

## **How to find money for OHS**

*The Principal Work Health and Safety Consultant for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Steve Griffiths, says OHS practitioners who "do their homework and speak the language of management" will be able to attract funding for occupational health and safety initiatives. The Chamber will present a free seminar at the Queensland Safety Show on June 22 that explains where to find grants and other funding for OHS, how to budget and be sure of a return on investment.*

It's naïve to think employers are going to spend money on anything that is not justified, including OHS, and practitioners need to learn to present a powerful cost-benefit analysis to management.

The good news is that the basic risk assessment tool so familiar to OHS practitioners provides a very sound foundation for a compelling business case for OHS investment. But only the foundation. A much more business-oriented five-step process is needed to build a capital expenditure proposal that will resonate with managers and employers.

### **Step 1: Get hard data**

Begin with a thorough risk assessment that includes hard data to support your case.

Larger businesses may already have their own injury data but if that's not available, use statistics gathered by the regulators and Safe Work Australia. The Victorian WorkCover Authority and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland publish industry hotspot information that will help you identify the likely areas of concern for your business and back that up with data.

### **Step 2: Analyse the costs and benefits**

Senior managers evaluate expenditure proposals in terms of costs and savings. OHS practitioners must learn to speak that language.

There's also a new legal imperative. From next year, the national work health and safety laws require employers to demonstrate they ensure health and safety as far as reasonably practicable, so a cost-benefit analysis is an important part of decision making.

Use risk management principles that take frequency and severity into account to put a value on the risk of not undertaking the project. Look at it from every angle: work health and safety projects also often generate measurable savings in terms of productivity.

### **Step 3: Prioritised recommendations**

No business can address every risk instantly. Use the risk matrix to create a recommended program that systematically addresses high-priority risks.

### **Step 4: Communicate**

Don't simply email your report to management. Occupational health and safety practitioners have a responsibility to educate employers about risk management. Talk the plan through and, if necessary, revise your report to match management expectations.

### **Step 5: Persevere or find another approach**

Many OHS initiatives that are rejected initially are ultimately adopted, so perseverance is important. On the other hand, there is often more than one way to address safety hazards and it

is also worthwhile reviewing the risk assessment to consider alternative control measures. Employers also need to be aware of the industry standard for managing the hazard and they need to keep abreast of new control measures.

Of course, a lot of safety initiatives require little or no capital expenditure. Many injuries result from unsafe behaviour that stems from the attitudes and actions of managers. Workers take their cue from what managers say and do, rather than what is in the policy handbook. Perhaps the most lasting investment any organisation can make is to ensure the behaviour of its managers is consistent with its values.

The CCIQ presentation, *Where to Find Money for OHS*, joins a line-up of very practical free manufacturing and workplace safety seminars at the Queensland Safety Show. Experts will explain how to attract funding, what to expect from new OHS laws, how meet obligations manageably and build profitability.

Sponsored by myosh, the Queensland Safety Show, Materials Handling Show and co-located Queensland Manufacturing Show run from June 21 to 23, 2011, at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre. For more information, visit [qldsafetyshow.com.au](http://qldsafetyshow.com.au), email [safetyvisitor@aec.net.au](mailto:safetyvisitor@aec.net.au) or phone Australian Exhibitions & Conferences Pty Ltd on 03 9654 7773.

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