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The Benefits of Hiring a Safety Consultant

By Peter Bouley (Source: September 2005 issue of Occupational Health & Safety)

They can help you save serious expenses through recommendations or implementation of new ideas.

The question of whom to hire and when should be on the minds of CEOs, operations managers, human resources, project managers, and others regarding safety and training issues. This question is not always easily answered, even if your company has the resources and personnel in the guise of a safety and health director and/or department. In this ever-changing world of downsizing, everyone needs to justify how many man-hours are spent and at what cost to the company. Everyone is responsible for watching the bottom line.

In order for most companies to remain competitive and stay in business, they must provide--per OSHA--a safe work environment for all of their employees . . . not just the full-time employees. You may have the best safety and training program, however, human error is impossible to predict and control 100 percent. Your safety and training manager (if you have one in house) usually has more on his/her plate than the original job description depicts. He or she does not have the time, and your budget constraints do not allow him or her the resources, to keep up with the ever-changing environment in which we live and work. Therefore, in most cases, it is very cost effective to hire a safety consultant to take a fresh look at your company policies, training, accident prevention programs, and a multitude of other issues that may be particular to your type of industry and company.

Why Go Outside for This Service?

First, a professional consultant is not bogged down by your company's internal affairs, nor is he/she influenced by your past safety record. Nor will he or she alter reports just to make your company look good. You also have the opportunity to find someone, although this person may not have a lot of initials and titles after her name, who has a proven record of actual, hands-on skills and has the ability to save your company a serious amount of money through recommendations or implementation of new ideas.



These professional consultants attend seminars, meet with industry regulatory agencies, and in general are ahead of the curve for safety and training in their field of expertise. The cost of their services ranges from reasonable to ridiculous, as some want to sell you software, videos, and other potentially useless expenses that leave you with a bad feeling for consultants.

In order to find the right company for your needs, get a referral list and check them out, the same as you would for other services that either your company requires or you require personally. For instance, if you needed heart surgery, would you run your finger through the Yellow Pages? Would you require a doctor with a multitude of titles or degrees? I surely hope not. If it were me, I would speak to past and present patients, other doctors, hospitals where they worked, and the Department of Health, and would make sure this is the person to whom I want to entrust my life. In the same manner, you are entrusting the lives and well-being of your employees to an outside safety consultant. Take the time to make a healthy decision.

Benefits to Hiring a Safety Consultant

- Reduce overhead costs
- 100 percent business expense (deductible)
- Service available either as needed or specified by contract
- Training available for employees when required
- OSHA intervention service available by someone who has experience dealing with the agency, can negotiate on your behalf, and can save you some serious expense, should you be fined
- Pre-OSHA inspection service and recommendations to correct potential problems at your site
- Up to date on safety regulations
- Available to check current safety manual and upgrade as required or write a new safety manual specific to your company and industry
- Can set up and check OSHA-required paperwork for construction subs on the job site
- Service available anywhere in the 50 states and Canada at the same low price
- Annual service contracts available for better savings
- Discounts available for referrals.