National Safe Work Month – Competition Entries

Week 1

Entry:

The Safety Committee and I worked with management to strategize a way to manage risks when stowing Trains at a Mine site.
Completing a risk assessment and inviting members of the workgroup and management to discuss a range of risks and then work on the best solution.
We then approached the Mine site and worked with the team there to create safe places to work, that were cleared of debris and bush to allow our staff

to perform the stowing task safely. This included creating a walkway, and a flat surface to walk on both sides of the rail wagons.

Entry:

Hi.

I would like to enter for my chance to win the free BSB41419 Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety course.

In my workplace, I encountered a situation that involved substantial ergonomic hazards. Our office primarily consisted of desk stations where employees spent long hours seated, which posed significant risks to our health and well-being. Recognising the importance of addressing this issue, I took the initiative to speak to our WHS coordinator to propose a change by introducing stand-up desks and implementing a comprehensive ergonomic training program for the team.

To address the ergonomic hazards, I conducted research on the benefits of stand-up desks, including improved posture and reduced risk of musculoskeletal issues. I presented this information to our WHS coordinator and gained their support to invest in stand-up desks for the office. However, introducing the desks alone was not enough to ensure safety. We also needed to educate our team on the proper use and benefits of these desks.

To ensure everyone's safety, we organised ergonomic training sessions, where an expert taught our team about proper desk ergonomics, posture, and the advantages of alternating between sitting and standing throughout the workday. We encouraged active participation and discussions during these sessions to address individual concerns.

As a result, the implementation of stand-up desks and the ergonomic training significantly improved the overall well-being of our team. We saw a decrease in complaints related to back pain and discomfort, which ultimately enhanced productivity and job satisfaction. This experience taught us the importance of proactive hazard identification and collaborative efforts to create a safer and healthier work environment for everyone.

Entry:

Hello!

Below is my entry in the competition to win free enrollment into BSB41419 Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety course

Week 1 (Entries accepted between 27 Sep – 8 Oct) – Working together to manage risks at work Provide an example of how a team you were involved in, worked together to manage a risk. Make sure you provide a clear description of the risk. (Minimum of 100 words)

Findings from a routine calibration status audit indicated that calibration status checks for two identical instruments were not able to be attributed or distinguished between the instruments. I discussed the problem with the Technical Team and we performed a Root Cause Analysis to determine the reasons for why the calibration data for the two instruments was not attributable against the individual instruments. The root cause helped us to determine two corrective and preventive actions. The first was to schedule new calibration checks, documenting the asset number of each instrument in the calibration reports. The second risk mitigation activity was for us to instruct the analysts in the workplace to record which specific instrument was used on their worksheets, when there are identical instruments with the same names (using unique identifiers – the asset tag of the instrument or the instrument short name / code). These risk mitigation measures allowed us to be able to attribute calibration check data against the individual instruments to allow for required transparency on individual instrument calibration status.

Week 2

Entry:

Psychosocial wellbeing is critical to a functional workplace. We immediately think of examples of bullying, low job control, low recognition, low role clarity, work overload, change management issues all of these are commonly controlled to differing degrees by organisational administrative controls such as codes of conduct, position descriptions with detailed roles and responsibilities, professional development activities for changes to work practices, safe work practices.

From time to time however a workplace can be impacted on by things that they can't foresee or control that will have a significant impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of everyone in the workplace. The worst incident impacting on the mental health of people within my organisation was when an individual at another site committed suicide. Whilst the suicide was not work related it had an extremely significant impact on the capacity of individuals at the other site to work and function in their roles.

Layers of support were provided to the site in the first instance Employee Assistance program EAP was provided so that staff had access to counselling to support them in the grief process.

Staffing support was provided with selected skilled staff from our site working from the other site to ensure continuity of service and instil in the team there that they had the support of their colleagues from other sites. Additional staff were provided to allow those who wanted to attend the funeral.

Ongoing counselling support was provided to those impacted directly as well as those who provided support to the staff at the other site.

Entry:

While working with the Safety Committee I raised that I had seen a few fellow members of staff struggling with their Mental health.

During a shift with another team member, I noticed that their mental health had declined since we had worked together.

I spoke with them, and I spoke about my own mental health and how I went about working with a doctor and the Works EAP program to get a handle on things. During the shift, the member choose to book an appointment and begin their mental health solution.

I have checked on them periodically and am happy to report that they have sought a mental health practitioner and have been provided meds to manage their well-being. I also mentioned during our initial conversation the websites that have helped me and have been open with my team about it. I have found that discussing it regularly and being open has allowed it to have less astigmatism at work

----

Week 3

Entry:

Every worker regardless of their position, needs the support of those around them, (even those that think they do not). The healthiest teams are generally that way as the individuals work together as a team to support each other. Tell us about when you were involved in a similar situation. Explain what the initial situation was and what the outcome looked like.

In our organisation, every worker, regardless of their role, relies on the support of their colleagues. Our WHS team hasn't always been a "healthy" team. Things have changed we have shifted from an environment where people took delight in highlighting problems and blaming people to a workplace that recognized fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual assistance was crucial for maintaining a safe work environment. Here's how we applied this principle:

1. Policies and Procedures:

   - We developed clear procedures and guidelines that emphasised teamwork and collective responsibility. These policies outlined safety protocols, reporting procedures, and emergency response guidelines.

   - Regular team meetings ensured that everyone understood their roles and responsibilities. We encouraged open discussions about safety concerns.

2. Audits and Inspections:

- Our WHS reps conduct routine inspections to identify hazards. Instead of working in isolation, they collaborated with workers from different departments.

- When an issue was detected (e.g., faulty machinery or blocked emergency exits), the team collectively addressed it rather than playing the blame game. This collaborative approach improved our safety record.

3. Safety Training Management:

- We maintain a comprehensive training register for all employees.

- Colleagues supported each other during training sessions, clarifying questions and reinforcing key safety practices.

4. Risk Management:

- Our risk assessments involved training on the risk register and all levels of staff collaborated to identify potential risks.

- Together, we prioritized corrective actions

5. Incident Management:

- When incidents occurred (near misses or injuries), we didn't blame individuals. Instead, we investigated collectively to understand root causes.

- Staff now report incidents promptly, allowing us to take corrective measures swiftly.

6. Asset Management:

- Our asset register includes machinery, vehicles, and tools. Proactive maintenance schedules are shared among teams, so they know when something is due or overdue.

- If someone noticed equipment malfunctioning, they alert others to prevent accidents and have repairs or maintenance tasks logged.

7. Chemical Management:

- staff handling chemicals collaborated closely to prepare a chemical register. They shared safety data sheets and communicated spill response procedures.

- Regular checks ensured compliance with chemical storage regulations.

By fostering teamwork and mutual support, our workplace became safer. Colleagues watch out for each other and support each other in the WHS learning journey, creating a positive safety culture that has benefited everyone.