CORTEX Business Unit at Cooma Earns International Accreditation

The Cortex textile products business unit at Cooma Correctional Centre has achieved a “world best practice” accomplishment. Following exhausting final audit by Standards Australia, the business unit has now been accredited under Australian Standard AS3902 - Quality Systems and Installation. The accreditation is the culmination of an outstanding effort by staff and inmates at the Correctional Centre, Regional and Corporate levels. It enables Cortex to position itself in the marketplace as a quality endorsed company with significant implications for its planned consolidation and expansion.

The contribution and intensity of staff and inmates to achieve this result has been magnificent. It has embraced, the development of manuals covering quality policy, systems, operating procedures and documentation. Beyond the formal manuals staff and inmates have acquired a comprehensive understanding of the systems and procedures processes and its implementation. It now enables the business unit to produce quality products through a formal and accredited system which incorporates checks and balances to prevent non-conformance of customer expectations.

This represents an extraordinary achievement for a Correctional Industry program. It is due to recognition for the sterling, committed and enthusiastic efforts of both staff and inmates. This achievement however extends beyond a Correctional Industries program. It provides a benchmark performance generally with very few Australian companies similarly accredited. Further, accreditation has been achieved in around 15 months whereas the norm in the private sector is 36 months and beyond. A further positive element is that Cortex Cooma is one of only 6% of Australian companies who have received accreditation following initial Standards Australia audit.

Apart from the obvious impact for the Cortex business division this achievement has significant cultural implications for all inmates work programs and for what can be achieved by both staff and inmates within the Department generally.

I would like to extend my personal appreciation and commendation to Governor Hank Zwiers, Dave Fairless, Bernie Theirlman, Bob Raynor, Mick Chapelle, Bernard Alcock and Brendan Carey of Cooma Correctional Centre; Jim Kirby, South West Region; and Steve Thorpe, Mick Pendry and Neville Edwards of the CSI Corporate office for this outstanding achievement.

Wayne Ruckle Director CSI
CSI Operations Management Workshop Shapes CSI Future

An extremely successful CSI Management Workshop was held on 6th April 1994 at the Corrective Services Academy. Attended by CSI staff from Correctional Centres, Regional and Corporate levels, the theme of the workshop was, "Success Relies On You!"

Presenting the keynote speech The Commissioner, Major-General Neville Smethurst noted that over the past two years, many positive changes had occurred within the Department. The important elements that had been achieved included; a team approach, the need to take initiative and try new approaches, the need for a positive attitude and the importance of communication.

Expectations for CSI in the coming year included, expansion of industries, improvement in the quality of work, output and effort, and profitability. These expectations were consistent with the Departmental goals of security, safety and rehabilitation.

The Commissioner emphasised the importance of work for inmates when 59% of new inmates are unemployed at the time of entering a Correctional Institution.

Outlining his expectations for the coming year in management and correctional programs, the Commissioner stressed the importance of area management, the structured day, enterprise agreements, privatisation and performance agreements. The implications of these programs and proposed capital works plans were also discussed.

In concluding his presentation, The Commissioner emphasised the continuing duty of care we had towards our "customers", the inmates, and read a moving poem written by an inmate on the chance for a new beginning and to start anew.

NEW BEGINNINGS

HOW OFTEN WE WISH FOR ANOTHER CHANCE TO MAKE A FRESH BEGINNING

A CHANCE TO BLIT OUT OUR MISTAKES AND CHANCE FAILURE INTO WINNING

AND IT DOESN'T TAKE A SPECIAL TIME TO MAKE A BRAND NEW START

IT ONLY TAKES A DEEP DESIRE TO TRY WITH ALL OUR HEART.

TO LIVE A LITTLE BETTER AND TO ALWAYS BE TRUE

AND TO ALWAYS ADD A LITTLE SUNSHINE TO THE WORLD IN WHICH WE GREW

SO NEVER GIVE UP IN DESPAIR AND THINK THAT YOU ARE THROUGH.

FOR THERE IS ALWAYS A TOMORROW AND A CHANCE TO START ANEW.

SO PLEASE GRANT US THIS WISH AND GIVE WITH ALL YOUR HEART

COURAGE, SUPPORT, STRENGTH AND LOVE THAT WILL ONE DAY MAKE US PROUD.
Regional News

Regional Business Managers Outline Key Results

CSI Regional Business Managers covered a number key areas at the Operations Management Workshop, including inmate employment, major business achievements, and financial results in a review of their regions for the year to date. They also presented key forecasts for 1994-95.

Eastern Region
Hans Wesseling advised the group that 80% of inmates were employed, vocational training was provided in 40% of business units, the major business units were ahead of budget in sales and margins, and there was good support shown by all the Governors, with whom Industries had established a good working relationship.

For the coming year, the Eastern Regional Business Plan forecasted increasing inmate employment to 90% and providing vocational training in 75% of business Units, to provide greater emphasis on sales and expenditure monitoring, improve customer service, achieve improvement in “500 reviews” and develop a team approach to the achievement of objectives.

Central Region
Paul Keen reported that 80% of inmates were employed or in full time educational programs. Major business achievements this financial year included Panama Developments taking over the nursery at Mulawa, the Police Department providing significant printing work to Parklea Correctprint and Agricor at Emu Plains supplying milk to country Correctional Institutions.

