

Success Story:

Redcats USA Reduces Injury Rate through Commitment and Communication


Redcats USA, a division of Redcats Group, is a multi-channel home-shopping leader (catalog, internet and stores) offering a wide range of value- and quality-driven merchandise categories, including missy apparel, men's and women's plus-size apparel, home and lifestyle products, and outdoor gear. Redcats USA has approximately 10,000 associates spread across 37 states; the company ships 42 million packages annually from its fulfillment centers.

In 2003, Redcats USA recognized the need to reduce ergonomic risk factors associated with rising injury rates. "Our objectives were to enhance the awareness in all of our associates on the critical role they play in practicing safe work methods, identifying and reporting hazards, and eliminating risks," explains Chip E. Edgington, Executive Vice President of Operations for Redcats USA.

Redcats USA enlisted the help of Humantech to develop a sustainable ergonomics process. Workers' compensation data was reviewed to establish areas of ergonomic concern. Capital resources were allocated to execute the initiatives that would have a strong impact on engineering and administrative controls within the company's fulfillment centers.

Specific tactics that were initiated include ergonomics training for all new hires, ergonomic design guidelines training for engineers and maintenance staff, management awareness training, and a train-the-trainer program. The company also began using an associate ergonomics handbook and supplemental materials to reinforce logical ergonomics concepts.

Since Redcats USA initiated its new ergonomics process in 2004, it has realized an 80% reduction in workers' compensation costs. "We have now sustained the enhancements to our health and safety management system for over three years and continue to show improvements. Each year has produced double-digit reductions in our incident rate, number of OSHA recordables, and lost work days," said Jennifer Irwin, Corporate Manager of Health and Safety for Redcats USA.



Redcats Ergo Process Timeline

- 2004**
 - Injury root cause and trend analysis
 - Union and management collaborative approach
 - Ergonomics management system development
 - Ergonomics training for on-site teams
 - Risk assessments with safety teams
- 2005**
 - Effective hazard controls deployed
 - Ergonomic design guidelines training
 - Supervisor training and custom poster series
- 2006**
 - Full union endorsement of program
 - Awareness training for all associates
 - Internal audits of program effectiveness

A key component of the company's success in this initiative, according to Edgington, is the strong management commitment and the efforts of all associates in the organization. "While presenting new initiatives can be a challenge, if the objective is clear, then the agenda will follow. Communicating the benefits and value of the program to all levels is critical, along with consistent follow-through on objectives," he explains. "Providing an environment that is optimistic for success and effective communication on the endeavors produces continued support."

The first quarter of 2008 proves to maintain the strong trend of sustaining this effective program with continued reductions in the health and safety statistics. As of March 2008, the fulfillment centers are happy to report a year-to-date reduction of 60% of OSHA Recordables and a 100% reduction of lost time injuries. Edgington adds, "We believe that our health and safety management system is a living document changing as needed to provide the best support to our health and safety needs."



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About Humantech

For 30 years, global companies have relied on Humantech for workplace improvements. By combining the science of ergonomics and our unique 30-Inch View®—where people, work, and environment intersect—we deliver practical solutions that impact safety, quality, and productivity. At Humantech, we believe people make productivity happen. The 30-Inch View is a registered service mark of Humantech, Inc., 2008.