

Work Well Awards 2023

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Example entry

Category four – Most significant improvement to work health and safety performance

1: What was the work health and safety performance issue?

The main issue for WHS performance at Black Hops is that the organisation had outgrown its WHMS with its continuous growth of production, and headcount within the company (Head count had grown from 40 staff in 2020 to 80 staff currently).

Previously, HR and WHS was outsourced and implemented internally by our founders and management staff. As Black Hops continued to go, the needs for WHS grew which the organisation didn't have the resources or personnel to manage this to ensure compliance across the business, and implement training and maintain adequate documentation (risk assessments, safe working procedures, training registers, inductions for high risk equipment) In mid 2021, Black Hops had engaged WHSQ to participate in the IPAM program which the Senior Advisor had identified 80 items to implement across our organisation, with a focus on the Production Facility in Biggera Waters. As Black Hops continued to go, we wanted to implement best practice for WHS and have safety as a priority in everything we do.

The main issue of being under-resourced without someone specialised in WHS was the lack of documentation to support safe working practices and adequate training not being conducted. There are a lot of high risk tasks and considerations within our Production Facility and engaging somebody qualified in WHS has driven creating a safety culture that focuses on consultation and participation from its workforce.

2: How did your organisation improve its health and safety performance?

The WHS contributions affect a majority of our team across our 3 sites in SEQ, in particular our manual tasks roles (production, warehousing and deliveries, hospitality venues). Now seamlessly integrated into our onboarding process, new starters are inducted by their direct manager and shown the associated risks and processes in their area of work, associated risks on site, and complete their HR Policy and Procedure induction electronically in their first week of employment (WHS policy included).

A full list of improvements are attached (BIP from IPAM).



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Implementing our new Safety Initiatives and improvements, we have had to get advice and input from a range of stakeholders.

WHSQ was engaged mid 2021 to identify weaknesses in Black Hops' WHSMS and provide advice on how we can improve compliance and implement best practice within our industry. Our newly appointed People & Safety Advisor has been working closely with the IPAM Senior Advisor to implement the Business Improvement Plan of 80 items.

The IPAM program has proven to be successful within Black Hops where we have dramatically improved WHS within the workplace, and have created a safety conscious culture.

The Founders of Black Hops have allocated and invested a large amount of resources to ensure safety is the priority within Black Hops. Having this initiative implemented by our Senior Managers and Founders has shown the team at Black Hops that the organisation has a priority of safety.

Management have collaborated with HR and their staff to roll out this initiative through consultation and making improvements that they believe will work. Staff have completed required training on SOPs, policies and procedures for safety.

Commissioning Black Hops Packaging upgrades and new machinery, we worked closely with the supplier for over a year and engineers onsite for 3 months to build the equipment and train our team on operating safely.

We have also engaged consultants to implement the following:

- Radiation Safety Protection and Management
- Dangerous Goods - Chemical Manifest and Emergency Training

One of the biggest challenges we encountered was when we acquired our industrial gauging equipment and were unaware of the licensing requirements from Queensland Health.

Governed by Queensland Radiation Safety Act 1999 and the Radiation Safety Regulation 2021, we were required to obtain licensing and approval from the Chief Executive of Queensland Health before acquiring the device which we weren't aware of till after its arrival on site.



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Our People & Safety Advisor was able to overcome this challenge by discussing to other breweries who conduct Industrial Gauging, and engaged an external consultant to assist with our documentation and training.

Another challenge we were having while rolling out our new safety initiatives and training, was ensuring required safety procedures and checklists were being followed across our 4 on 4 off roster in Production. To ensure safety was at the forefront and new procedures implemented were being followed, we rolled out Shift Supervisor Training for our experienced brewers to outline their obligations on shift and be the link between management and day to day operations.

3: Explain how the changes have improved your performance. How have you ensured this improvement will be sustained?

Black Hops now has a robust, comprehensive, compliant and collaborative WHSMS and safety culture that supports staff participation, collaboration and consultation. To monitor the changes and staff perception on safety, we have implemented a Safety Climate Survey which is conducted every 6 months within our newly implemented Cultural Survey.

Over FY21/22, we have had zero notifiable incidents, zero active WorkCover claims or work related return to work plans, and have remained well under industry claims in Beer Manufacturing.

We now have commitment from all levels of management for safety within Black Hops, and our team is aware of Standard Operating Procedures, risks, training and relevant licensing for roles.

Our weekly Safety and Production meeting outlines what safety initiatives/training are being implemented and is an open discussion on investigating incidents and implementing control measures for risks and hazards.

The ongoing role of our People & Safety Advisor will ensure that our WHSMS is maintained, best practice is followed and Black Hops are continuously improving on how we can be safer at work.



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