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Employee Awareness of Standard Operating Procedures and Safety and Compliance Training IPCA Laboratories Limited, Athal

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Abstract : *Within the pharmaceutical industry, there is a need for awareness of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as well as safety and compliance training so that employees can work consistently and responsibly. This paper explores employee awareness of SOPs, safety and compliance training within IPCA Laboratories Limited, Athal. Furthermore, it investigates the contributory part of the Human Resource (HR) department in employee communication, training coordination, record-keeping and awareness.*

Primary data was obtained from employee communication, direct observation and survey/questionnaire responses throughout my internship. Secondary data was accessed from company, HR and academic information along with research articles, journals and credible internet sources. Analysis for the SIP report was completed for 207 people and involved frequency and percentage analysis.

It was found that 44.9% had full awareness of their relevant SOPs, 31.4% had partial awareness and 19.3% needed increased awareness. Of those surveyed, 35.3% received regular and 39.1% received occasional guidance concerning SOPs and/or compliance. Moreover, 42.0% received regular and 35.3% received occasional safety training. Differences in training and information provision were therefore apparent.

Good communication is key in maintaining awareness. Continuing re-training and good information availability are also important. Hence awareness and HR contribution are both significant in promoting good working practice within a pharmaceutical business.

Keywords: Standard Operating Procedures, awareness, safety training, compliance training, Human Resource Management, pharmaceutical industry.

I. INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceutical sector is vital to society as it is responsible for supplying medication and healthcare items. Within such businesses, employees need to be aware of and abide by procedures, safety and compliance guidelines in order to work in a standard and responsible manner.

Standard Operating Procedures are written guidelines which dictate how particular work related processes should be executed. Although, alongside providing a guideline, it must also be ensured that employees are aware of and comprehend such procedures. Communication, training and information are hence key areas.

Employees can be trained in safety so that they are aware of safety guidelines, recognise possible danger and are cognisant of how to avoid danger. Likewise, staff can be trained and given information about a business's procedures and requirements, in order to increase awareness. Often, the Human Resource department will work in conjunction with relevant departments to facilitate these processes alongside its communication, record-keeping and employee interaction functions.

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1.1 Background

This research was completed as part of a summer internship at IPCA Laboratories Limited, Athal. The research centres on employee awareness of SOPs, and safety and compliance training. As such, it is valuable as it allows an insight into awareness specific to an organisation and can highlight where additional information, communication and/or re-training could prove beneficial.

Furthermore, from an academic perspective, the investigation relates theories covering Human Resource Management, training and behaviour within an organisation to real world examples of HR functioning, employee communication and processes. This therefore has value in both academia and in terms of my internship.

1.2 Aims

- To analyse employees' awareness of relevant SOPs;
- To analyse employees' awareness of safety;
- To analyse employees' awareness of compliance training and requirements;
- To analyse the role of the Human Resource department within the process of providing training in relation to SOPs, safety and compliance;
- To practically engage with HR functioning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned above, secondary data was accessed from company, Human Resource, academic, research, journal and reference resources and also credible websites. Below is a conceptual review of literature relating to areas of interest in the research.

2.1 Human Resource Management and employee development

Human Resource Management encompasses elements such as employee and employee development management. Within a business, the HR department can facilitate awareness by effectively communicating, co-ordinating training, and recording information. In particular, this paper analyses HR's contributory functions in these spheres.

2.2 Standard Operating Procedures

SOPs are written guidelines which dictate how work processes should be executed. Individuals can refer to them to ascertain the correct method and requirements for fulfilling their role. Awareness of SOPs involves not only knowledge that such procedures exist but also comprehension of and ability to access them.

2.3 Safety training

Safety training involves employees being made aware of the safety guidelines, processes and practices which apply within the workplace. An employee's training engagement can serve as an indicator for their awareness. Furthermore, as not all employees will undergo training to the same extent, there can be differences in the level of training engagement.

2.4 Compliance training and awareness

Compliance information enables staff to become aware of, and understand, an organisation's guidelines, standards and procedures. The SIP report analyses the extent to which employees engage with such information and suggests that continual re-iteration of this may be of benefit in sustaining awareness.

2.5 Relevance of research

The above areas allow an analysis of employee awareness for IPCA Laboratories Limited, Athal. Linking together awareness of SOPs, safety and compliance training and the contribution of Human Resources, this research utilises survey and observation data to analyse the specific situation in this organisation.

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III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

A descriptive research design was adopted. This was an appropriate choice as the intention was to analyse and describe employees' awareness of SOPs, safety and compliance training rather than to investigate causal links. Information was analysed and grouped in accordance with research aims.

3.2 Organisation and participants

Research was undertaken at IPCA Laboratories Limited, Athal. As detailed in the data analysis section of the SIP report, 207 people were analysed. Findings should thus be analysed in the context of the sample and of the organisation.

