



# IOE HELPING MEMBERS

DEVELOP OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES



**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS**

## ADDING VALUE FOR MEMBERS, GENERATING REVENUE FOR EMPLOYERS' MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS

It is important for IOE Members considering whether to provide occupational safety and health services to understand the opportunities they can bring and how they fit with the overall objectives of an employers' membership organisation.

Employers' organizations worldwide are at different stages of development and those wanting to **START PROVIDING OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES** can learn from the experiences of those that have been through many business cycles and challenges. IOE staff and other IOE Members will help.

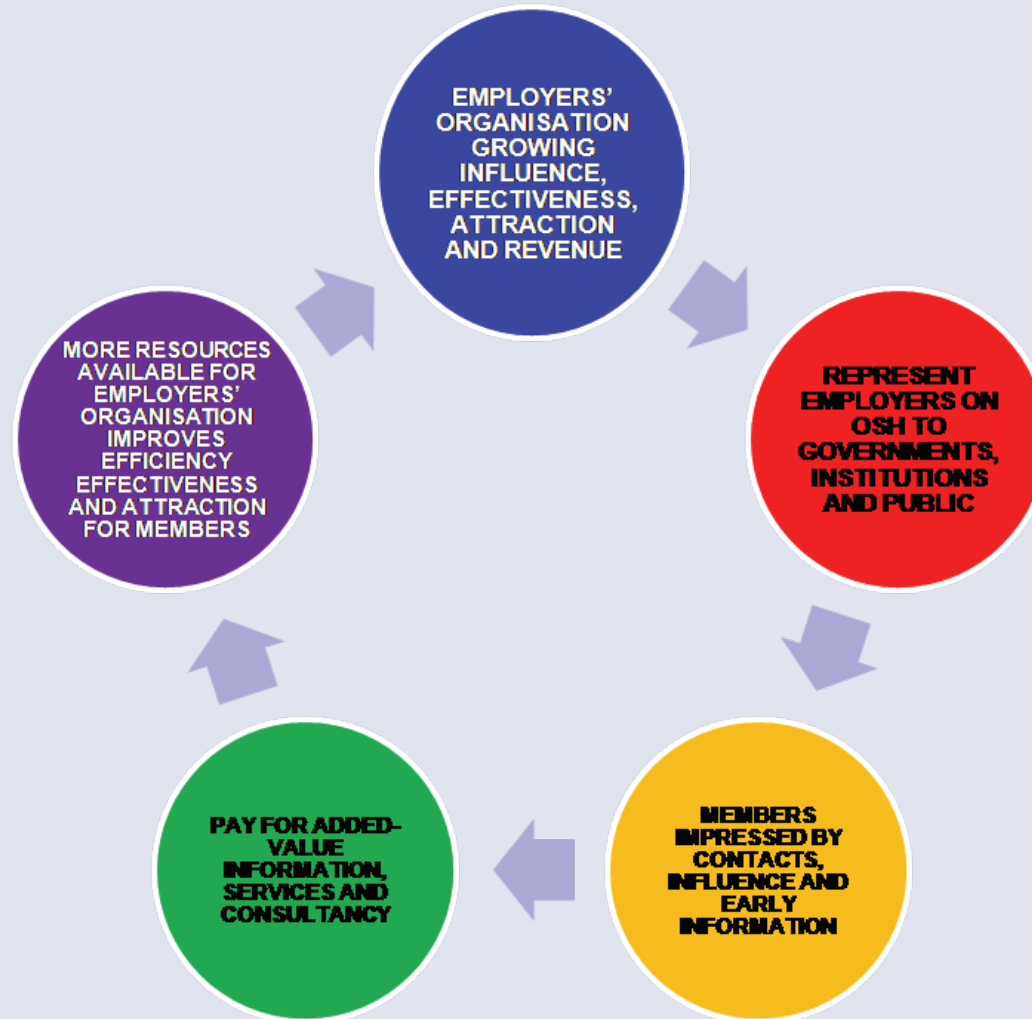
Although there are **many models of national Employers' Organisations** globally most are a discretionary spend for companies. So to attract and retain membership and generate revenue, Employers' Organisations need to refresh their offering and can do this by providing added-value services.

*The growing interest in occupational safety and health gave us an opportunity to develop a service to assist our members. This boosted our influence with government, increased our offering to members and generated income for us. A 'win-win-win' situation all round.*

*Barbados Employers' Confederation*

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**THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE - GOOD FOR GOVERNMENTS, MEMBERS AND YOU**



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## WHAT IS AN EMPLOYERS' MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION AND WHAT IS IT FOR

The **purpose of an Employers' Organisation is usually defined** in the articles of association. Often they are set up with special company and/or tax status to provide services to members on the basis of fees paid. These arrangements may restrict what they can do. Of course such restrictions, if any, can be changed but they may need to be sanctioned by the governing body of the organisation and set up in compliance with the national laws on companies and taxes.

