

## CIMBRIA EAST AFRICA Ltd.

### ***'An eye opening experience-simple things that increase the bottom line'***

*CIMBRIA East Africa (CEA) Ltd is a company that specializes in post-harvest equipment and it has been in operation in East Africa since 1972 when*

*CIMBRIA, Denmark commenced their long relationship with the then Wheat Board of Kenya in Nakuru with delivery and installation of wheat dryer, cleaner and conveyors.*

*The company is located on Muiri Lane, No. 10 Off Langata Rd, near the BOMAS of Kenya.*

*Facilities on their premises include offices; a fabrication workshop where all non-production line equipment, metal structures, hoppers etc.*

*are manufactured; toilets and changing rooms for staff. The company has a total of 41 permanent workers and a range of between 30-35 contract workers, depending on the orders received.*

*CEA is part of worldwide group specializing in post-harvest equipment technology.*

CEA hoped that participation in the SUSBIZ programme would assist the company in structuring its CSR work as well as assist on issues of labour and health & safety. Following the completion of the programme, CEA attested to getting more than they bargained for!

#### ***Health & Safety***

To begin with, CEA staff had already identified a need to improve on the use and maintenance of PPE for their staff, contracted staff and the clients' team on the ground.

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Secondly, there was no structure for the management of health & safety within the organisation. There before, a health & safety committee had been constituted, but due a number of reasons including having staff on site most of the time, the committee had not been active.

Thirdly, the company had for a while planned on having a medical examination done for their workers especially those at the workshop, but had not come around to doing it.

While interacting with the SUSBIZ team, the company realised that it was not registered with the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services (DOSHS) though this was a legal requirement. Further the cost for registration was very low.

Lastly, CEA acknowledged the need to improve housekeeping in the workshop area and segregate activities such as welding and painting and to provide workers with changing rooms and showers.

To begin with, the company registered its premises with DOSHS as a 'workplace' as is required by law and proceeded to undertake fresh elections of a health and safety committee.

Thereafter, SUSBIZ Kenya sponsored a day's training of all staff at CEA on health & safety. This highlighted the need for proper and consistent use of PPE. The company also

committed to ensuring that all staff charged with a responsibility of driving company vehicles undergo an enhanced driving course 'defensive driving' to sharpen their skills on the road.



FIGURE 1: H&S TRAINING

Similarly, medical examination of all workers exposed to noise and/or fumes was undertaken and had been instituted as a procedure within the organisation for existing and new staff.

Consequently, the morale of staff has been boosted and staff are now upbeat about their work. This contributes to the productivity of staff.

To control fraudulent reports of accidents, CEA now ensures that all staff on site are issued with and sign for PPEs as well as having an accident and injuries report at the end of each project.

To control exposure to noise, some offices were moved from the workshop area and enforcement of use of PPE was heightened.

Staff were also trained in fire fighting and a fire team constituted. The team has been tasked with organising for a fire drill.

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All workshop staff have been provided with lockers and new of changing rooms and showers have been constructed.

In 2012, CEA experienced a fire caused by an electric fault at the nearby transformer belonging to Kenya Power and Lighting Company. Consequently, the entire workshop was gutted down. CEA is therefore in the process of rebuilding the workshop and has taken advantage of this situation to re-organise the workshop. The workshop had therefore been clearly marked to improve housekeeping. Plans are underway to have welding shields in place to protect other workers in the workshop from the welding light.



FIGURE 2: BURNT DOWN WORKSHOP

### **Labour**

Whereas there were no major challenges regarding labour, there was need to have a human resource office as human resource matters were handled by the chief accountant. CEA. therefore employed a Human Resource Manager, who is charged with the responsibility of handling of human resource matters and streamlining operations at CEA.

*'I was playing that role (of HR) and it was quite difficult when I have to safe for the company at the same time consider the welfare of the staff, but now with a different person who will look at things in a different way as opposed to me at least I think they are a bit more better'*

**Joseph Mburu, Finance Manager**

This allowed for the documentation of CEA's labour policy which led to a number of improvements in human resource management even as the policy is being reviewed by the company's board.

The company used to issue its contract workers with short term contracts even when a specific job was available for periods equal to or exceeding a year. Therefore after engagement with the SUSBIZ team and attending the SUSBIZ workshop on labour relations, the company changed this such that staff are given longer contracts corresponding to the orders already within the company. This has enabled the staff to plan for their own financial commitments. The contract workers were also enlisted to benefit from company paid medical cover which was not there before and are entitled annual leave just like the permanent workers.

*'Because before we never actually used to involve employee in anything, it was you (Susbiz) who introduced this. We used to be a bit like it's like this, take it or leave it. BUT Now we involve them in trainings and even when we have any issues with employees, we call for discussions with representatives for more negotiations .*

**Joseph Mburu, Finance Manager**

This has really changed the working relations at CEA, and there is an upbeat attitude among all staff. Where there was indifference, all staff now feel like part of the company and therefore own their jobs. The changes in human resource management have really impacted on the productivity of the workforce.

*'Giving an example of our staff I honestly tell you that they are in very high morale probably because of those changes of HR and giving them small benefits and trainings and all that, they are up to it. So it has really opened up our thinking of saying we are improving things and it should continue....Hongera!'*

*(Congratulations)*

**Joseph Mburu, Finance Manager**

### ***Environmental management***

With regards to environmental protection, CEA is committed to continue undertaking annual environmental audits as is required by law. Secondly, the company engaged a company licensed by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to collect its solid waste.

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### Community engagement

CEA acknowledged that they used to give to the community but without a structured plan. They therefore identified a long term community project, a childrens' home, which has a planned budget from the company. CEA's staff have also on their own initiative started a birthday programme for the orphanage where every month they contribute a certain amount which goes to making Christmas celebrations enjoyable for the children.

Internally CEA has formed a football club. This has provided an avenue for staff to socialise outside work and also to recharge their energies. Cimbria Denmark has been very supportive of this initiative and donated the club's uniforms.



FIGURE 3: CEA FOOTBALL CLUB

handling equipment. For its clients, CEA has provided education to farmers in several of its work sites on proper ways of grain handling. This has created an awareness of their products and earned CEA good reputation as a manufacturer of grain handling equipment.

It (SUSBIZ Kenya) was a good experience and it has made us realise those small things which we sometimes assumed and look at them as being too expensive, they are not... probably they are cheaper because bottom line you end up benefiting more as an institution. **Joseph Mburu, Finance Manager**



FIGURE 4: DEMONSTRATION OF CEA EQUIPMENT TO CUSTOMERS

### In conclusion

the expectations of CEA upon joining the programme were met and exceeded! When asked if participation in SUSBIZ Kenya had inspired Cimbria East Africa Ltd., to continue working with CSR, **Losey Wamutitu** The Global Compact representative had this to say:

*"What we have started we cannot just drop, we have to implement, we have to continue acting on the Action Plan, improving on the Action Plan; we have to continue with the audit assessments, we have to act on the reports of the audit assessment to put us into a better state environmentally for sustainable business.... We feel... the Action Plan is something we have to continue using in all our small... small things because it will put us in check, what are we supposed to do...? I think it is a very good Action Plan that we can embrace and use for better management and better sustainability"* MANY THANKS to The Danish Federation of SMEs, the Danish Ministry of Business and Growth and Federation of Kenya Employers, with the Danish Federation of SMEs as lead partner together with