value the intended training will have in their work life.

Linked with the above are the literacy levels of workers and the level of language used both in the management system documentation and training media used.

When developing the training for implementation of a management system, it is critical that consideration is given to the following:

- **Transfer climate** – A positive transfer climate is critical for a worker to apply and maintain their learning. This includes a supportive environment that recognises individual learning needs and is not simply punitive of failure.
- **Support** – This refers to both supervisor and peer support and will impact the transfer climate of an organisation. The support provided to a worker, from both their supervisors and peers, is the most important variable of the work environment impacting learning transfer.
- **Opportunity to perform** – Workplace opportunities that allow for newly acquired skills to be applied. Presenting opportunities and the applicable resources to practice skills learned is rated by workers as highly supportive, thereby promoting transfer.
- And most importantly the **Follow-up** – What happens post-training. Following the formal training experience with additional learning opportunities promotes positive transfer.

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