Rehabilitation Guidelines—developing an effective approach to the rehabilitation of injured employees
Joe White
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Comcare
Build, Connect and Support—Lead the conversation
Dominic Andreacchio
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Australian Air Express
Developing an effective approach to the rehabilitation of injured employees

“The Australian air Express Story”

Dominic Andreacchcio
General Manager – Human Resources
Company background

Joint venture: Qantas Airways Ltd, Australia Post

Formed: 1st August 1992
(integration of Australia Post Express Courier and Australian Airlines Cargo)

Self insured: 1 July 1999

Restructure: Integration/sale of AAE Retail (Pick up & Delivery) business into Startrack in 2011
**Key stakeholders**

**Qantas**
AaE’s largest supplier of ‘Belly Space’, with access to over 300 Qantas flights per day

**Australia Post & Star Track**
AaE’s largest customers
Company overview

- Approximately 650 employees nationally (down from around 1250 pre integration/sale of AAE Retail to Startrack)
- Union coverage - TWU and ASU
- Operate own dedicated freighter aircraft network
- Expansive regional airport service network
- Operational sites at all major capital city airport locations

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Prior to self insurance

AaE lacked formal management systems, including:

- formal OHS structures
- OHS and rehabilitation resources
- accountability for safety and return to work
- rehabilitation or claims management systems
### Pre-self insurance statistics

#### LTIFR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998/1999</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/1998</td>
<td>120+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Claims for Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Claims</th>
<th>Total Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998/1999</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>$2.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/1998</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>$1.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/1997</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>$1.6M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why introduce a Safety/Rehabilitation Management System?

- to reduce high claim costs
- to reduce high absenteeism resulting from injury

Shift in mindset was required:

- acceptance by Board that injuries and time off work impact on the “bottom line”
- commitment from Board and Senior Executive to provide resources
- the move from treatment of injuries to prevention
Our transition to developing an effective Management System

- AaE’s management system was developed in the late 1990’s
- the aim was to develop an integrated prevention, rehabilitation and claims management system linked into the company’s business plan
- Comcare’s review in 2000 and 2001 revealed AaE had not reached the Management System compliance levels to Comcare’s satisfaction
AaE took the following actions …

1. Undertook a cultural change program through an “Extraordinary Leadership” development program which included WHS

This program targeted
- Senior Management
- Middle Management
- Line Management
AaE took the following actions ...

2. increased resources were made available to assist in the prevention and injury management activities

3. increased commitment to Case Management training

4. acknowledgement that early intervention was the key to success in managing injured employees and introduced an “Early Intervention Program”
Commitment was first obtained from the AaE Board and Senior Executive

The following policies and procedures were developed in consultation with employees:

- Rehabilitation and Claims Management Policies
- Working Together Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct Policy
- Harassment Free Workplace Policy
- Whistle Blower Policy
Achievements over the journey

- early intervention in respect of all injuries
- expectation that an early return to work is the norm
- that suitable duties are available
- the injury management model is fully integrated into all levels of management
Regulatory and audit experience

- AaE now has in place a strong Rehabilitation Management System with a focus on continuous improvement.

- AaE holds tier 3 (self audit) status and utilises the approved Comcare audit tools to audit the robustness of the prevention, claims management and rehabilitation systems.

- Self insurance licence renewed on 4 occasions to 2013.

- Results of all audits are tabled with the Board Audit Committee.
Results of AaE’s Rehabilitation Management System

Over a 10 year period

- claims trended down by 72%
- claims per 100 employees trending down by 75%
- frequency of lost time injury claims per 1M hours worked trending down by 84%
Safety Awards

2003 Safety Award - Winner
  Rehabilitation and Return to Work Award

2004 Safety Award – Winner
  Leadership in Injury Prevention and Management Award

2005 Safety Award – High Commendation
  Workplace Safety Innovative Solutions Award

2008 Safety Award – High Commendation
  Best Solution to an Identified Workplace Health and Safety Issue

2008 Safety Award – Commendation
  Best Individual Contribution to Health and Safety

2009 Safety Award – Winner
  Best Solution to an Identified Workplace Health and Safety Issue

2010 Safe Work Australia Safety Award – Winner
  Best Solution to an Identified Workplace Health and Safety Issue
Benefits of an effective Rehabilitation Management System

- commitment by Senior Management to:
  - early intervention strategies
  - Supporting the return to work of injured employees
  - Providing suitable employment

- employees know what is expected of them in return to work

- employee feels valued and needed

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Benefits of an effective Rehabilitation Management System cont…

- provides for management, performance measurement/evaluation and continuous improvement
- time of work is reduced
- cost of injuries is reduced
- increased Company productivity with increased benefits to shareholders
Critical to developing an effective rehabilitation management system is:

- support from Company Senior Executive
- robust Policy
- positive culture towards injured employees
- sufficient trained and competent resources
- expert support from Rehabilitation providers
- processes for continuous improvement
Cost of an effective Management System

In most circumstances in the Commonwealth arena it is expected that system would be cost neutral. Why?

Because there are existing:

1. resources doing rehabilitation activities, but in an unstructured manner
2. template for a system called the Section 41 Guidelines for Rehabilitation Authorities 2012
Success measurements of an effective Rehabilitation Management System

- reduction in time off work and costs (including early return to work)
- performance Indicators
- staff surveys
- audits against audit tool
- improved rehabilitation provider performance
Case study

- Date of injury: March 2010
- Injury: right forearm crush/laceration as a result of a forklift crushing his arm against a pillar
- Time off work: 126 weeks
- Barriers: fear of mobile plant and vehicles, extensive surgery, post traumatic stress disorder.
- Rehabilitation: was persistent and supportive.
- System: ensured that the employee was supported during the whole process and that a return to work remained a high focus for all parties.
Final message ...

- Have no fear of a management system.
- It works for you, not against you