

RISK ASSESSMENT AS THE BASIS FOR CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

1. Case metadata

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2. Organisations involved

Zdravilišče Radenci d.o.o.

3. Description of the case

3.1. Introduction

Terme Radenci is an independent company established in 1990. The main operation of Terme Radenci d.o.o. is resort tourism. Radenci provides medical, catering, and auxiliary services as well as a recreational swimming pool. The spa resort complex includes four hotels with 641 beds total, accompanying buildings such as health stations with a laboratory, a health and relaxation centre, a thermal-recreational centre, a tennis centre, the thermal swimming pool complex Banovci and the hotel Jerusalem in Ljutomer. The company employs 300 people.

In Slovenia, there are 15 natural spa resorts, and Terme Radenci with a long-standing tradition is ranked in the larger spa resort category, being the first spa in Slovenia to obtain the international acknowledgement "Maison de Qualité", as well as the first resort with the certificate ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 – Safety and Health at Work Management Policy (since 2005). It is also the only Slovenian spa that entered the contest for the Business Excellence Award. Since the company complies with the requirements of the mentioned standards, it is the leading one in this sector, and the leading one in Slovenia in the field of the treatment of cardiovascular diseases.



The management of Terme Radenci has clearly been determining its vision, mission and values for over 15 years, and in 1997, it decided to introduce quality management systems according to the ISO 9001 standard. All company directors and managers have been actively engaged throughout the process by defining the strategy, development tasks and management reviews, and by the implementation of goals originating from the quality systems and other systems, introduced by the company. The management strives to raise the employee awareness as to how important it is to meet the requirements of employees, guests/customers and legal requirements, defines policies and goals, performs management reviews and provides the required resources for all these processes.

3.2. Aims

The company's mission and vision is to assure a safe and healthy working environment, thereby preventing work-related accidents, which might result in injuries and health disorders. The minimum goal of Terme Radenci was to comply with the legal provisions in the areas of occupational health and safety. Adoption of risk assessment is a legal obligation for all companies. The management decided to introduce a methodological (project) management of OSH by using modern standards as an upgrade of the existing OSH legislation.

3.3. What was done, and how?

Occupational health and safety became an integral part of the general company management system and was included in all business processes:

Processes are divided in three basic sets:

1. **Umbrella processes** to ensure a successful management of basic processes through sub-processes and supporting processes and their improvement. The management process as an umbrella process links all processes through decisions about the activities within a particular process. Individual procedures or manners of management as well as applied tools are determined in the following chapters of the quality manual (strategy, vision, mission, values, quality goals, management reviews, internal communication, internal follow-ups, corrective, preventive measures, etc.).
2. **Basic processes** to ensure the realisation of services and creation of added value.
3. **Supporting processes** to provide and maintain the resources for the execution of basic processes. Resources are financial sources, competent personnel, suitable infrastructure and information technology, and natural and other specific sources. Required information is information by all interested parties about their requirements and expectations, contractual obligations, standards and legal provisions.

In Terme Radenci d.o.o. there were identified the following processes: 1 umbrella process, 6 basic processes with 4 sub-processes and 8 supporting processes. The following parties were involved in these processes:

Umbrella process: MANAGEMENT

Basic processes: HOTEL INDUSTRY with a **sub-process** RECEPTION and HOUSEHOLD, CATERING with a **sub-process** FOOD AND SERVICE, WELLNESS AND HEALTH CARE, SWIMMING POOL and CAMPSITE.

Supporting processes: SALE, PURCHASING, ENTERTAINMENT, TECHNICAL SERVICES, FINANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES, INTERNAL AUDIT, CONTROLLING AND INFORMATICS, and SAFETY (which includes safety and health at work, the environmental protection from fires, and protection of guests).

Occupational health and safety policy

The occupational health and safety policy is defined and adopted by the management. As a rule, the policy suitability is reviewed at least once per year as a part of the management review.

In its policy, Terme Radenci d.o.o. obliges to do the following:

- **consider** legal requirements at its work that refer to the company, and other requirements, which the company determined in relation to occupational health and safety;
- prevent injuries and health disorders and continually improve the management system and effects of occupational health and safety;
- carry out activities to ensure a **permanent improvement** within its annual plans in the area of occupational health and safety, and to search for improvements (planning). The primary focus is the prevention of any safety problems as far as this is possible;
- **incorporate** requirements for occupational health and safety for each new activity,
- if possible, to **substitute** hazardous substances with less hazardous ones;
- regularly follow up the occupational health and safety conditions and **take steps** for prevention and improvement;
- to make all persons who work under supervision of the company familiar with the policy in order to make them aware of their obligations in the area of occupational health and safety;
- **inform** the trade union and **trade union organiser for occupational health and safety** about the adoption of new rules or organisational provisions which concern the valid legislation and **consult** with them;
- **cooperate** with interested parties, thereby contributing to the success of common efforts for which the company invests in the improvement of occupational health and safety;
- **ensure** all necessary resources for the implementation of occupational health and safety standards;
- make a **documented** occupational health and safety policy available to interested parties, take care that the policy is **implemented and maintained** and its suitability periodically **revised**.

