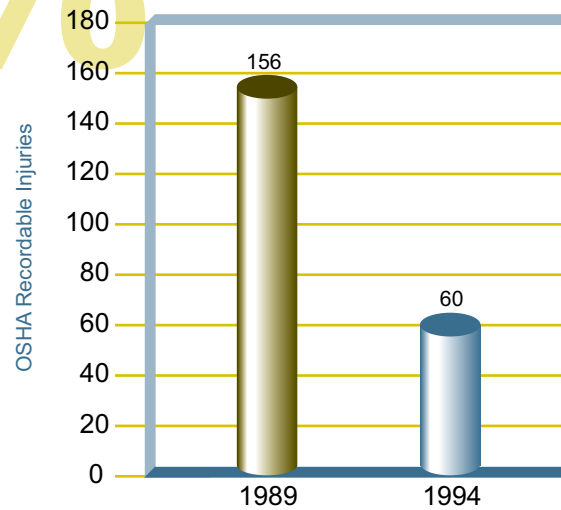


Aventis

Aventis Pharmaceuticals Lowers Injury Rates and Costs with Humantech

Aventis Pharmaceuticals, formerly Rhône-Poulenc Rorer, is a world leader in life sciences dedicated to treating and preventing human disease through the discovery, development, manufacture, and sale of innovative pharmaceutical products aimed at satisfying unmet medical needs. Aventis employs approximately 90,000 people in 150 countries.

62% Reduction in Ergonomic Injuries



Humantech assisted Aventis Pharmaceuticals' Kankakee, Illinois, facility in implementing an effective ergonomics process to lower lost time accidents 94% and recordable injuries 62% while cutting workers' compensation costs by over \$1 million per year.

Aventis

The Challenge

In 1989, Aventis Pharmaceuticals Kankakee, Illinois, manufacturing plant employed 1,500 workers who were experiencing a large number of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs). Their jobs, ranging from drum handling, to cart and oven loading and unloading, to palletizing, involved a significant amount of manual lifting, much of it from the floor. The company determined that the injuries resulting from manual lifting—66 lost time incidents and 156 recordable injuries—accounted for \$1.2 million, or 80% of its workers' compensation costs during 1989. In response, the Aventis management staff committed itself to making the changes necessary to improve employee health and safety, and to reduce workers' compensation expenses.

Adding to the challenge, the company faced two main obstacles when considering its course of action: all design and process changes were subject to FDA approval and, as is common in the pharmaceutical industry, there was only a limited time frame in which to implement improvements. Getting it right the first time was absolutely essential.

The Solution

With the help of Humantech, the company analyzed workers performing their jobs, obtained information via employee surveys about work discomfort, and examined company health and safety records. Plugging this data into a computerized risk prioritization tool, Aventis was able to identify those jobs involving the highest ergonomic risk, and then turn its attention to the top 20% in each department.

Every plant employee, including management, engineering, and maintenance staff, received ergonomics training in preparation for the changes to come. Five years of ongoing ergonomics instruction ensured that all employees were able to identify potentially risky job situations, generate possible

solutions, and operate equipment in a safer manner. Engineers received instruction in design and build guidelines as well. With management support and a dedicated Health and Safety Manager, the company began to move forward with ergonomic improvements, and established regular follow-up activities to gauge their success.

Aventis redesigned work processes in the plant to reduce lifting from floor level by 80%. Most notable were the changes that occurred in the ingredient blending operation, which originally involved maneuvering heavy drums by hand. Workers now use lift assists to handle the full weight of the drums. Equally as effective were the changes made in the filter press loading area. The company replaced metal filter press plates with lighter plastic frames, thereby reducing the total weight lifted by about two thirds. Flexible conveyors, additional lift assists, and reductions in weights lifted at any one time also significantly reduced ergonomic risk in loading/unloading and palletizing tasks. Remarkably, throughout the five-year effort, the company also managed to satisfy all FDA requirements while still meeting its ergonomic needs.

The Results

With the changes in work processes and equipment redesigns, lost-time incidents decreased from 66 to 4 between 1989 and 1994, and recordable injuries decreased from 156 to 60. In five years, the plant virtually eliminated manual lifting from its manufacturing process, reducing lost time incidents a remarkable 94% and recordable ergonomic injuries by 62%. A corresponding ten-fold drop in workers' compensation costs provided an additional benefit, clearly demonstrating the value of ergonomics in the workplace. Extensive employee training and management's dedication to ergonomic efforts were key factors in achieving the breakthrough improvements experienced at Aventis.

About Humantech

For 30 years, global companies have relied on Humantech for workplace improvements. By combining the science of ergonomics and our unique 30-Inch View®—where people, work, and environment intersect—we deliver practical solutions that impact safety, quality, and productivity. At Humantech, we believe people make productivity happen. The 30-Inch View is a registered service mark of Humantech, Inc., 2008.