

Shaving Worker's Compensation Costs

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Workers' compensation (WC) costs are often a significant company expense. We all want to improve our bottom line wherever possible and quite often there are multiple solutions. Here are five strategies with proven results:

Studies show a return on investment of \$3 to \$6 for every dollar spent for employee fitness or injury prevention training including seminars, fitness stations, back pain DVDs and foot orthotics. I've found that once employees are armed with the knowledge of why they are experiencing injuries and given strategies to correct them, they are motivated to take charge of their issues. No-one wants to live and work with pain.

Shop around for WC coverage. This little tip alone can save bundles. If you don't belong to a trade association, check one out and see if the cost of joining is defrayed by the savings they can offer on WC premiums. Otherwise, if you haven't compared insurers in the past two years, now would be a good time to do so. Insurer's are no different than other companies. They need your business. Letting them know you are comparing prices will often help drive your costs down.

If you haven't already done so, begin tracking injury causes to find their roots. Accident investigations are crucial for not only correcting the work area or behavior in question but also showing your adjuster you are serious about reducing injuries on the job. This is often reflected in your premium adjustments.

Ergonomics is a big word for a sometimes simple solution. Interventions can be as simple as adjusting chair height or minor alterations of a work station. Quite often you'll find that an ergonomic adjustment to a problem work area can improve production, reduce injuries and improve product quality. Ergonomic solutions don't need to be costly; they just need to be smart.

Over 70% of substance abusers hold a full or part-time job and are eight times more likely to use the healthcare system. Workers under the influence are more likely to show up late, become involved in accidents or affect productivity. Implementing a substance abuse program can help you help your employees while potentially reducing WC premiums and your bottom line.

Some of these interventions will take time to flow through to your premium adjustments. A WC solution must be thought of in long term payoffs. In the meantime, your company will benefit from higher morale, increased productivity, improved quality and fewer accidents on the job.

Rick Olderman is a physical therapist and owner of Z-Line Training and provides motivational injury prevention seminars, employee fitness program development and strategies for reducing workers' compensation costs. To find more information about these or other programs, visit www.zlinetraining.com or call 303-477-4212 to set up a free initial consultation for your company.*

*Free initial consultations are available in the Denver Metro area only.