Planning in the area of occupational health and safety

Terme Radenci already has an established procedure for the identification of hazards, risk assessment and decision making about steps for risk management. In the case of changes in hazards, risks, organisation or the occupational health and safety management system, the company tries to anticipate such changes before they appear.

The procedures consider:

- all legal requirements connected with risk assessment as well as performance of all tasks required for its management;
- regular supervision of the existing condition by all responsible persons;
- managers and employees inform the occupational health and safety engineer about all changes and foreseen changes, novelties and discrepancies in the work process on an ongoing basis;
- incorporation of an occupational health and safety engineer in the planning of work spaces, processes, work equipment, installation, instructions for work, organisation of work, including their adaptation to abilities of an individual;
- activities of all who have access to a workplace, including contractors and visitors;
- behaviour, abilities and other human factors;
- identification of hazards which originate outside of a workplace and might be hazardous to health and safety of the persons that the company takes care of;

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- hazards that can appear near to a workplace as a consequence of work-related activities and supervised by the organisation (environment);
- infrastructure, equipment and materials in a workplace which are supplied by the organisation and others.

The methodology for identifying hazards and risk assessment is developed independently and is determined with regard to the work process. It acts in a preventive manner (proactively) and not reparative (reactively):

- it defines risk classification and identification of those risks which should be eliminated or managed as defined in the planning procedure;
- it considers past experiences and goals of selected measures for risk management;
- it has defined a criteria for the determination of requirements regarding work equipment, identification of needed training or development of supervision over the activity;
- it defines a supervised implementation of required measures, thereby ensuring efficiency and their timely introduction.

Comprehensive risk assessment and management is carried out on a regular basis with the participation of the workers. Special attention is paid to older, young, pregnant and disabled workers through individualized risk assessment and management. Health and safety issues are also taken into account when planning workspaces, processes, equipment, installations and work organization. The results of these assessments and analyses are used to set health and safety goals for the company. In addition to prevention measures, the company also focuses on workplace health promotion, including healthy nutrition, physical activities, giving up addictions etc. Based on the proposal by the competence centre Safety, the management adopted the following framework goals in 2005, which are revised every three years:

1. A decrease in frequency of injuries by 5%
2. Keep the status at zero (0) fire occurrences
3. A decrease in negative influences on employee safety and health, and work equipment

To achieve these goals programs are being laid out every year, which act as a supplement to the legal requirements in the area of occupational health and safety, and fire safety (see table 1). The basis for these programs is represented by Risk assessment and List of measures.

Table 1: Number of programs by year and performance, financial framework for the program implementation

	Year	Number of programmes	% performance	Financial funds
1.	2005	22	82	33.650 €
2.	2006	10	90	322.100 €
3.	2007	10	80	250.000 €
4.	2008	16	70 (programs were not finished yet)	

1. Year 2005: An ergonomics program was developed for employees working behind display screens and for protection against employee infection. A workshop was organized where in-company physiotherapists instructed employees on how to properly arrange their workplaces and correct sitting postures, and showed them physical stretching exercises in their work environment and breathing relaxation exercises. Written instructions and included pictures were prepared as well.

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2. Year 2006: In the year 2006, the company joined the project Fit for Work, which was organized by the Ministry of Education and the Clinical Institute for Occupational Health. Within the framework of the educational program, which consists of an introductory lecture and seven modules (Employee Health Analysis, Prevention of Work-Related Injuries, Ergonomic Measures on a Workplace, Prevention of Loads due to Exposure to Chemical Risks, Organizational Measures in the Working Environment, Controlling Stress, Prevention of Using Psychoactive Substances on a Workplace), which took 100 pedagogical hours in total, two employees were trained as health promoters (among the first 16 in Slovenia). They successfully apply their acquired knowledge in the processes, which results in a decreased number of injuries and higher responsibility of employees for their health. To complement health promotion, they proceeded with health promotions among employees with lectures about healthy nutrition, addiction to alcohol and other psychoactive substances, and employee training about the correct way of lifting loads, stretching exercises on a workplace and outside of it.

3. Year 2007: Within the framework of the project "Let's Improve Our Health and Condition", whose aim was to decrease absenteeism, workshops were organized and interviews were made with employees who were on a sick leave often. In this project, Terme Radenci d.o.o. collaborated with the company Visit-a d.o.o., which carried out the workshops. They wished for an individual to face their illness as a part of their lives and offered them certain basic ways to surpass personal distress because of a change in the quality of their life. In individual sets of material they include certain practical key cases, which are noted for their excellent results despite a handicap.

All sets of material were presented in a positive, powerful and motivational manner, which encourages even the most embittered persons to change their way of thinking. Three workshops were organized, of which one was carried out for managers. 58 participants attended these workshops and had interviews made by external and in-company interviewers. Certain employees were directed to seek help in specialized institutions, or the workshop leaders helped them in arranging their workplaces, promoted good relations within a team, or reassigned them to other workplaces. Results show an actual decrease of sick leave levels with workshop participants.

