

9.1 Transitional Work Program at Walt Disney World

Based in Orlando, Florida, Walt Disney World focuses on a transitional work program to help manage disability. Employees are encouraged to immediately report all work injuries, and company physicians help to decide whether employees can return to regular work or light-duty work. Disney's light-duty program allows employees to spend up to six weeks in this transitional program, but the average stay has been only 15 work days. Results from Disney showed that lost-time cases had been reduced more than 30 percent (Gemignani 1996).

Gemignani, J. 1996. "Early Return-to-Work Shows Promise." *Business and Health* (October): 75-76.

9.2 The Transitional Work Center at Steelcase, Inc.

Steelcase Inc., a furniture manufacturing company based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with over \$3.2 billion in revenues, used a transitional work center to offer injured employees light-duty work. With openings for around 30 employees, the center provided temporary light-duty jobs such as washing towels and sorting gloves for employees who continued to receive their original hourly wages and full benefits. Employees working in the transitional work center were able to continue accruing employment hours which counted towards their share of Steelcase's profit-sharing program.

Steelcase's program enabled the company to reduce costs per lost-time claim by more than 50 percent, to \$2,500 per claim (Hursch and Shrey 1999). Furthermore, by having injured employees perform necessary company jobs, Steelcase was able to save around \$400,000 per year because it did not have to outsource this work. This focus on disability management is reflected in the organization's culture, and Steelcase has been rated by the National Safety Council as four times safer than the national company average for the light-metal industry (Laabs 1993).

Hursh, N.C., and D. E. Shrey. 1999. "Workplace Disability Management: International Trends and Perspectives." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* (September): 45-59.

Laabs, J. J. 1993. "Steelcase Slashes Workers' Comp Costs." *Personnel Journal* (February): 72-87.

9.3 Other Ergonomics Programs

Ergonomic Safety at Newport News Shipbuilding

The welding department of Newport News Shipbuilding used an ergonomics program to decrease the number of wrist injuries occurring among its 1,800 workers. In-depth training on tool selection, work methods, and scaffold placement resulted in a reduction in wrist injuries from an average of two to four per month to only six injuries in the entire year

following the training. The maintenance department used a lifting training program to reduce the frequency of back injuries from an average of one per month to zero. Documentation of the company's success with these programs showed a 30 percent reduction in overall ergonomic case rates and a 55 percent reduction in lost-time ergonomic cases. These reductions were reportedly associated with savings of \$4.1 million in workers compensation expenses (Fitzpatrick and King 2001).

Fitzpatrick, M. A., and P. M. King. 2001. "Disability Management Pays Off." *American Society of Safety Engineers/Professional Safety* (January): 39-41.

Prevention and Ergonomics in Healthcare: Laurel Center

This Harrisburg, Pennsylvania-based healthcare facility used the opportunity created by a management change to re-emphasize ergonomic lifting safety. The ergonomics program included training on proper techniques for lifting and the use of mechanical lift assists to help facility staff provide lift assistance in areas such as wheelchair and floor transfers. After instituting this program, the lost work day injury rate fell from an average of 8.3 percent to 2.4 percent, and upper extremity musculoskeletal disorders decreased from an average of 7.1 percent to less than 1 percent in 1999 (OSHA 2001).

OSHA. 2001. "Success with Ergonomics." [On-line article; retrieved 5/25/01.] http://www.oshaslc.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/ergonomicreports_pub/ergonomicsuccess/pennsylvania/nc000899.html.

9.4 Integrated Disability at Steelcase

An initiative by Steelcase has been to integrate workers' compensation and disability management for the company. This 1997 integration has resulted in a decrease in the overall cost of disability from \$1.55 per \$100 of payroll to \$1.40 in 1999. Litigation has also decreased with a drop in cases from 25 in 1997 to six in 1999 (Lipold 2000).

Lipold, A. G. 2000. "Managing the Guy Who Isn't There." *Business and Health* (November/December): 25-30.