



‘Keeping it Fresh’ at Sanford, Timaru

Communicating and Celebrating

Simple, every day, down-to-earth, effective, easy solutions that can be implemented at very little cost to the organisation, were an outcome from the *Keeping it Fresh* training programme. The 40-hour workplace training programme was delivered in four-hour modules.

Project presentations were an integral part of the end of course celebration. Sanford management joined course attendees and families at the event, including CEO Volker Kuntzsch, COO Greg Johansen, Human Resources Manager Nikki Iuli, and Site Manager Grant Day.

Health and Safety Solutions

New Health and Safety legislation was a particular focus for the course. The implications and responsibilities that came with the legislation was an eye-opener. “Man there’s a lot do,” said Eddie. It also got them thinking more about their own health and safety practices at work.

This then led them to site investigations, based on what workplace data. Two groups investigated different occupational health issues – allergies to histamines, and Recurring Injuring Prevention Education (RIPE). The RIPE group analysed the site’s pain and injury data for 2015-2016 and found most injuries occur from the fingertip to the back and they calculated the average cost was \$350 per injury.

Staff were surveyed about recurring injuries. Analysis of the data led to the recommendation that there be a three-minute stretching programme at the start of the day and after lunch to ensure that staff are warmed up before going into the factory. Staff will be trained to do this, with input from an occupational therapist.

Two other groups investigated near miss reporting and Hazard ID. In both areas, the groups thought the data showed under-reporting, partly due to workers not knowing enough about the types of hazards or what a near miss was. This was compounded by forms that were not fit-for-purpose. The recommendation was to develop new forms and processes to engaged staff in reporting issues.

Going to the Gemba

‘Going to the Gemba’ is a group walk (form) that aims to identify hazards (physical, chemical, biological, and behavioural) and encourage staff to suggest ways to manage the risks. Walking as a group aims to educate on the range of hazards, not

just physical. The group recommended that management 'Go to the Gemba' for 30 minutes each week, walking the floor, and talking to staff. This approach would also improve staff engagement.

Grant Day thought the process could be improved by staff and management walking together, and the forms are now being used by the company.

That was a close one!

We all have close calls in the workplace, but when should they be reported as a near miss? The group identified that the technical definitions of a near miss led to a lack of understanding among staff, and a lack of reporting. So the group came up with their own definition, using words that everyone could relate too. Their definition is: "A near miss: a hitting, nudging, tripping, falling or slipping in the workplace without causing injury." This definition will be posted around the factory to increase reporting and engagement.

The group also took the opportunity to redesign a more simple reporting process. Supervisors are to ask each team member, individually, if they have experienced a near miss. If yes, then the supervisor completes the reporting card, on the spot.

"We've tried everything to get more reporting," says Logistics Manager Jim Routhan. "It's a slow wheel to move. It started to get better last year, but after the buzz of the presentation I see we were going about it the wrong way. They went about it their way. Now we have an environment that will work for us. They want it this way."

Communication Solutions

Communication is the key to understanding what a company is all about and what is going on.

Our people, our values

Recently Sanford's introduced three new values: passion, caring and integrity. Staff on the *Keeping it Fresh* training brainstormed meanings for the values by drawing up lists of words, writing statements, and taking photos of staff at work demonstrating these values. The photos and captions were matched.

The group proposed that posters be professionally produced and placed around the site. Sanford CEO Volker Kuntzsch said this was a project close to his heart. "You've made a wonderful job of bringing the values to light. I don't know why we are paying a company to produce posters when we have people who can do this."



Passion: Only the best for you!

Tarakihi TV

The employees on the course were genuinely interested in what is going on at the site, but the group identified a lack of engagement with printed messages, and identified that more TV screens around the site would be the best medium to communicate messages. This led to the creation of *Tarakihi TV*, and course attendees put together a sample programme of what they would like to see broadcast. They learnt how to put together a power point presentation, interview staff and write content. Their first programme has gone live in the factory.

“It’s like a TV show, Sanford’s got Talent. It’s a bloody brilliant idea,” says Jim Routhan.

A group will be formed to put together future programmes. “It was massive, getting the content and putting it on the screen. I freaked out as I produced and edited a programme. I never thought I’d be able to do something like that. I’ll continue with it. I’m looking to do it in my own time for say half an hour every couple of weeks after work. Everyone wants to know what’s going on. We’d like pictures, bullet point facts. There are thousands of things we could do.”

Employee views

Several course attendees admitted to being reluctant before the course, but they all said they enjoyed it and felt affirmed and more confident.

The course gives workers new skills to solve real workplace issues and this is the legacy of the course. These skills will be further developed as they progress on to Level 2 training on health and safety and food safety through Primary ITO. The success is also about feeling like they have made a contribution to the company. They are now telling other workers at the site: “Bite the bullet and do it. Overall we’re looking to the future, looking forward with Grant – he thinks ahead, he initiated the course. Volker walks the talk. He makes us feel special, he mingles and asks what we could improve.”

Employer’s views

Sanford’s management noted the challenges of getting the programme underway and of communicating it in a way that would encourage employees to sign up. “We

wanted to be able to give assurances about the end goal, but the risk was that it could have gone pear shaped if it had been labelled as this or that type of training,” says Grant.

The second challenge was the logistics of getting people off the production line for four hours. Sanford’s managed this by running the training in the slower season, and selecting workers from different sections of the factory.

Management has noticed increased confidence, engagement and participation. “They’re chattier, more at ease and able to discuss issues and ideas if things are not running right. You used to see a lot of division, but it’s opened up their eyes to other areas,” says Stores and Purchasing Manager, Shirley Scott. Grant Day has also noticed this change with workers now actively offering solutions.

So, is it worth running 40 hours of workplace learning? Grant Day thinks so. He was proud and stunned by the presentations, and sees the course as a tipping point for engagement. “The benefits are for Sanford and the site.”

