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Championing WSH for a strong foundation

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Boustead Projects spreads the word to all its subcontractors

BOUSTEAD Projects has been a champion in reinforcing the importance of workplace safety and health (WSH) for the construction industry.

A bizSAFE Mentor since 2011, the SGX mainboard-listed company shares its excellent WSH system and practices with its vendors.

Boustead Projects provides industrial real estate solutions, including financial and project feasibility studies, sourcing for land, master planning and concept design on architecture.

It provides mechanical and electrical services, as well as fast-track design and construction, serving sectors such as logistics and warehousing, aviation, electronics, manufacturing, chemicals and food.

Mr Howard How, Boustead Projects' environment, health and safety director, says "WSH brings out the best from the company to ensure our sustainability."

"It makes good business sense as worker health and safety are the core foundations of any organisation."

"A safe and healthy workforce will create a safer work environment, and hence have better safety standards with lesser accidents and downtime."

Positive outcomes

Always looking for ways to improve workplace safety, the company embarked on the bizSAFE journey almost nine years ago.

In 2008, the company invited the WSH Council to present bizSAFE to its management and subcontractors.

Boustead Projects followed up with training for

the subcontractors in order to help them kick-start their safety efforts.

"From there, there was no turning back as more subcontractors saw the positive benefits of the programme and have continued their journey to obtain safety standards as high as the bizSAFE STAR level," says Mr How.

Boustead Projects was recognized as a bizSAFE Partner that same year.

bizSAFE Partners are large organisations that provide motivation for small and medium-sized enterprises to join the bizSAFE programme.

"We found the bizSAFE programme to be a systematic approach in improving all our safety and health standards," he adds.

The company's efforts have paid off, with its accident frequency rate lower than the national average for the past eight years.

As a bizSAFE Mentor, the company provides assistance and training to all its subcontractors and to achieve bizSAFE Levels 1 to 3.

Of its subcontractors, 88 per cent have attained bizSAFE STAR, which means that they meet occupational health and safety standards such as SS506 or OHSAS 18001 and are certified by an approved WSH auditor.

Boustead Projects' subcontractors have achieved bizSAFE Level 3, that is, they have implemented risk management.

A collective effort

Safety is an organisation-wide endeavour.

The management has to be committed to building good WSH and ensure WSH efforts extend to the supervisory and worker levels.

Inspections and meetings are carried out at Boustead Projects at daily, weekly and monthly

intervals depending on the nature of the agenda, with findings channelled to all supervisors and workers.

For example, updates to WSH regulatory requirements are disseminated at weekly WSH coordination meetings.

Every employee undergoes training in WSH. The company currently has safety officers studying for specialist diplomas in WSH, coordinators for advanced certificates and supervisors attending building construction safety supervisor courses.

All site personnel have to attend the construction safety course for project managers.

Since November last year, Boustead Projects has centralised its safety induction training, working with QMT Industrial and Safety, a Ministry of Manpower accredited training provider, to improve the quality of the training.

It also conducts occupational first aid courses with Agape First Aid, another accredited training provider.

“We want to be able to monitor each and every WSH status and ensure that the implementation of risk management is at ground zero and not just a paper exercise,”

says Mr How.

Preventive measures

Boustead Projects has introduced an online system called iBOSS, where online bookings and records for its safety documentation such as risk assessments, facial recognition data and productivity are stored.

It will launch its online Permit to Work system this year.

Each subcontractor will then have to brief workers daily on the risk assessment of activities captured in the online submissions.

Other measures include using behaviour safety observation checklists at its worksites to ensure safe working behaviour and conditions.

The company has also introduced an innovation and improvement incentive scheme to encourage its people and subcontractors to generate ideas and improvements to make the workplace even safer and better for everyone.

“Our subcontractors look to us for guidance and assistance in order to achieve good safety standards for their companies so that workers can work safely at the workplace,” says Mr How.