

The Grocon Culture: A Solid Foundation for Sustainable Business

The Highlights

- 81% reduction of Total Injury Frequency Rate from 2008 to 2011
- Increased work productivity and efficiency contributing to building completion ahead of scheduled time¹
- Improved industrial relations environment
- Injury reduction and improved performance of subcontractors



“Today we have got people joining us and seeking us out for employment, based on our values of safety, sustainability, community and innovation.”

Daniel Grollo CEO, **Grocon**

A Challenging Environment

Research conducted by Safe Work Australia in 2005 and 2006 revealed construction workers experienced injury at a rate 25% higher than that of all Australian workers².

Senior managers of construction and development giant, Grocon, knew they wanted to achieve a safety record better than that of industry peers. However, translating aspirations into reality faced several challenges:

- The construction industry had traditionally accepted safety records deemed unacceptable by world class performers.
- The longer serving employees and leaders at Grocon had spent much of their careers working with attitudes that could lead to prioritising project deadlines before safety considerations.
- The safety management traditionally practised was compliance driven and of a policing nature, with a focus on disciplinary action.

With these issues, the challenge for Grocon was to shift its safety culture to a state in which every employee adopted safety as a core value that shapes how work is performed.

¹ An example of early completion was seen in the Media House project– information taken from Grocon TV <http://www.grocon.com/grocon-tv.html>

² <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au/AboutSafeWorkAustralia/Whatwedo/Publications/Pages/SR200910WRIConstruction2005To2006.aspx>



“Safety culture is really the ownership that everybody is responsible for safety, and not just in the workplace but outside the workplace”

Col Keegan, Safety Manager, Queensland



Building a Safety Culture

Whilst Grocon had a reputation as a safe company, did its performance match global safety standards? Daniel Grollo, Grocon’s CEO, did not have to look far for an answer.

In 2006, Grollo and management toured an Australian steel manufacturing site that had undertaken a safety journey guided by DuPont. They were introduced to DuPont methodologies and tools that could assist Grocon to achieve world class safety standards.

In 2008, Grocon commissioned DuPont to assess its practices and performance in a number of critical areas. The findings were benchmarked against world class safety standards and the ensuing gap analysis showed some areas of excellence and some opportunities for improvements.

As a result of this initial activity, DuPont worked with Grocon’s leaders to develop a detailed and tailored improvement plan. It aimed to integrate safety into the organisation’s strategy, structure and culture, with a plan that catered for every employee and subcontractor.

Grocon’s safety culture transformation involved a three year intensive partnership with DuPont. Training involved key modules such as conducting safety observations and incident investigations, as well as developing the most effective interpersonal skills required to deliver and adopt the safety message. Managers received one on one DuPont coaching to develop the leadership skills to understand, feel and demonstrate an active commitment to safety.

“The guidance that DuPont has given us, the tools and measures, the training and the way to position ourselves to tackle the right things, and to sequence our plans appropriately, were quite enlightening,” says Daniel Grollo.

Grocon took an unprecedented step in encouraging its sub-contractors to undertake the same training and coaching. A selection of them took it up and they have seen great improvement not only in the safety of their workforces, but also in their alignment to Grocon’s values and expectations³.

The Sub Contractor’s Story - Apps Electrics Pty Ltd

Contractor Apps Electrics prides itself on its commitment and reputation to get projects completed on time and budget. It has worked with Grocon on many projects, delivering electronic, communications and security infrastructure and systems. Recently, Apps Electrics was contracted by Grocon to work on Melbourne’s Media House development, which achieved a 5 Star Greenstar design rating and included the latest sustainability features.

Clearly sustainability and reliability are key values for Apps Electrics and played a part in its leaders’ decision to accept Grocon’s suggestion to undertake DuPont coaching and training. Adopting the same tools and structures for safety management has resulted in Apps Electrics performing in accordance with Grocon’s procedures and safety culture.

Director Michael Sharpe has been delighted with the results. The company has recorded a 73% reduction in its TIFR from 2010 to 2011. The company has implemented sophisticated safety metrics, a more intensive safety apprentice induction program and initiatives aimed at sharing the learning of incident investigations.

Michael was introduced to safety leadership by a Grocon site worker, who approached him as he made his way to a site office. He discussed with Michael that he wasn’t wearing the required safety gear. “I thought it was really impressive that this guy took the time to walk over to me and explain that I was not following safety procedures,” says Michael. That site worker showed anyone can display leadership.

³Apps Electrics Pty Ltd is an example of a Grocon subcontractor. Apps Electrics Pty Ltd story is included in this case study.