### AN EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATION

- **LOBBIES AND REPRESENTS ITS MEMBERS**
- **INFORMS AND SUPPORTS ITS MEMBERS**
- **IS AN ADVOCATE FOR BUSINESS TO WIDER AUDIENCES**
- **PROVIDES FURTHER ADDED-VALUE CHARGEABLE SERVICES**

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## **LOBBYING AND REPRESENTING MEMBERS**

The main purpose of an employers' organization is to **represent its members (companies, employers, businesses) usually to influence institutions** e.g. governments or other policy, law or tax making bodies at national, regional and international level to ensure members' interests are taken into account.

Employers want **sustainable competitive businesses** and Employers' Organizations should help them achieve this.

**To represent members**, Employers' Organisations must be an effective **conduit between the members and the institution to be influenced**. They should

- **know about government and other institutions' developments**
- **know how the legal, policy and practical developments will affect members**
- **tell members about the developments and**
- **consult them on how they want to influence the institutions thinking**

They should then ensure that the relevant institution is influenced at the right time, at the right level and with the appropriate arguments. This puts Employers' Organisations on the inside track to be the first to know about developments and gives them an advantage over their competitors.

## **INFORMING AND SUPPORTING MEMBERS DIRECTLY**

**Employers' Organisations should inform and support members** by maximising their opportunities, minimising threats and providing services that the members have paid for. There is often a **different perception between Employers' Organisations and their members** of what services the membership fee covers. E.g. some Employers' Organisations will have long established help-desks providing legal and technical expertise that members see as a service already paid for within their membership fee. Other Employers' Organisations will not have such services and in seeking to set them up, will either, look to increase the membership fees or charge members a commercial fee, for the service provided.

Employers' Organisations are ideally placed to **facilitate the development of networks** for members with common interests to share information and best practice and to test ideas.

## **BEING AN ADVOCATE FOR BUSINESS TO WIDER AUDIENCES**

Employers' Organisations should also be **an advocate for the business** voice to present ideas and views to the wider audiences. Employers' Organisations and their members **operate against their own backgrounds of national and regional cultures** and are the focus of attention, scrutiny and often challenge from the media, the public, other NGOs and lobby groups, and unions. Without Employers' Organisations, individual companies or organizations would be directly in the media spotlight and public consciousness for both good and adverse publicity.

Employers' Organisations also need to help the wider audiences understand that business values and ideas can benefit all. By providing institutions e.g. schools, charities, government officials with **access to business expertise** makes them more understanding of the business needs when they deal with them. Theoretically this could be a service that Employers' Organisations could charge for, but most Employers' Organisations consider it part of the 'quid pro quo' for having access to Government etc.

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## **PROVIDING CHARGEABLE SERVICES - BEING A BUSINESS**

There are considerable opportunities for Employers' Organisations to build on their expertise, influence, knowledge and networks to provide their members with further added-value services for which charges can be made. This should be agreed with the members so that it avoids conflict with their interests.

Then an Employers' Organisation, or a related division of it, will become more like a business and will have the challenges of any other business. They may be in competition with other businesses that provide similar services or if they initially have an exclusive or niche market they may find others setting up in competition. The tough rules of running a business in a free market will start to become obvious.

An Employers' Organisation should be ready to face the challenge from others who could accuse you that providing a service in a policy area could compromise your ability to lobby effectively to minimise the threats from that policy.

But Employers' Organisations will have many advantages from being a membership organisation on which it can draw, such as well established networks and contacts.



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## **EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR MEMBERS IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**

### **PROMOTING GOOD STANDARDS OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**

Occupational safety and health is an area where the tripartite grouping of governments, employers and employees representatives is central to policy and practice development. It is recognized that those that are responsible for achieving health and safety performance in the workplace should use their knowledge and experience to ensure that developments at the national and international level can be implemented and enforced.

All International Labour office (ILO) instruments have been developed by tripartite debate and consensus. Many on occupational safety and health deal with specific issues, but the latest - ILO Promotional Framework Convention 187<sup>1</sup> - is aimed at promoting a preventative safety and health culture and requires ratifying States to develop, in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers, a national policy, national system, and national programme on occupational safety and health. The IOE endorses<sup>2</sup> this flexible approach and calls on companies and Member federations to promote its ratification and implementation in their countries.