In the coming year there are plans to increase inmate employment to 90% and provide additional employment opportunities for remand inmates. An additional three Private Sector Business Units, consolidation of current markets and for business units to meet budget estimates in sales and expenditure were important targets for 1994-95.

South West Region
Jim Kirby referred to the inmate employment profile of 82% with 69 new positions having been created within the Region during the current year. Sales to date were just under budget at $3.7 million.

In the coming year the business plan called for an increase of the employment profile to 90%, the creating of 50 additional positions and to have 50% of inmates involved in vocational training programs. The regional sales target for 1994-95 was $5.4 million.

Northern Region
Rob Steer referred to the fact that 85% of the Region’s inmates were being employed and 60 new positions had been created at John Morony and Maitland Correctional Centres. Regional sales were at $2.7 million, 5% above budget. In the coming year the Regional business plan called for 100 new positions to be created and 30% of inmates to receive vocational training. The sales target in 1994-95 was $4.4 million.

Work Groups Highlight Specific Issues and Strategies

CSI Managers of Industries split into four work groups to discuss specific issues of concern and to try to find strategies to overcome problem areas. The areas of concern included: pricing, reducing costs of raw materials, maximising productive hours worked and seizing the opportunities of area management.

Strategies to overcome pricing issues included keeping a history of pricing estimates, standardising labour times in like Business Units as an average of actual production times and sharing of profits by all units, not just the end finishers.

Purchasing strategies to reduce costs and increase margins centred on group purchasing, introduction of a “Slow Moving Stock” list, regular contacts with NSW/Federal supply authorities, competitor updates and wastage analysis.

In seeking to improve the number of productive hours worked, the main strategies put forward included improved liaison with classification staff implementing the hierarchy of privileges concept, increasing inmate training, provide more staff training and refresher courses and to develop pride and commitment in the work place.

In Area Management, it was felt that there was a tremendous opportunity for Industries personnel to take a leading role in the direct management of the Correctional Centre. CSI Managers were encouraged to get involved with policy development and help to establish and improve effective communications with all levels of their Correctional Centre.
The Business Athlete vs The Corporate Athlete

Guest speaker at the CSI Operations Management Workshop was Sports Psychologist, Dr Michael Martin who presented an extremely interesting analogy between the way an athlete prepares for and maintains peak performance and the way a 'business athlete' should approach corporate competition.

Dr Martin developed a compelling argument to support his theory that the detailed mental preparation and strategies used by athletes in focusing on a big event are remarkably similar to those that a successful business manager should use in day to day goal and performance setting.

Dr Martin said these preparations should include setting objectives, preparation of detailed action plans, focusing on controllable factors, developing a positive approach, using mistakes as feedback for improvement, reviewing performance and setting realistic targets.

Backing up his presentation with slides and charts, Dr Martin's talk was well received by the workshop participants who will be implementing and communicating these principles to Correctional Centre staff in their day to day work situations.

Workshop Recommends New Training and Development Programs Within CSI

The adequacy and effectiveness of training and development programs for staff has always been a topic of intense interest. It has been given further importance as the skill needs of officers within Corrective Services Industries are increased to meet the growing demands of new programs and the contemporary marketplace.

In identifying staff training needs, the workshop concluded that the objectives and task elements of a position should be clarified before determining the type and level of training required in order to perform in the position. A performance level assessment plan also needs to be developed for each officer, and as well, multi skilling should be part of the training needs assessment.

In developing training plans, a range of options such as, on the job, external and overseer training courses need to be made available. These courses should be designed to provide relevant, realistic and achievable levels of proficiency.

Timetables for individuals and groups to receive training should be drawn up and resources provided to enable the training to be undertaken.

It was also mentioned that within the department there is a large pool of people who are qualified in many areas and who may not be utilising their skills or qualifications. It was proposed that a skills register be set up to identify these staff members, in order to more effectively utilise the skills that already exist within the department.

Director Outlines Guidelines For Successful CSI Future

Summing up at the end of the successful CSI Operations Management Workshop, CSI Director Wayne Ruckley outlined a number of important issues that had been raised during the course of the day.

They included:
- development of a corporate understanding by CSI staff
- identifying each individual's role within the organisation
- confronting, not avoiding issues
- the importance of communicating with staff
- the setting of expectations for managers and their staff

Future issues to be addressed included:
- increasing inmate employment and training
- commercialisation of CSI
- raising the level of customer service
- developing more Private Sector involvement with CSI

The Director thanked all the participants for the professional manner in which they contributed to the overall success of the workshop.

The workshop concluded with a formal dinner attended by the participants and senior departmental personnel including Commissioner Smethurst, Deputy Commissioner Sulman, Assistant Commissioners Ron Woodham and Jim Ryan, Regional Commander Ken Middlebrook and guest speaker Charlie Henry, Managing Director of Charlie Henry Timbers.

In introducing Charlie Henry, Northern Regional Business Manager Rob Steer outlined the tremendous benefit the Glen Innes Timber Mill had derived from the close working association with Charlie Henry Timbers. Charlie Henry delivered a very warm and often amusing account of his experiences within the timber industry starting off as a wood machinist and progressing through to the founding of the company that bears his name and which today is one of the most successful wholesale timber suppliers in Queensland. A vote of thanks proposed by CSI Manager of Industry Bob Dwyer, concluded the evening.