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any time while at work

Kagan Logistics

Project: Reducing manual task risks

Kagan Logistics, a warehouse management and distribution company, successfully negotiated changes to an international import contract which reduced manual task risks for workers as well as giving other benefits to their business.

The majority of work undertaken at Kagan involves unloading containers, warehouse storage and product dispatch. One of Kagan's contracts involved receiving large container loads of 50 kg bags of soybean meal. These loads presented manual task risks to Kagan workers—if pallets were not adequately wrapped, bags could fall off the pallet, requiring staff to manually lift and/or carry them.

Through consultation, workers and management identified that the situation needed to be reviewed to ensure the manual task risks associated with the import contract were eliminated or reduced.

Initiatives to improve workplace health and safety

Workers and management brainstormed solutions to the issue and trialled a number of potential methods. However, these methods did not adequately control the risk. Better solutions could be developed further up the supply chain to more effectively manage worker health and safety risks.

Kagan suggested that the product be supplied in 850 kg bulk bags, which would allow workers to use a forklift to remove loads from the container and eliminate a major manual task risk. The importer recognised the potential benefits of this approach and contacted the international supplier to instigate the change in packaging.

Following implementation Kagan continued to monitor the situation and made further improvements to the process, including using a forklift jib that allowed more product to be packed into the container—a critical consideration in the transport industry.

Role of senior management

Kagan management:

- discussed the issues with the importers of the product, highlighting the workplace health and safety and chain of responsibility legislation
- involved workers to help identify the best solutions to manual task risks
- encouraged worker involvement in the change management process
- monitored, reviewed and made improvements to the manual task risk.



Figure 1: Original packaging method



Figure 2: Improved bulk packaging method

Outcomes and benefits

The change to bulk packaging eliminated the manual tasks risks associated with handling the product as loads could only be handled by forklift. The smaller pallets meant easier and safer loading in and out of pallet racking and loading vehicles.

This eliminated the risk for everyone involved in the supply chain, including the transport and logistics companies, the client and workers.

In addition to the worker health and safety benefits, these changes had benefits for business efficiencies, including:

- improved product quality through decreased damage (for example, the product did not overhang the pallet)
- reduced costs as it took less time to unpack the product.

Productivity at the Kagan site was improved because the product required less handling and was easier to rack in the warehouse environment, giving workers more time to complete other duties.

How could this innovation/action help industry?

This case study shows how one organisation was able to influence their supply chain in order to decrease manual tasks risks. Discussing health and safety as part of contracts and/or negotiating changes to pre-existing contracts can reduce manual task risks and improve business efficiencies throughout the supply chain, i.e. importers, suppliers, manufacturers and those who transport, store, sell and use the product.

Lessons learnt

- Worker participation in identifying the issues and the solution development is vital in ensuring the best and most sustainable solution is chosen. It provides for greater ownership by workers and demonstrates management commitment to addressing health and safety risks.
- Discuss issues early in contract negotiations to ensure that risks are adequately managed.

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Safety Integrity Leadership Knowledge

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