### **REPRESENTING MEMBERS ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MATTERS**

As the most representative organisation for businesses and employers in your country you should be pushing at an open door with your Government to represent your members' interests in the field of occupational safety and health. Some Governments fund staff in both employers and employees representative organizations to support the drive for improvements in occupational safety and health standards. The national policies, systems and programmes for occupational safety and health required by countries ratifying ILO Promotional Framework Convention 187 should involve Employers Organisations and you should be highly visible there.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C187>, <sup>2</sup> [http://www.ioe-emp.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents\\_pdf/papers/statements\\_resolutions/english/state\\_2007may\\_resosafety.pdf](http://www.ioe-emp.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents_pdf/papers/statements_resolutions/english/state_2007may_resosafety.pdf)

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**The sorts of arguments that can be put forward to ensure a seat at the Government table are that :**

- *those who create the occupational safety and health risks must be responsible for managing it*
- *employers must have responsibility for compliance and have unhindered authority to do so in a way that does not undermine their ability to conduct legitimate business*
- *since the duties for occupational safety and health are on the legal entities of organisations or employers they should be part of the system to define what those duties are so that they can advise on whether and how compliance can be achieved*
- *all involved at the workplace - workers, employers, directors and managers have to provide the solutions for the control of occupational safety and health risks at the workplace*

Whatever may separate the interests of employers on specific occupational safety and health issues, there is one common thread of cohesion as workers representative organisations see occupational safety and health as a strategic recruitment issue for their members. They also seek the greatest legal certainty when negotiating occupational safety and health standards.



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In order to establish credentials to represent members at the national level it is important that Employers' Organisations have

- a **critical mass** of members with a common interest in occupational safety and health developments
- access to **expertise** from the disciplines needed for occupational safety and health management systems
- have the **time and resources** to be involved
- provide an **effective communications** link between government and their members
- have **positive proposals** to make otherwise unions and government will dominate the debate
- know the **political process** so that the right arguments are presented at the right level, at the right time

**THIS ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE YOUR CREDIBILITY AND REPUTATION WHEN YOU COME TO SELL OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES TO YOUR MEMBERS.**

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## **BEING AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUR MEMBERS ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MATTERS**

When representing members on occupational safety and health matters it is important to

- *develop a clear position that you can defend to the public, press etc as well as institutions*
- *be consistent with other policy areas*
- *ensure that your members will also publicly support that position*
- *agree priorities with your members for the resources available*
- *know who, how and when to influence for maximum impact*

There will be many opportunities for you to promote understanding of the business values, ideas and needs. Businesses have expertise that is valued by many.

However, in providing business assistance to help draft guidance, train labour inspectors, deal with the media, make presentations, network with schools and other services, the resources required from the business as a whole should not be underestimated.



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## **KNOW THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SYSTEM AND RESOURCES IN YOUR COUNTRY**

The systems for occupational safety and health are different from country to country and have come from very different starting points. Some come from the social development, some from engineering standards and some from medical standards. Some were established in the 1800s and others are very new. There are academic courses specifically in occupational safety and health in some countries and extensive professional networks of practitioners. Some of the basic academic disciplines that are required to contribute to an understanding of the main fields of occupational safety and health are; – biology, physics, chemistry, engineering, psychology, human health, statistics and law so even if there are not identifiable specific occupational safety and health resources there are the elements of expertise that can be called upon from other professions, technical and business areas. Some occupational safety and health systems are driven by the competent enforcing authorities, some by the social security systems and some by the public or private compensation systems. There are also other lobby groups on corporate accountability or representing victims of occupational accidents that influence occupational safety and health developments.

It is important to know who your allies are when lobbying and who your opponents are and establish where there are points of common interest on which agreements can be built.

## **THINK OUTSIDE THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH BOX**

Occupational safety and health is multidisciplinary and can also be a part of many of the broader business and policy agendas. It can extend to public health and environment issues, product safety, social wellbeing and welfare. It is the most visible part of corporate social responsibility, whilst risk management links occupational safety and health with broader business objectives. Policy ideas evolve, new marketing and motivating programmes are embraced by business and they are all opportunities to engage business interest in occupational safety and health.

