

Executive Summary

Injury Management Campaign Formative Research

July – December 2007

Introduction

In February 2007, the WorkCover WA Board approved the commissioning of research to underpin the planning, design and implementation of an Injury Management (IM) Campaign as described in the WorkCover WA 2007-08 Business Plan.

The primary research objective was to inform the development of a communication strategy to enable WorkCover WA (WCWA) to lead stakeholders in working towards reducing the social and economic impact of workplace injuries in Western Australia through effective IM and return to work (RTW) strategies. The research included the understanding of how the current system operates in its entirety and how the various parties operate separately and in unison.

The Board recognises the importance of independent research in establishing credibility with stakeholders and TNS Social Research was appointed in July 2007 to conduct this formative research.

Key Findings

1. The current IM system in Western Australia is fractured.
 - The system operates with a competitive ethos, rather than a cooperative one with stakeholders blaming other parties for problems occurring during the life of the claim.
 - Employers, medical practitioners and workers hold some conflicting and contradictory perceptions, which can translate to unhelpful behaviours.
2. Stakeholders do not have a shared vision in terms of the overall purpose of IM and recognition of their different perspectives.
 - Moving to a cooperative ethos involves changing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs at the 'grass roots' level.
 - The focus of workers' compensation and injury management should be 'return to work'.
 - The behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of all parties play an important role in determining the success of IM systems and return to work (RTW) strategies.
3. There is a willingness amongst stakeholders to collaborate and work cooperatively to support the RTW of injured workers in Western Australia.
4. The following areas have been found to enhance commitment to and success of IM systems:
 - education and collaboration of key parties
 - early notification of injuries
 - early provision of interventions
 - workplace-based rehabilitation such as modified work
 - stakeholder collaboration

Bottom Line: These findings are consistent with the body of available research and recent reviews.

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a 3 year Injury Management Campaign based on social marketing principles that will strive to achieve a workplace culture in Western Australia that supports the timely return to work of injured workers in line with best practice.
 - Social marketing offers a strategic approach to influencing attitudes, perceptions and ultimately behaviour of identified markets. It involves using the tools and technologies adapted from commercial marketing.
2. Make the following areas a focus of the campaign:
 - raising awareness by increasing knowledge and influencing attitudes and beliefs.
 - building supportive environments by creating opportunities for cooperation and supporting/promoting the capacity of services available.
 - supporting sustained behaviour change to achieve best practice injury management.
3. Develop workplans with specific strategies for the priority target markets of medical practitioners, employers and workers that:
 - clarify roles of primary target markets
 - promote accountability and transparency
 - foster cooperation and communication
 - disseminate and promote best practice guidelines
 - define obligations for various parties
 - educate and inform
 - promote safety net and availability
4. Conduct quantitative baseline measures prior to commencement of strategies
 - Ensures campaign effectiveness can be measured.

Bottom Line WorkCover WA is the ideal organisation to motivate a change in behaviour to meet best practice and legislative compliance, where return to work is the goal associated with injury management.