

October 2021

Using a strengths-based approach – look at what is going right at your work

Work is never exactly the same from one day to the next. Yet most of the time, work still takes place in a healthy and safe way.

Often this is because people are able to adapt successfully to varying conditions and unexpected events, and contribute to work getting done well. By recognising this, you can establish a work environment where people feel trusted and everyone wants to share their knowledge and ideas.

People like talking about work they have done well and solutions they have come up with. This creates a sense of ownership and pride.

Talking regularly about success factors lets you understand from the people doing the work what they rely on. This includes the resources people need to be healthy and safe. These insights can be used to plan and invest in bringing those success factors together more reliably, so your business is even better set up for success.

Find out what is going well in your organisation by:

- having conversations with workers about how they successfully go about their day-to-day work
- encouraging everyone to speak up when they see work being done well
- understanding the strengths, skills and interests of the people you work with
- supporting everyone to make small changes in your business that will make their work easier and more productive.

Practical suggestions

1 Look at what is going well right now

Set some time aside with everyone at work to identify examples of good work practices that are already happening. You could ask the following questions.

- What does a good day at work look like?
- What makes your work mates great to work with?
- What resources (time, support and equipment) are most important to have so you can do your job well?
- What experience and knowledge do we have that helps us achieve good results?
- What do we want to start? What do we want to stop? What do we want to do more of?

2 Imagine how work could be even better

To do this, with the people you work with talk about:

- what an ideal work environment would look like
- what resources, equipment, training, support and work culture are needed to create this ideal work environment
- do we know who has what strengths, so everyone knows where to seek support if needed?
- how could we design or organise our work so that we make better use of our combined strengths?
- what changes will be made as a result of these discussions.

This WorkSafe New Zealand case study from [Air New Zealand](#) shows how they are working with their people to improve work.

3 Commit to making changes that build on what you already do well

Decide as a team what it means to do work well. Encourage everyone to model these practices and commit to modelling these practices yourself.

CASE STUDY

Contact Energy gives an example of how including people in decisions and investigations can create a positive work culture.

Learn more about their story: [Involving everyone in learning reaps benefits](#)

For more information, go to: [A positive work culture](#)