Shifting Mindsets

Grocon's journey was not without effort and was not uniformly adopted across the organisation. The speed with which the state teams progressed varied: whilst Victoria and New South Wales were quick to embrace change, Queensland took longer to adapt. Reflecting on the three years of transformation, senior managers recall being introduced to some challenging ways of thinking.

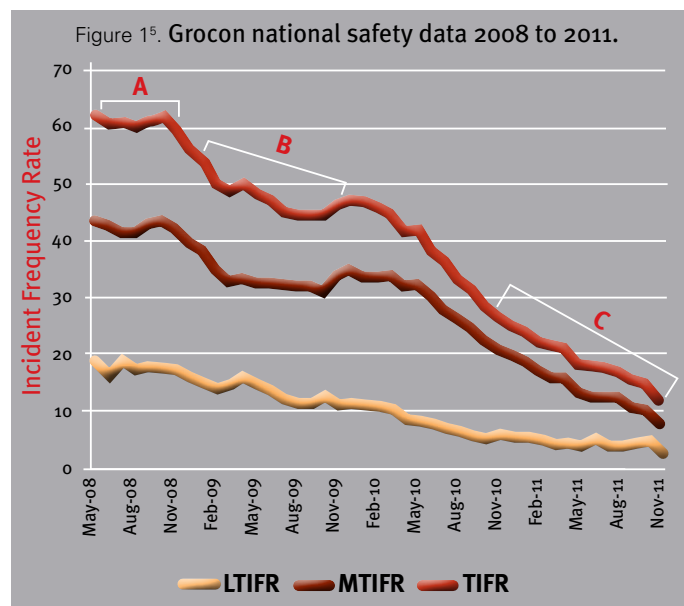
"The initial challenge was getting alignment with sub-contractors and a fair bit of education was needed to get them onto the same wavelength as Grocon. It took time for them to adjust." - Dayne May, Queensland Project Manager.

Once the Queensland team understood and accepted the concepts of safety leadership and the program was fully underway, there was an acceleration of injury reduction. By the end of November 2011, Queensland had achieved a 84% reduction, from 80 down to 13 Total Injury Frequency Rate (TIFR)⁴ over three years.

Celebrating achievements

Despite differences in the rate of acceptance, hard work and the safety leadership of its managers saw Grocon nationwide achieve a 10% reduction in TIFR in eight months, (point A of figure 1).

As the journey picked up momentum, further improvements were made. By the end of 2009, a 12% reduction of TIFR was achieved, (point B of figure 1).



In quarter 4 of 2011, Grocon achieved an overall injury reduction (TIFR) of 81%, with an impressive 55% reduction of TIFR in just one year (point C of figure 1). This means 68 people have not been injured over the 12 months prior to November 2011, who might otherwise have been.

Grocon's achievements are the result of strategic implementations that filtered from the CEO's office, through line management to site workers and sub-contractors. The strategy stimulated a growing belief that all incidents can be prevented.

The integration of safety as a core value of business strategy, and the adoption of safety as a personal belief for every member of the Grocon community, has shaped the business as a whole and how everyone performs their day to day tasks.

A raft of accomplishments contributed to Grocon's impressive safety performance, including:

- The implementation of a robust safety organisational structure, driven by the CEO.
- The execution of personal safety action plans, to drive individual performance.
- The implementation and sustaining of a formal incident investigation process and the sharing of learning outcomes.
- The adoption of leading and lagging indicator metrics, which allowed the monitoring of trends, highlighting where more focus was required and what practices were yielding the best results.

"Now, we are investigating near misses, whereas three years ago, we would only have been investigating lost time and injuries" - Jason O'Hara, Grocon's Victorian Construction Manager.

In 2011, Grocon's safety culture was recognised by WorkSafe Victoria with the awarding of the 'OHS Management System of the Year'. This prestigious award acknowledged Grocon's unique approach in including subcontractors as part of the overall safety management system, as well as its sophisticated safety metrics through leading and lagging indicators.

Culture and Sustainable Business

The results of this project go beyond the benefits of an excellent safety performance. Whilst the primary aim of any safety journey is to prevent harm to people, Grocon's transformation has proved a catalyst for advancing overall business performance.

"Safety for us is not just an indicator of how we are performing from the perspective of not hurting people but also of how the business is running. Our safest sites are safe because they are run efficiently." - Daniel Grollo.

Improved communication has proved beneficial. The management, site leaders, sub-contractors and workers are close-knit and aligned in achieving the aims of safety, efficiency, quality and productivity to deliver industry leading projects. Grocon cites significant benefit to its engagement with unions and associations, reporting it to be more effective.

