

Occupational Health and Safety Beyond the Risk Register

Most businesses have found themselves crippled by Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) non-compliance cases; or irreparably damaged by tragedies that could have been avoidable.



The human, social and economic costs of occupational accidents, injuries and diseases have long been the cause for concern at all levels at the workplace. Measures and strategies designed to prevent, control, reduce or eliminate occupational hazards and risks have been developed and applied continuously over the years to keep pace with technological and economic changes. Yet, occupational accidents and diseases are still too frequent and their cost in terms of human suffering and economic burden continues to be significant.

According to the 2020/21 Department of Employment and Labour Annual Report, the compensation claims made in relation to OHS in 2019/20 were 82,526 amounting to approximately R3 230 832 373. In the scramble for income, the pressures of increasingly stiff competition due to Covid 19 impact, may tend to deflect the attention from the long-term economic benefits of a safe and healthy working environment.

Some of the most common occupational health and safety hazards in the Gaming industry include:

- Second-hand smoke in casinos (smoking areas), which may increase the risk of lung and breast cancer, amongst others.
- Burns - In casinos, burns most commonly occur in preparation or delivery of foods, beverages, or oils since liquid or steam at only 68°C can burn or scald the skin.
- Violence and threat to personal safety - Patrons may become aggressive and agitated toward the staff or other players, potentially leading to assaults and other threats to personal safety.
- Theft & Robberies - Casinos also frequently have large amounts of money onsite increasing the risk of robberies and threaten personal safety.

Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 in South Africa

Due to injuries within the workplace, and the increase of litigation and responsibilities of employers, businesses are required by law to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993. The purpose of the Act is to provide for the health and safety of persons at work and for the health and safety of persons in connection with the use of plant and machinery, as well as the protection of persons other than



FIG 1. Duties & Responsibilities: OHS Act

persons at work against hazards to health and safety arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at work. With this comes duties and responsibilities for everyone in the workplace as highlighted in fig 1 Above.

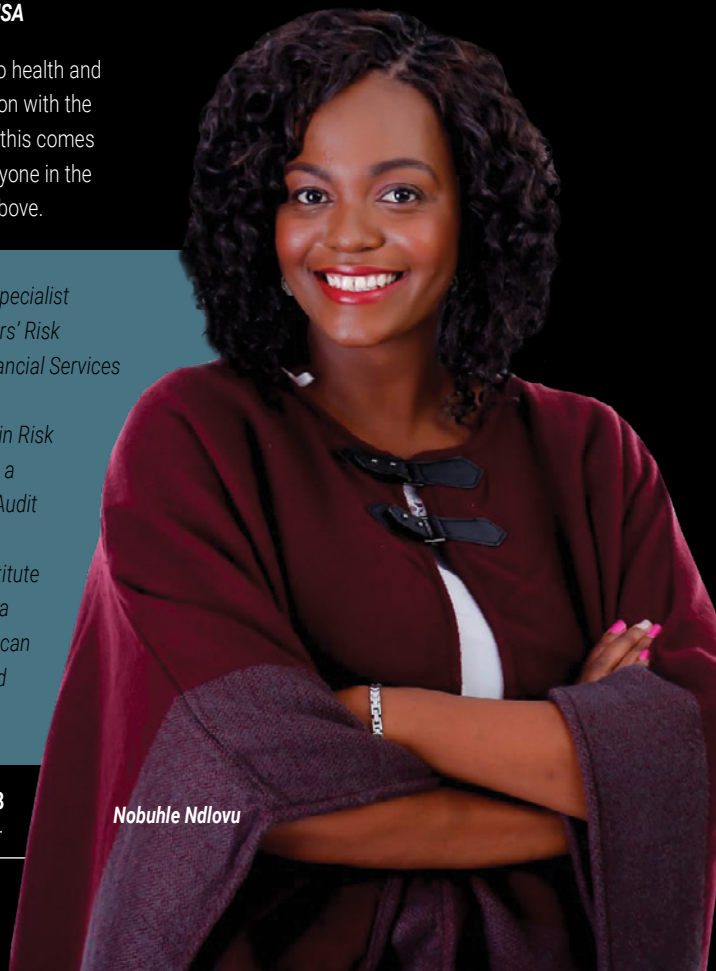
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Tone at the top, Tune in the middle, Rhythm on the dance floor

