

## Increased Resilience = Reduced Accidents



If your business was resilient **and** the people in your business were resilient what would that mean to the overall health of your organisation in terms of productivity and profitability? Could all parties in the business actually have their cake and eat it too?

On behalf of the Road Transport Association (and through my own personal quest for information) I have been gaining an understanding of the various influences in your daily role as a professional driver. As a result I have had the opportunity of meeting with some very interesting organisations and also examining some revealing articles and statistics.

In discussions with the **Resilience Institute** I've discovered there is a clear challenge to those who want to assist transport businesses and those that work within the industry to resist from using the word 'Health'. For some reason the word has some threatening connotations to many of us "blokes". So instead the word "resilience" is seen as a better descriptive word - at least it doesn't make people run for the hills.

"Resilience" has a deeper meaning which appeals to me because it not only encompasses the health of the driver or the overall business health of the organisation but also includes the ability of the individual / company to **survive** in times of economic, environmental or personal crisis whilst **thriving** and operating at optimal performance in general.

And there are compelling reasons for businesses to look into their wider resilience. Just check out the statistics. On average, for every \$1 invested in staff health there is a return on that investment of between \$2 and \$5. Increased staff health reduces the cost and inconvenience of absenteeism, lack of focus resulting in lost productivity and workplace accidents. This in turn can reduce costs of insurance, at fault motor claims, ACC levies and addresses a whole raft of productivity issues.

An example of a health programme implemented within an international bus company resulted in an increase in bottom line profit of 23%.

Did you know that when staff are not well but are coming to work because they have used up all their sick leave it is costing on average between \$327.00 and \$387.00 per person per day in lost productivity? Enough to give the accountant conniptions!

Drilling down into the statistics further there have been case studies in the USA investigating an element of the above. The results showed that people who suffer from lower back pain are also more likely to also suffer from depression. Depression affects energy and focus and an effect on the level of accidents. As incidence of depression rises, so does the level of accidents. *(Ref Construction workers struggle with High Prevalence of Mental Distress and this is associated with their pain and injuries JOEM Volume 55 Number 10 October 2013)*

In this article they also state “mental distress has a negative influence on the workers’ attitudes regarding safety and engaging in unsafe behaviour”. They further state “having substantial mental distress was associated with low back pain, multiple pain sites and a higher frequency and range of work related injuries”.

So this really puts an interesting spin on Health and Safety in the work place especially taking into account the upcoming implementation of the Health & Safety at Work Bill and also what this information could do to change the number of accidents at work and within your fleet of vehicles.

If you want to increase profit with an optimal investment whilst reducing your insurance costs it is worth looking at diverting some of your existing spending by making small incremental changes in your working environment. There are some great tools out there that can really make a difference. It’s just a matter of doing your homework and experimenting what will work in your work place.

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