3.3 Data sources

Primary sources of data comprised: employee and HR communication, direct observation, practical engagement and survey/questionnaire results all gathered during my internship. Employee and HR communication enabled me to analyse awareness of SOPs, safety and compliance training.

Secondary data sources were company, Human Resource, academic, research, journal and reference information together with credible websites. These assisted in analysing theoretical material.

3.4 Tools and data gathering

An important primary data gathering instrument was a survey investigating employee awareness. This centred upon awareness of SOPs, safety and compliance training, and employees' comprehension and training engagement. Information was also obtained through employee and HR communication, observation, record-keeping and practical engagement. Only data which could be accessed throughout my internship was analysed and confidential or sensitive business data was not analysed.

3.5 Data analysis

Data was analysed descriptively. Survey responses were analysed and grouped. Frequencies and percentages were then used for analysis. To calculate a percentage, the number of people in a particular group is divided by the overall number of respondents and then multiplied by 100. Below are tables displaying analysed data.

3.6 Constraints

My internship, extent of observation, access to confidential data, resource availability and my internship responsibilities all restricted research. Additionally, the accuracy of analysis is influenced by participants' comprehension and responses. As working practices can differ between organisations, the findings should be analysed in the context of this research.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are results from the data analysis section of the SIP report. Where appropriate, data has been rounded and so slight discrepancies in overall numbers may occur.

4.1 Awareness of Standard Operating Procedures

Of those surveyed, the greatest number (44.9%) stated that they had full awareness of their relevant SOPs. Furthermore, 31.4% had partial awareness. Nineteen point three percent needed more awareness. Just 4.3% claimed that they did not have sufficient awareness. Thus, whilst awareness of SOPs is evident, further information and/or re-training could be of benefit to certain individuals.

Responses	Number of employees	Percentage
Fully aware	93	44.9%
Partially aware	65	31.4%
Aware but needs more clarity	40	19.3%
Insufficiently aware	9	4.3%
Total	207	100%

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4.2 Guidance and training

Of those surveyed, the most commonly cited type of engagement with guidance was occasional engagement (39.1%). Regular engagement was next, with 35.3%. Approximately 23.7% mainly encountered guidance at, or during, induction and initial training. Finally, 1.9% had not engaged with any guidance. This emphasises the importance of ongoing communication and re-iteration.

Type of engagement with guidance / training	Number of employees	Percentage
Regularly	73	35.3%
Occasionally	81	39.1%
Induction and/or initial training only	49	23.7%
None	4	1.9%
Total	207	100%

4.3 Safety training

Of those surveyed, 42.0% engaged with safety training regularly and 35.3% occasionally. Some 20.3% mainly encountered such training at, or during, induction. Finally, 2.4% had not engaged with safety training. Again, there is evidence of differing engagement with safety training and ongoing awareness beyond induction is therefore pertinent.

Type of engagement with safety training	Number of employees	Percentage
Regularly	87	42.0%
Occasionally	73	35.3%
Induction and/or initial training only	42	20.3%
None	5	2.4%
Total	207	100%

4.4 SOP accessibility

Twenty eight point five percent found SOPs very easily accessible and 27.5% found them easily accessible. A similar proportion (27.5%) found SOPs to be only moderately accessible. Fourteen percent perceived them as difficult to access and 2.4% felt that they were not accessible. Thus, it appears that the accessibility of SOPs can be further enhanced for some.

Accessibility	Number of employees	Percentage
Very easily accessible	59	28.5%
Easily accessible	57	27.5%
Moderately accessible	57	27.5%
Difficult to access	29	14.0%
Not accessible	5	2.4%
Total	207	100%

4.5 Engagement with safety training

Most commonly, people engaged with safety training every half year (26.6%). Next was quarterly engagement (24.6%) and then monthly (22.7%). Other responses included annual, as required and not being aware of the frequency of safety training. Effective communication of training engagement may aid employees' understanding of when training is available.

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Frequency of safety training	Number of employees	Percentage
Every 6 months	55	26.6%
Quarterly	51	24.6%
Monthly	47	22.7%
Annually	30	14.5%
As required	22	10.6%
Not aware	2	1.0%
Total	207	100%

4.6 Discussion of results in terms of research aims

Generally, survey responses suggested that individuals were aware of SOPs and engaged with safety and compliance guidance. Nevertheless, there were variations in awareness, accessibility and training engagement. As analysed in the SIP report, the Human Resource department contributes to an organisation by facilitating communication, co-ordination, record-keeping and training. Findings from this research demonstrate that, for example, re-training in relation to SOPs, continual safety awareness, effective communication of training engagement, practical advice and enhancement of SOP accessibility, may all merit further consideration.

My internship allowed me to practically engage with Human Resource functioning. I was therefore able to relate academic theories concerning Human Resource Management, training, communication and research to real life application. Conclusions are specific to the researched sample and the data accessible during my internship.