



IPA

For one of Australia's largest recruitment companies, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) inductions have always presented challenges: processing a large volume of staff, verifying and tracking candidates' training records and matching the induction to the nature of the work. Carmel Norris, General Manager at IPA Personnel, tells how an industry-designed online solution has solved these issues for the company and given IPA the certainty it needs to keep its staff safe.

As one of the largest Australian-owned recruitment agencies in the country, operating in six states, IPA inducts a high volume of temporary candidates for a wide range of industries. In one day, an office could be sending 10 to 15 candidates to clients and processing as many as 150 OHS assessments every month. As a result, keeping track of who has had adequate OHS training has traditionally been very difficult.

"In the past, people just turned up with a piece of paper to show they had done their general OHS induction. But we couldn't really be sure if they understood or absorbed the information from the safety video or the brochure they took home. I believe that answering five questions in five minutes just isn't adequate OHS training," Ms Norris said.

With the introduction of WorkPro, IPA has been able to process candidates more quickly, whilst recording their OHS assessment results in a centralised database for future tracking and proof of training. IPA subsequently established a policy that no candidate will be placed unless it can be verified that they are registered and have done their training with WorkPro.

"Aside from providing assurance that the people we send out to the field are aware of OHS issues, WorkPro has provided us with an edge because having all the data we need on candidates in one place saves a lot of time, both for us and the candidate. The online nature of WorkPro means candidates can complete their registration and training at home, before they meet with their recruiter at IPA, leaving time for other important issues.

"We look forward to the next stage of development when the WorkPro assessment highlights those questions which they have answered incorrectly. Currently it requires candidates to re-sit the questions until they obtain a certain percentage. This means we can spend quality time with the candidate when they do come into our office and means we will be able help them in the weaker areas of their assessment," she said.



Time is not the only critical factor saved but cost as well. Ms. Norris added that they achieve savings on insurance with WorkPro because having an effective OHS induction program means fewer claims from safety-related incidents and, in turn, lower insurance premiums.

'If we can ensure our candidates are aware and understand what it means to look after their own safety, then we can minimise the risk of workplace injury and the chance of increasing insurance premiums. By completing a Workpro induction at least we know we've done what we can to ensure our candidates are being educated from the outset and have safety precautions on their radar before being placed in the job,' she said.

IPA in Perth first trialled WorkPro for three months beginning in November 2006 and has been using it permanently in the last two months, predominantly for jobs in the white-collar, commercial, industrial, hospitality and retail areas. It has also solved the problem of tailoring training to each industry.

"Our industrial division was particularly sensitive to OHS issues because there were so many areas of concern for them – from the different gradings of safety licenses to the various types of harnesses that need to be used by workers. Because WorkPro has tests tailored for specific industries, we can recommend that our candidates complete training packs and modules which are relevant to the industry in which they work.

"A construction worker operating a forklift will have a different training module to that of an office or call centre worker. We have found that both the candidates and the companies are impressed by these targeted programs – they get the sense that we are listening to them and that we are catering for their specific needs," Ms. Norris said.

"There is no doubt about the tangible benefits of using WorkPro but even more important for us is the knowledge that we are doing the right thing by everybody: both our candidates and our clients. We can sleep at night knowing that the people we are deploying have done the right OHS training and we look forward to the time when WorkPro data is integrated directly into the IPA system," she concluded.