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## JUSTIFICATION FOR SETTING UP OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES

### **THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH THREATS TO BUSINESS**

Businesses see taxes and laws as the biggest threat to their competitiveness but, equally, understand that they provide a level playing field and are generally supported as the basis for occupational safety and health policy areas to provide minimum standards for worker protection. An extensive raft of occupational safety and health legislation comes from international, regional, country and local levels. There is a lot of law, a lot of information but often very little practical help in being able to digest and apply it all. Occupational safety and health legislation also imposes on businesses

- *administrative burdens in making risk assessments and prevention plans*
- *requirement for companies to keep abreast of new risks and new ways of controlling them*
- *increasing corporate accountability with duties imposed on directors and public reporting requirements*
- *requirements to train all at the workplace where the trade unions in particular have taken the initiative to train their members in knowledge of occupational safety and health law, practical interpretation and how to use it as a collective bargaining tool*

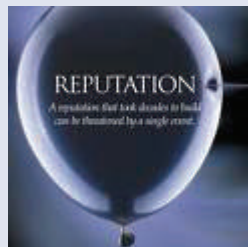


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## **THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GETTING OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT RIGHT**

There are financial as well as moral benefits in getting occupational safety and health management in a business right.

- *poor standards of safety and health can cost lives and can cost money. When and if something goes wrong the resources that businesses have to use to deal with the fallout are considerable*
- *insurance may be more difficult and more costly to obtain*
- *poor standards of safety and health can ruin business reputation, threaten a position in the business community and in the ability to recruit staff*
- *good standards of occupational safety and health can save money by making processes more efficient and by cutting absenteeism*
- *occupational safety and health objectives when aligned with other business objectives improves business performance*





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## PROVIDING OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUR MEMBERS

You can help turn the perception of occupational safety and health threats and the business case for a positive approach to safety and health management into positive action to help your members. However, to make this an added-value service for which you can charge a commercial fee, you have to approach it as any other business venture and research your market and tailor your product.

### STEPS TO GET YOUR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH BUSINESS GOING

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1. CLEAR THE IDEA WITH YOUR MEMBERS
  2. RESEARCH YOUR MARKET
  3. DECIDE ON YOUR SERVICES
  4. GET YOUR RESOURCES
  5. ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND AND PRODUCTS
  6. DEVELOP YOUR CHARGES
  7. MARKET AND COMMUNICATE YOUR ORGANISATION, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
  8. KEEP UP TO DATE WITH DEVELOPMENTS
  9. KEEP REFRESHING YOUR OFFERING
  10. KEEP A BUSINESS EXIT STRATEGY IN MIND

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## 1. CLEAR THE IDEA WITH YOUR MEMBERS

**This needs to be done at an early stage though you should have some ideas of the sorts of services you could offer and the likely market for them. You may well be challenged to provide a realistic business plan.**

- *get board level agreement*
- *understand the boundaries that may conflict with your members interests*
- *legally can your organisation provide chargeable services or will you have to develop a new or separate structure e.g. national employers' organisation and national employers' organisation services provider*
- *cover potential liabilities under civil law, negligence, company law*

## 2. RESEARCH YOUR MARKET

**There are many factors involved but as a minimum you need to know**

- *who your members are*
- *do you have trade associations and their membership networks*
- *what sectors do they cover*
- *what size of company is involved*
- *if they all have a need for the basic knowledge of how to manage safety and health*
- *what is provided by others e.g. enforcers, professional organisations, legal services, academic institutions*
- *is the market for OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH services mature or underdeveloped*
- *is there a current lever that justifies and can enhance your movement into the market now*

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### 3. CONSIDER THE SERVICES THAT YOU CAN DELIVER

The sorts of services that are commonly provided are:

- *information and education on the law and policy in conferences, workshops etc*
- *provide model policies, templates for working methods and risk assessments*
- *briefings in-house or at other events*
- *surveys of business performance or attitudes*
- *publications on best practice*
- *training courses giving practical advice about implementing general or broad requirements of law and best practice to management*
- *toolkits to help managers and employees understand what to do for general occupational safety and health*
- *legal, medical or expert occupational safety and health advice as part of help desk*
- *benchmarking company performance*
- *provide in-house consultancy to advise companies about their risks and liabilities*

However, beware of potential liabilities for your organisation from providing advice for situations that later you cannot manage or influence. The closer you get to giving specific advice on specific risks for the circumstances in a specific company situation then the greater your exposure to liability will be in the event of an accident. The challenge with occupational safety and health is that accidents will happen and in many legal systems there may be a close link between cause, effect, litigation and compensation and you do not want to be caught in that chain. You may need to consider purchasing specific professional indemnity insurance

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#### 4. THE RESOURCES TO DELIVER THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICE

You need to consider the following which will influence your choice of product or service.

