

Dear Son / Daughter

Its great that you have gone into business, I am proud of you and I want to help you as much as I can. I believe the time spent on prevention will pay you back a thousand times for your effort. (Read A tale of two businesses on this website) I have spent over 25 years in workplace safety and this is my sincere message to you.

Safety is important. It can be the difference between prevention and life or death. You, your family, your workers and their families have a right to expect that all will be safe at work.

There are massive fines and possible prison terms up to 5 years for negligence, particularly on risks that everyone considers you should have known about (Foreseeable risks) at your workplace, or where you placed your workers.

1. Develop your WHS Policy. (This is your promise of what you will do and shows others that you are aware of your safety obligations),
2. Look at your Risks, make a list and then address the High Risk ones straight away. Involve and consult your staff in how to address the risks and keep a brief record of the discussions. Managers have paid big fines and penalties for being unaware of risks that all the employees knew about.
3. See if the Induction Page covers the risks you have identified in the workplace. If not change it so it covers the risks you want covered and get the employees to sign it so you have record of their induction. This is important as it lets them know how to keep safe at work and sets the standards you expect.

4. Hold regular safety meetings with a WHS Agenda. Invite everyone and let the employees know who couldn't make it, what was discussed and the decisions that were made. WHS Meeting Record

5. Make sure your reporting system works and ALL risks, hazards, incidents and near misses are recorded. This is the lifeblood of a safety system. Forget it and it will injure you and your business. All you have to do is make sure that all employees are aware of their obligation to report any safety issue.

A near miss today, could be a death tomorrow. How would you live with yourself if a person was seriously injured or died. What would you say to their partner or their children. Would you go the funeral knowing that it was avoidable. Even worse if the Regulator believes that your safety system was only words, not actually applied to actually make a difference.

6. Decide how you can support the WHS System so it is not in words only. See if risks you hear about are actually reported. Ask yourself, do my employees really think it makes a difference to their safety. If yes continue. If not stop and ask the hard question, 'Why isn't it working?'

Better to ask yourself for free than be in a court with a lawyer on \$450+ per hour of your money, answering the question for you in the hope of minimising fines which range from 10s of thousands of dollars to millions and you can also go to prison

I have seen some workplaces where they don't record the risks that will cause paperwork. Honestly the paperwork is not there to bore employees, it is to ensure that everyone has the best information in how to keep themselves safe.

7. Now you should have a working system and don't forget that it is common for employees to take shortcuts if for no other reason than habit. Whatever standard you set, it will eventually be downgraded. Accept this as a common occurrence and work to address it by setting the example for others. Don't fall into blame the victim syndrome. This says that you either employed fools or can't fix a

compliance problem with your own employees. At the end of the day both of these issues are your problem.

8. Advise employees of the risks of complacency and shortcuts. Encourage employees to see safety as an ethical duty, not avoid safety risks with paperwork no-one else knows about. Reward employees for bringing hazards and risks to your attention. A culture of keeping quiet will expose you to risks and also ensure your competitors leave you behind, as they become more successful and operate more safely and cheaply than you. Add up your time spent on buying consultants to tell you what you have right under your nose for free, or worse getting lawyers at \$450+ per hour saying they can't give you a fixed quote, they will just bill you for their time but it could be as high as \$10,000 plus.

Just think about this. All the time and money you have spent on a defence, is in your competitors bank account and they spent half on a 10 day cruise, and there still in front of where you are, in your potentially avoidable legal expenses.

9. I am sorry to be so blunt but one day when I am not here and an event happens at your workplace I want you to be in the best position to manage it.

Just remember in my view any workplace issue comes down to two things.

Leadership and Relationships.

Leadership

Because it is leading, educating and watching people grow. It is not simply coordinating or managing tasks. It is seeing employees as people who matter and should be advised of what they need to know to make good decisions for you in your business.

## Relationships

Because I cannot tell you the number of business that fail to see the importance of having clear respectful relationships based on clear boundaries any actions outside those boundaries are addressed quickly and firmly.

An example. Your employees have a choice of working for you or your competitor. If you haven't got people asking or keen to work for you, then make sure you haven't forgotten the importance of seeing how other employees view your management style. Why not check up on whether you are the preferred employer and if not, ask the tough question Why?

10. I wish you all the best. Leadership can be lonely at times but if you succeed, you will have an enjoyable and profitable working life.

Love Dad