

The economical facilities for a safety management system in an ethical approach

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Health and safety at work (OH&S) represent more and more a social issue as well as a competitive factor for companies. In fact the correct management of OH&S elements lead to a reduction of the cost associated to injuries and occupational disease, and can represent a considerable return on the prevention investment.

In a broader view the real challenge is going towards a social responsibility approach, to develop an integrated management system, focused on a “total quality”, which would be an investment with both relevant social and economic return.

However, it is difficult to convince employers and decision-makers of the profitability of improving working conditions.

An effective way is to make financial and economic estimations; at the same time there is the need to provide economic and financial incentives to enhance methods and instruments for improving OH&S and corporate social responsibility behaviour.

A Safety Management System (SMS) is one of the most powerful methods to achieve this important tool, actually not widely understood among the employers.

Therefore, INAIL, Italian Workers' Compensation Authority, could represent one of the means capable to diffuse the SMS adoption, by granting a premium reduction for “safe companies”.

Aim of INAIL is to offer a new integrated form of assurance, a global protection for all workers, considered the focal point of all activities.

With a view to contributing to the reduction of accidents, INAIL has implemented a number of important tools to continually monitor employment and accident trends; in such a way it provides training, advice to small and medium size enterprises in the field of prevention and funds companies that decide to invest in the improvement of safety.

Among these funding activities, INAIL, since 2000, provides a premium reduction to companies which adopt a SMS or a CSR policy; the reduction is 10% or 5% depending on the size of the company.

Furthermore, the new and innovative law on occupational health and safety claims a modern organisational and managerial approach, focusing on a SMS as a tool for enhancing occupational health and safety, in a wider ethical overview.