A special methodology was used for risk assessment at workplaces where display screens are used - 36 workplaces were included in the assessment. Where conditions deviated from indicators defined for a healthy workplace, certain steps were introduced to eliminate such deviations. Furthermore, a methodology for the estimation of hazardous substances was developed to be carried out in the following year.

In 2007, measurements of natural gas radon, a low-radioactive gas, were carried out as part of the National program for Protection Against Natural Radiation. In indoor swimming pools, this gas can be present due to utilization of natural thermo-mineral water from the wells. Measurements were done by the Institute Jožef Štefan, and the results showed that contents of radon were considerably lower from the prescribed limits, therefore special measures with regard to the employee protection against radiation in indoor facilities were not required.

In 2007, Terme Radenci collaborated in the European project Move Europe. The project promotes the significance of health across Europe.

4. Year 2008: In this year, healthy food projects and physical activity projects were underway, to which Terme Radenci contributed particularly with their specialists. There was also an anti-smoking campaign, in which Terme Radenci collaborated with the Institute of Health Protection and the CINDI organization.

Their employees can use thermal swimming pools for free in order to maintain and strengthen their physical condition and receive discounts for other medical services. The personnel department, the health personnel employed at Terme Radenci, the safety engineer, the nutritionist and the entertainment team are all involved in the promotion of a healthy working environment.

The company also participated in the preventive campaign of the Month of Safety and Health at Work. The campaign included:

- Raising employee awareness – the issue of the bulletin *Srečko Advises and Warns*

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- Additional training courses for employees to identify risks to safety and health
- Systematic detection of hazardous events – near miss
- A Safety Conference: "Good Safety Culture Reduces Risks"

3.4. What was achieved?

The effects of a comprehensive and systematic approach to the area of occupational health and safety are:

- a reduced number and seriousness of injuries;
- sick leaves due to injury represent 3.9% of all sick leaves in the company, which is far below the average in Slovenia (9.0%);
- a reduced exposure to risk factors.

In 2007, there were 10 injuries in total, of which 8 injuries necessitated sick leave. The number is lower than in 2006 (2006 - 23.7 days sick leave/injury; 2007 – 16.5 days sick leave/injury) (see table 2). If compared to other companies in the same sector, the result Terme Radenci has achieved was better:

Table 2: Seriousness of injuries

	Terme Radenci	Terme A	Terme B	Hotels C
Seriousness	16.5	17.4	17.5	33.4

(S – Seriousness = number of lost work days/injury)

Other injuries were caused at a hazardous event, which did not result in sick leave. However, it was still analysed and certain measures were introduced to avoid another such event. The number of sick leaves due to an injury represents 3.9% of all sick leaves in the company, which is far under the Slovenian average (see table 3).

Table 3: % sick leave due to work-related injury

	Terme Radenci	Terme A	Terme B	Slovenia (2006)
% sick leave due to work-related injuries	3.9	3.5	7.5	9.0

(% SL= number of sick leave hours due to work-related injury/number of total sick leave hours)

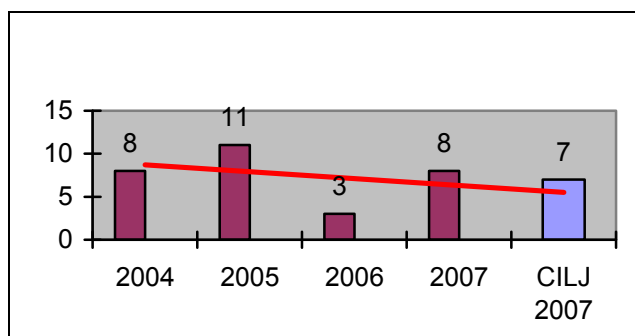
Comparison of number of injuries by year is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Work-related injuries

	2004	2005	2006	2007
No. of employees	348	334	317	300
No. of effective hours	609,470	614,145	569,074	519,063
Numbers of total work-related injuries	15	18	11	10
Numbers of injuries with sick leave	8	11	3	8
Numbers of sick leave days due to work-related injury	161	166	71	132
OSHA LT-IR	2.62	3.58	1.05	3.08

(LT – IR number of work-related accidents with sick leave/number of work x 200,000)

Figure 1. Number of work-related injuries with sick leave



The number of injuries in 2007 was higher than in 2006, but in a 4-year period Terme Radenci experienced a descending trend. Injuries are minor, therefore a programme is being prepared on how to keep injured employees in the working process (temporary reassignment, training, etc.) (see figure 1).

3.5. Success factors

Because of a permanent employee education/training process, the goal of the company was accomplished, which is to enhance the satisfaction of employees and achieve a higher added value at the same time.

3.6. Further information

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3.7. *Transferability*

The described example is a good example of a comprehensive approach to health and safety at work regulation in the company. Solutions that are used in this case can also be used in other companies, primarily in terms of relationship management and employees to OHS.

3.8. *References, resources:*

Information provided by the company in the framework of the Good Practice Award Competition 2008/2009

http://osha.europa.eu/fop/slovenia/sl/EK2008-2009/dobra_praksa.htm

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