

## bizSAFE CONVENTION 2019

# Education is key to keeping workers safe

Interior design firm Jim & Hall's shares how it builds a safety-first thinking culture

BY TAY HWEE PENG

Cultivating a safe workplace culture boils down to the individual taking responsibility for his or her own safety. When that happens, the rest falls in place naturally.

"Our safety approach is to educate, not exercise punishments at the first instance of non-compliance," says Mr Mok Thy Wai, the director of interior design firm Jim & Hall's.

"You cannot be watching them 24 hours a day. The minute the safety officer turns his or her back, the workers can choose not to follow safety rules. They know when they can take a chance," the 57-year-old adds.

This is why it is so important to keep drilling into them the message of workplace safety.

"The workers themselves have to understand why safety is so important. It must become second nature for them to follow safety rules and be mindful of the potential risks they themselves could be exposed to in their course of work," says the father of three.

Jim & Hall's, a winner of the bizSAFE Enterprise Exemplary Award (BEA) for the second consecutive year, has achieved a 100-per-cent clean safety record since it was established in 1989.

Busting a commonly held myth that workplace safety measures are applicable only to construction workites, Mr Mok says: "Any place of work, in or out of the office, should be considered a workplace."

His firm focuses mainly on corporate office interior fit out works for multi-national companies. Its customers include Bloomberg, Oracle, Singapore Airlines and HSBG.

Among other things, Jim & Hall's holds regular safety cam-



Jim & Hall's director Mok Thy Wai (second from right) having a safety discussion with his staff. PHOTO: TED OEH

aigns to spread awareness about workplace safety among its employees, clients, vendors, sub-contractors and the workmen working on its projects at various sites across Asia.

He adds that those at the management level needs to take the lead by getting involved in safety campaigns. "This shows that safety is everyone's business," he explains.

#### Spread awareness

Jim & Hall's also shares with its six regional offices across Asia the latest safety news it gets from the WSH Bulletin, a free electronic newsletter published by the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council.

"Although not all cases are relevant to our interior industry, they serve as a case study to remind everyone of the importance of safety and not take it for granted," says Mr Mok.

Even though the company regularly conducts spot checks at workites and imposes fines on repeat offenders, Mr Mok stresses that "the penalty system is set as a deterrent and we hardly need to issue fines at any of our sites".

He says that the safety officers at the sites mostly issue warnings, imposing fines only on repeat offenders.

As part of a fine-and-reward system that Jim & Hall's uses to motivate the people working on its projects, the money collected from the fines is used to fund prizes given out at monthly on-site safety quizzes.

Those who answer the questions correctly get rewards such as water bottles and shoe bags.

"Instead of punishment, we focus on motivation through participation/sharing sessions, acknowledging their views and implementing on the ground," says Mr Mok.

"Continual education of the workforce has always been our primary direction since the beginning, not enforcing compliance through punishments," he adds.

The firm, however, takes a hard-line approach against black sheep. "Some recalcitrant workers have been barred from the sites. If those who violate rules are seen getting away with their bad behaviour, it will only influence and embolden the others," says Mr Mok.



PHOTO: TED OEH

## Putting people first

TeamBuild Engineering & Construction integrates technology into its procedures to ensure workplace safety

BY NIVANI ELANGO VAN

Simulated walk-throughs of construction sequences, drones for safety inspections and capturing safety lapses with a smartphone — these are ways TeamBuild Engineering & Construction leverages technology to ensure that its workers remain safe.

The bizSAFE Enterprise Exemplary Award winner firmly believes that a good workplace safety record boosts employees' morale, and increases productivity and efficiency. In turn, the company gains confidence when projects of a high standard are delivered to clients.

"The best motivation for every individual is knowing that we place a high importance on the well-being and safety

of our staff," says Mr Johnny Lim (left), executive director at TeamBuild.

#### Using tech for safety

He adds: "We are constantly exploring the adoption and integration of technology into our construction processes to build smart workites that can help to track safety practices and compliances." To date, TeamBuild has put a mobile environment, health and safety (EHS) system in place that allows smartphones to capture real-time safety lapses on site, so that responses and follow-ups by the workers are almost immediate.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) also enables the study of site utilisation and construction sequencing planning, as well as crane capacity and fall prevention development processes to be studied and analysed ahead of work starting on a site. TeamBuild's latest technological adoption uses virtual reality to simulate construction processes so that building sequences can be planned effectively before their actual execution to work out potential hazards and put the necessary safety provisions in place.

Similarly, virtual reality can simulate work-at-height risks, which help workers to take the necessary steps to prevent associated accidents.

#### Success as a bizSAFE partner

Says Mr Lim: "We make a deliberate effort to reach out to our sub-contractors and employees to be part of our workplace safety and health journey. Through this, they are made more aware of safety requirements and are better equipped to handle the challenges on-site."

He attributes TeamBuild's successful safety management to the following key points: the right motivating factors, leadership commitment, and continual improvements to workplace safety and health.

"We place the safety of our staff as the single most important factor, and all our efforts are centred on achieving that," he says, adding: "Our management takes the lead by being directly involved in the policy, direction and even inspection of the sites."

TeamBuild's workplace safety and health team also constantly updates staff on new regulations and safety findings, to ensure that suitable control measures are introduced when necessary.

Mr Lim believes that it is important to not get complacent and let one's guard down, as that is when accidents happen.

"TeamBuild will continue to strengthen the safety culture in the organisation, and that takes time, teamwork, effort, persistence and commitment from everyone."

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