Top management has the ultimate responsibility for the OHS programme in the organisation. Total commitment on the part of top management to making OHS a priority is essential to a successful OHS programme. It is only when management plays a positive role that workers view such programmes as a worthwhile and sustainable exercise. The boardroom has the influence, power and resources to take initiatives and to set the pattern for a safe and healthy working environment.

Middle management and supervisors are obviously the key individuals in such programmes because they are in constant contact with the employees. As safety officers, they act in a staff capacity to help administer safety policy, to provide technical information, to help with training

and to supply programme material.

Employee participation within the organisation is an essential element of prevention of accidents and diseases. Workers should, while performing their work, cooperate in order to enable their employer to fulfil their obligations. Employee participation has been identified as a key precondition of successful OHS management and a major contributing factor in the reduction of occupational diseases and injuries. The full participation of workers in any OHS programmes designed for their benefit will not only ensure the efficacy of such measures but will also make it possible to sustain an acceptable level of health and safety at a reasonable cost.

In conclusion, OHS management should not be treated as a separate process but be integrated into other workplace activities. Its functions and procedures should be embedded in other

management system and business processes.

Penalties for failure to comply with the prescripts of the OHS Act include fines and imprisonment with a criminal record. It is important to know that where non-compliance leads to injury or a casualty, the employer could be held liable. There are several challenges which may be faced in implementing, promoting, and maintaining health and safety compliance i.e., costs, resources etc, but once the necessary steps are taken to ensure a healthy and safe working environment, there are numerous benefits which can be reaped by both employers and employees, in the form of reduced illness related costs, increased productivity & revenue, and consequently creation of a health and safety culture.

- *Compensation Fund Annual Report 2019/20*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993*

From Luggage Porter to General Manager of Sun International's only Beachfront Casino Resort

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"During December 2021 our room nights sold rose to 99% of December 2019, the closest metric we have before the pandemic began," he says. "What is interesting to note is that the beginning of December was buoyed by an increase in conferencing business, but by mid-December our guests were upcountry domestic travellers booking holidays for their families. They also booked longer stays with the minimum period being three days."

He credits good rates and offering value for money as a key factor in the resort's success. "We focused on what was within our control, which is how rates became the success story of the month."

He believes that pent-up demand from the domestic market and easing of Covid-19 restrictions are the other factors which will

help drive the recovery in the domestic tourism sector this year.

It is this drive, passion and focus that fuels a man who is family-orientated and describes his greatest achievement as his four children – one daughter and three sons.

He is a keen sportsman, enjoying running and surfing and in his youth turned out for Mamelodi Sundowns Under 21s. He is a huge supporter of the Brazilians, while his overseas team obviously supports Sundowns locally and internationally, he is an Arsenal fan. In rugby season, Peter's allegiance is split between the Sharks and the EP Kings.

Musically he is a fan of Mi Casa and lists their song La Vida as his personal favourite, while he has come to love the seaside. "Anywhere that has gorgeous white sandy beaches."

Has he never considered other careers? "Not really. Hospitality offers me a job that

changes me all the time. It is a fast-paced environment where I am doing varied tasks each day. I am on my feet and moving around a lot which helps me think, feel, and react better. And I am not stuck in a cubicle all day."

For those seeking to start out in the industry he has the following sage advice. "There are many and varied job roles available in hospitality. Waiters and Chefs often come to mind when one mentions a career in hospitality. In truth, the hospitality industry is one of the largest sectors in the modern world, with enough variety in job roles for any kind of person, from the creative person to the corporate-minded."

And travel the world. "From a young age, I wanted to travel and see the world. Hospitality became the best way to fund my travels and extend my qualifications in the industry. It helps grow you as a person."