Grocon has also found an exemplary safety record serves as a useful marketing tool in a business environment increasingly sensitive to sustainable business practices and social responsibility. Using safety as a competitive advantage, Grocon won an opportunity to provide construction services to the Australian Government.

⁴Total Injury Frequency Rate (TIFR) is a DuPont measurement of a combined Total Loss Time Injuries and Medical Treatment Injury per 1000,000 man-hours.

⁵Loss Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR), Medical Treatment Injury Frequency Rate (MTIFR) and Total Injury Frequency Rate (TIFR), per 1000,000 man-hours.

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Relentless Energy

Today, everyone at Grocon sees safety in a new way, the kind that goes beyond compliance and legislation to a lifestyle. People make safe choices because it's what they want.

Grocon continues working to become the industry leader in safety, sustainability, community and innovation. It will continue to set high benchmarks and strive towards becoming world-class. As John Van Camp, Head of People and Culture, observes: "This engagement process has certainly paid great dividends - it is an ongoing journey and we cannot relax. It needs to be relentless."



About Grocon Pty Ltd

Grocon Pty Ltd is Australia's largest privately owned development, funds management and construction company. Grocon has built some of Sydney's and Melbourne's most admired icons such as the Eureka Tower, AAMI Park and 1 Bligh St in Sydney, as well as others in the Middle East and India. By pushing boundaries and reaching greater heights, whilst staying true to its core values, Grocon is creating environments that inspire people.

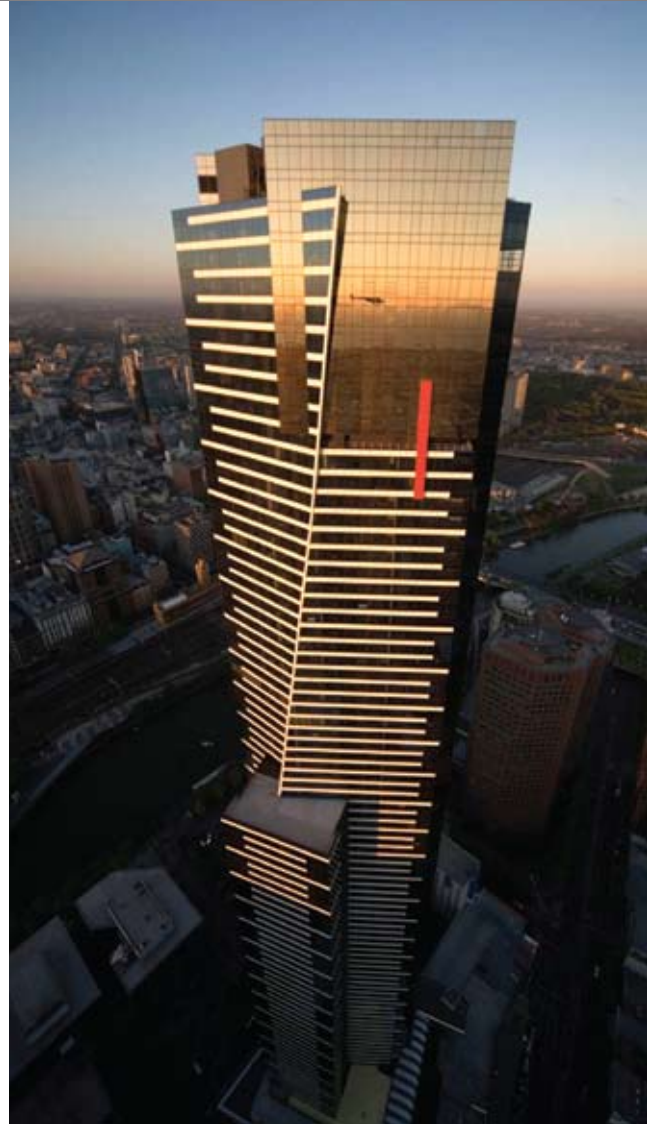
Visit Grocon: www.grocon.com.au

About DuPont Sustainable Solutions

DuPont Sustainable Solutions is a global consulting, training and technology licensing business that helps our clients transform work places and work cultures to become safer, more efficient and environmentally sustainable. As an owner-operator company, our real-world experience is manifest in our consultants' capability to inspire our clients and assist them to facilitate the cultural changes required to achieve their goals.

To discuss how DuPont
(Australia) can assist
with your safety journey,
please contact us:
Toll free: 1800 252 992
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Or visit our website at:
www.dupont.com.au



"Once you have the ability to manage a complex issue such as safety - all the other things that a company needs to do are positively affected by the momentum"

Jason O'Hara, Construction Manager, Victoria

