

Buckley Systems Ltd

Skills Highway

Having a diverse workforce means addressing a diverse set of needs, and for one of New Zealand's premier manufacturers, ensuring that employees have strong literacy skills is a high priority to establish safe work practices.

Buckley Systems Ltd is the world's leading supplier of precision electromagnets, which are used in the manufacture of more than 90 per cent of the world's silicon chips. The company employs 370 staff from a number of different countries and backgrounds. English is a second language for a high percentage of their staff, and for some it is even their third language.

Buckley Systems Ltd's specific workload has a number of key challenges, many of which require competency in literacy and numeracy. This creates an issue when staff are not confident in speaking and reading English, as they are required to understand a wide variety of documentation and compliance measures.

To help address these difficulties, Buckley Systems Ltd partnered with The Learning Wave in 2015 to develop a learning programme called the "Work Well Strategy." This strategy involved training at all levels of the business, from managers to production staff. Key factors were consistency of language and including workplace examples and systems within the training.

The programmes were presented in a dedicated learning centre on site, established by the Board of Buckley Systems Ltd, and all senior managers attend staff presentations at the completion of the programme.

In 2017, the strategy was reviewed and updated to focus on three areas of the organisation: production staff, team leaders and heads of department/managers. All of these programmes have been successful, but the Work Well to be Safe programme for production staff, which embeds literacy and numeracy skills in a health and safety-focused training programme, has been particularly helpful in addressing Buckley Systems Ltd's key business challenges.

Some key outcomes for participants in a pilot of the Work Well to be Safe programme were:

- A 50 per cent increase in the skills required to enhance reporting health and safety problems and near misses
- A 30 per cent increase in the ability to communicate with team leaders and managers
- A 33 per cent increase in understanding health and safety words and signs
- A 25 per cent increase in confidence to speak up

This new understanding and awareness of health and safety among staff has also led to hazards that may have gone unnoticed previously being identified and addressed.

Health and safety has been given a new focus within the organisation, and adjustments to Buckley Systems Ltd's approach to safety on the job have included new signage, which is clearer to understand for people with diverse literacy levels, and re-written, clearer Standards of Procedure.



Managers have reported a noticeable change in staff input to team meetings and toolbox talks, especially around safety, since the completion of the first programmes.

Participants have been positive about the programmes too, with one saying, "It helped me to change and grow with my communication skills and helped me think more positively within my workplace. It also gave me a lot of courage to stand up and say 'I can do it.'"

"It has opened my eyes to how dangerous workplaces can be, and how important health and safety is - at work and at home."

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