



ALL FOR ONE – ONE FOR ALL

1. Organisations involved

Fa. Marchl Stahlbau G.m.b.H.

2. Description of the case

2.1. *Introduction*

Marchl is a small family-owned business specialised in steel construction. Currently 23 workers build car ports, staircases, handrails, roof constructions, garage doors, fences and conservatories. Marchl is also a service provider for maintenance works and can be contracted by bigger companies.

Safety at work is an important issue for the company's management at Marchl: A safety and health management system has been implemented and certified by AUVA, the Austrian social accident insurance body, in 2005. With the introduction of the management system technical and organisational safety standards have already been significantly improved.

But that was not enough for the Marchl management: "Fortunately we did not suffer from serious accidents since many years", says Tanja Luttenberger, one of the executive partners "Perhaps this was the reason why we realised a tendency that smaller accidents like cuts, burns or crushes were not taken serious by the workers." Actions were taken to improve the situation regarding the smaller health and safety incidents.

The close cooperation with another industrial company provided an insight into their safety and health system and motivated the management of Marchl to start a project in order to raise the safety awareness of everyone in the company. The idea was to create a health and safety approach that would involve everybody in the company and that should be part of an active safety and health management.

2.2. *Aims*

The project "All for one – one for all" aimed at raising the safety awareness of everybody in the company and at reducing the number of light accidents, near misses and dangerous situations at work.

The title demonstrates the different responsibilities. On the one hand "all" employees contribute to the safety at work with increased safety awareness while on the other hand the "one for all" - respectively the company's management - provides the appropriate conditions and the implementation of safety measures.

The project addressed two different focus areas: First, areas and tasks of elevated risk were to be identified and second, work organisation and tidiness were to be further improved.

2.3. *What was done, and how?*

Every small accident that does not lead to sick leave and even a near miss stands for a dangerous situation at work which also could have possibly turned into a severe accident. In other terms: The more dangerous situations you face at work, the more risk you run of being involved in a serious accident one day. Safety experts compare the situation with an iceberg: Only the severe cases appear in statistics while the gross of unsafe situations and near misses are below the water line. It is



estimated that per severe accident which happens about 600 unsafe situations and near misses did already happen.

At Marchl, various safety and health circles for different areas (e.g. cleaning of cars, repair shop, small tools) were founded. They were moderated by external safety engineers and consist deliberately of small teams. Workers were asked to bring in their experience and expertise for pointing at dangerous situations that used to happen at work. They were also asked to assess how dangerous these situations could be for their health: The parameters to estimate were likeliness of an accident and severity of possible negative health effects.

Taking these estimations into account, every circle was asked to elaborate a list of priorities and possible improvement measures. Three or four workers and a management representative were nominated to co-operate in implementing the assigned measures. Every group had a time frame of two months for implementing and for ensuring the effectiveness of the improvements. After two months the responsibility was given to another group.

In this way the improvements were not only re-checked by another group, it was also ensured that every worker was confronted with typical risks in the different work areas and that everybody could better understand the implemented measures.

In the same way the project team decided to tackle organisational issues and tidiness within the work site. In moderated circles specialists also informed about hygiene standards, general health risks and possible measures that could contribute to staying healthy in the job. Marchl introduced for example the payment of premiums for stopping smoking or avoiding one day sick leaves.

Again groups consisting of three or four workers and a management representative were formed and given a two months term for assessing work areas and for deciding on and implementing improvement measures. Again the teams changed after two months following the rotation principle.

The project soon brought to light what was hidden under the surface before:

- In the assembly hall trip hazards could be identified and eliminated.
- New welding equipment was installed: Mounted on a jib under the ceiling, the welder can now easily move and access the equipment at any place in the assembly hall.
- A new crane was also installed: It lightens the load of the workers who do not need to carry heavy goods manually anymore.

The workers also stated that the project helped to find a better access to work organisation aspects and that it opened the mind for hazards at work. The safety awareness has been improved and with the improved organisation the quality of work also enhanced.

The project character could be turned into business practice: Convinced by the good results and the positive feedback, the owners decided to go on with the work in the safety circles and to use this instrument periodically to keep the high standard and to constantly improve working conditions.

2.4. What was achieved?

The positive effects of the activities could be observed in various aspects:

- Since the start of the project the number of smaller work accidents could be significantly reduced. Accordingly the likeliness of being involved in a severe work accident was decreased as well.
- The workers became aware of the advantages of work safety and personal health issues and contributed actively to keep the new safety culture alive.
- The sick leave has been reduced.
- The good cooperation of management and workers also had a positive influence on the motivation of the workers and contributed to a better team spirit.



- The productivity could be improved: new equipment and an improved organisation lead to better quality of work and to less wastage.

2.5. Success factors

As success factors could be described:

- strengthening of sense of community
- promotion of teamwork through regular safety and health circles
- tidiness and cleanliness
- clear procedures
- consideration of workers' ideas of improvement, and
- workers' awareness for the internal success and with it, their job security.

2.6. Further information

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2.7. Transferability

The project was very sophisticated on the one hand on the other hand it was relatively cheap. Using the experiences of workers for their work places also means that less external consultation is needed. Many businesses, including small and medium enterprises can follow the example of Marchl Stahlbau.

Sure, some money is needed to be invested in external moderation and new equipment. "Nevertheless, one of the main advantages of the project was its cost efficiency," says Tanja Luttenberger. "The investments paid off in many dimensions, not only in better safety but also in better team spirit and better productivity."

3. References, resources:

- Arbeitsinspektion (Ed.) 2009: Alle für einen, einer für alle - Sicherheit bei der Firma Marchl. http://www.arbeitsinspektion.gv.at/NR/rdonlyres/C91B904D-00F5-4D12-B9C4-1BC371D96D9A/0/BestPractice_Marchl_Stahlbau.pdf
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