

## ***Tips, trends and links to keep you on top of your training***

This series of tipsheets is distilled from my e-newsletters, to give you timeless information of value to your environmental training program.

### **In this summary:**

- ✓ environmental non-compliance a good indicator of a training need
- ✓ the astounding dollar return on good training
- ✓ scary statistics on the lack of environmental training
- ✓ great links

### ✓ **Environmental non-compliance a good indicator of a training need**

Green promises are often not met, according to a survey last year of New Zealand companies holding environmental permits.

A study by University of Waikato researcher and former compliance officer Marie Brown suggests that a third of such permit holders were not complying with their environmental obligations. Marie assessed how permit conditions relating to pre-agreed "ecological compensation" were being met across 245 conditions in 81 different resource consents granted across the country. Her study found just over 35% of these requirements were not being met, with agriculture turning in the worst results by far out of all activity types surveyed.

Key findings were that:

- of 10 activity categories surveyed on a scale of 0-3, the energy generation industry scored perfectly, meeting all permit conditions
- of 104 subdivision consents, around 75% of conditions were met, with the remainder almost meeting them
- infrastructure and waste management activities scored much lower, with just 55% and 50% of such permit holders respectively fully meeting their requirements
- agriculture was lowest-ranked, with just under 5% of agreed compensation fully achieved
- public organisations and state-owned enterprises fared better for compliance than private companies and individuals
- large-scale operations were found to have better compliance, as were those where compensation was agreed early in the application process.

Marie's paper also found room for improvement among decision-makers. Her assessment was that a lot of the non-compliance was about a lack resources and expertise to do the work, noting that if regulators realise the permit holders don't have the capacity to comply, "then we probably need to find a better way."

Now there's a real opportunity for targeted environmental training that could benefit both regulators and permit holders!



### ✓ The astounding dollar return on good training

Last time I explained the importance of good induction for new staff. One of the papers at the LearnX conference in Sydney in 2013 was on induction training. Below I have worked out an ROI (return on investment) analysis based on the figures given for an Australian company of 1,300 staff over the year following the introduction of a new staff induction process:

- the net benefit was over \$AUD 4 million dollars per year
- the ROI was a return of \$855 for every \$1 spent
- the benefit:cost ratio was 79:1
- the payback period was 4½ days.

These stats are amazingly positive. Though of course, if you consider the losses of NOT doing good induction training, they reveal the massive costs of poor induction for staff turnover.

We know that organisations with good environmental performance attract the best talent – what an amazing bottom line benefit good environmental induction offers!

### ✓ Scary stats: UK CEOs worry about lack of environmental skills and training

A 2014 survey by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment of more than 900 UK businesses said that while “environment and sustainability skills will be essential to plan the adaptations needed to survive and stay competitive, helping businesses adapt towards a ‘circular economy’, extracting the maximum value from materials and turning waste into resources”, many UK businesses say they are “ill-prepared for these growing challenges: they recognise the gravity of the threats but lack the necessary skills to face them head on and turn them to their advantage”.

When asked how confident they are that they have the skills to compete in a sustainable economy, only 13% said they were very confident they did. Of the rest:

- 39% said they were reasonably confident, but there were gaps
- 35% said they were somewhat confident; there were significant gaps
- 13% said they were not confident.

When organisations were asked how confident they were that employee groups have the skills to address the environment and sustainability agenda, the answers revealed a perception gap between leaders and workers:

- 17% of leaders said they were not capable, 58% said they were partly capable and 25% said they were fully capable
- 18% of senior managers said they were not capable, 62% said they were partly capable and 20% said they were fully capable
- 27% of the rest of the workforce said they were not capable, 65% said they were partly capable and 8% said they were fully capable.

Other results were:

- 62% of organisations say environment and sustainability (E&S) training is more poorly funded than other professional areas such as safety and finance
- 10% say they have no environmental training budget at all.

These and other similar findings from various global surveys indicate a crying need for excellent environmental training. What are we waiting for?

### ✓ Great links

- “Green promises are often not met”: read the article at [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10878882](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10878882)
- IEMA (the UK-based Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment). 2014. *Preparing for the Perfect Storm: skills for a sustainable economy.* [www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net).



Clare Feeney is a sustainability strategist who helps organisations of all types grow their sustainability capability. She can help you grow jobs, increase profits and improve the environment – and have fun along the way! You can find out more at [www.clarefeeney.com](http://www.clarefeeney.com) and contact her at [clare@clarefeeney.com](mailto:clare@clarefeeney.com).