



SMART WORKPLACES

The Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre (WISer) at the University of Adelaide are collaborating with the Department of State Development and the Stretton Centre on two research projects around High Performance Workplace Systems (HPWS) and Advanced Manufacturing. These projects will provide employers with practical support and identify HR practices that can enhance strategic performance measures.

High Performance Workplace Systems (HPWS)

The term High Performance Workplace Systems (HPWS) describes the organisation of work that best utilises the skills and knowledge of employees to complement wider strategic business objectives. HPWS is often associated with the production of higher value added, quality, differentiated or niche products which require greater employee discretion, involvement and innovative thinking. This is often referred to as Advanced Manufacturing.

HPWS employers bundle HR practices together to 'best fit' their business needs and corporate objectives. These are often designed to enhance employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, and opportunity to contribute which in turn can generate a variety of positive performance outcomes including:

- Greater commitment
- Lower labour turnover
- Improved productivity and quality
- Better service performance
- Enhanced safety performance
- Better financial performance.

Smart Workplaces Online (SWO)

Smart Workplaces Online (SWO) is a resource designed to support manufacturing businesses that are seeking to better understand and successfully implement HPWS. The project will provide a 'portfolio of tools' to be used by manufacturing companies in South Australia to help them self-assess 'where they are at' in terms of a variety of HPWS performance objectives. This web resource, based upon extensive research, shall incorporate:

- **HPWS self-assessment questionnaire:** The web resource will allow employers to assess their business in relation to nine HPWS performance indicators.
- **PDF Smart Workplaces report:** Results from the self-assessment questionnaire will be produced as a PDF report, tailored for each participating organisation. Relevant HR practices will be recommended.
- **Resource Centre:** Federal, State and Local support and related resources will be listed thematically and links (URLs) will be provided.

- **HPWS key information:** More detailed information about HPWS (including reports) will be provided for free download.
- **Case study examples:** Three case studies, differing in size, industry and product market, will be presented as examples of good HPWS employers.

Research indicates that implementing HPWS practices considerably improves productivity.

Jiang et al 2012

Smart Workplaces Demonstration Program

A Baseline Monitoring Survey will be undertaken within two participating companies to identify wider performance objectives and the use of HR practices. This will form the basis of a detailed HPWS change management program within the workplace. The surveys will be re-administered 10 months later to identify performance improvements and contribute to detailed Case Studies that document the journey of the organisations towards Advanced Manufacturing and HPWS. Key measures include:

1. Employee involvement and authority
2. Two way communication and information sharing
3. Performance measurement and reward
4. Knowledge and enhancing skills
5. Leadership and strategic HR
6. Team working
7. Job security and internal labour markets
8. Financial performance
9. Use of technology and product innovation

The value proposition

HPWS enables business to better utilise all the abilities of its workforce improving performance in a variety of ways. Such practices encourage, as well as support, business models associated with Advanced Manufacturing.