- *do you have the products, can you find them, adapt them*
- *can you go it alone or would partnership be better*
- *can you train existing resources*
- *do you have to hire or recruit new staff*
- *is this a one off or a long term development*
- *will you cover the costs of staff and service or absorb the costs to enhance the membership offering*

#### 5. ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND AND PRODUCTS

Depending on your market you don't need to have a huge budget and sophisticated branding but you need to :

- *look at your current reputation, brand and logo – decide for your occupational safety and health services whether to use the same, modify or differentiate*
- *have visible and consistent marketing material to advertise products*
- *make all communications and products recognisable with your branding*

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## 6. DEVELOP YOUR CHARGES

This is probably one of the biggest challenges, as there will inevitably be different opinions from members about what they think their membership fee already covers. The market will also influence pricing options and structures.

### **The following are usually considered to be already covered in the membership fee**

- *facilitate member - government meetings*
- *facilitate meetings between experts and officials*
- *facilitate work with regulator*
- *Networking between member companies and their representatives*
- *sharing best practices among members of a similar industry*

### **The following could be charged as extra services available to all, but members get a favourable rate**

- *mass conferences*
- *breakfast briefings*
- *seminars and training events*
- *policy or legislation updates*
- *survey reports*
- *priced publications*
- *help desk information or expert advice (to charge or not to charge depends on history, organisation, market, competition)*

## 6. DEVELOP YOUR CHARGES (continued)

You could provide added-value services at the market rate, exclusively for members, if you provided tailored in-house

- *training*
- *consultancy*
- *auditing*
- *certification*
- *risk assessments*
- *help desk information or expert advice*

In pricing the services you should

- **know your market value - don't price yourself out of the market but don't undersell yourself. Customers are always suspicious if a product looks too cheap**
- **remember that members can be invited to sponsor events or products**
- **not undermine your reputation and brand by inappropriate partnerships**
- **charge a nominal fee, even for member events, to discourage the numbers of last minute 'no shows' from people who have committed to attend but then find that they have other priorities and have no incentive to attend.**

## 7.MARKET AND COMMUNICATE YOUR ORGANISATION, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

### Use the advantages of your membership organisation, network and databases

- *you need to keep current real contact points and update regularly*
- *create a mind-share among employers of the purpose, value and benefit of the organisation occupational safety and health function and services*

### Use the language of business

- *use the phrases, labels, terms and examples that business uses*
- *relate them to the current business concerns*
- *use current business techniques for communication*

### Target the information for events or specific products

- *to appropriate sectors*
- *to the right business function for the right service*
- *to the person with authority for budget spend*

### Use all avenues to publicise your brand and product

- *faxes, letters, postal flyers, emails, website, the media, the press*
- *provide articles for professional and business magazines mentioning the products*
- *referring to the products in speeches and at events*
- *tell members and others about it regularly*
- *send complete packages for events - information, action, registration forms and **most importantly, sanction for charging or invoicing***

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## 8. KEEP UP TO DATE WITH DEVELOPMENTS

Members need to have confidence that you are close to developments to be able to influence them.

- *keep alert and refreshed*
- *be amongst the first to know the latest developments*
- *do events or briefing to show your members how close you are to the powers that be*
- *don't be too far ahead of the issue as otherwise it will not have matured where the implications are understood*
- *relate it to current business concerns and developments*
- *relate it to new businesses, members, new staff and functions*

## 9. KEEP REFRESHING YOUR OFFERING

Members need to be kept interested and involved

- *you may have developed a core suite of occupational safety and health products but you should always look for opportunities to enhance them*
- *you need to be inspirational and enthusiastic, if you are not excited by the topic don't expect your members to be and they certainly won't pay for it*
- *there are actions beyond legal threats – social dialogue, partnerships etc. that all present new opportunities*

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## 10. HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY IN MIND

*You will need to think holistically about setting up occupational safety and health services as a business and this will involve hard business decisions just like your members have to take about their interests. But it will be worthwhile to seize the opportunities presented.*

*Businesses will always need to manage occupational safety and health and you can provide the services to help them manage and keep up-to-date. You should not start a business with a pessimistic outlook of how to get out if it fails, but be optimistic about how to develop or profit from it when it has become successful.*

*You may grow such a successful business that demand outstrips your ability to supply within available resources or other policy issues will develop and you have to think of the possibility that the resources needed to provide the occupational safety and health service may be better deployed on other business activities or other hot political topics. The occupational safety and health service growth may change or dominate your core business. You may have to recognise when you have developed the occupational safety and health programme that you no longer get the best returns from the investment.*

*The exit strategies that you may have are limited by the need for you to retain your reputation as an Employers' Organisation. So, if the occupational safety and health part of the business is successful the products could be licensed to others to run for you and you retain an interest or you could sell the business to someone who has a more suitable portfolio with which it fits better.*

## CONTACT INFORMATION



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