## Case

# “Bedalia Hotel”

The case study concerns a four star hotel that had seen its workers compensation insurance premium rise to an extent that it was affecting the overall company profit.

The reasons for the rise in workers compensation insurance included musculoskeletal injuries to the back and upper arms of the room attendants (cleaners or chambermaids).

The main factors that led to the injuries were found to be:

* Stretching when cleaning the bathroom tiles, mirror, and windows
* Force and repetitive actions in vacuum cleaning
* Handling heavy cleaning carts in the corridor
* Bending and force when moving beds
* Other factors that were identified as leading to injuries were organizational and time pressure and uneven workloads

A participative approach was chosen by management to address the problem, including changes to job design.

Working committees were set up, consisting of representatives from room attendants and the hotel's occupational health and safety manager, to determine better working methods and work schedules.

The committees identified workplace training as an aspect that required considerable improvement and the training manuals were re-written to include the methods identified as safe.

The intervention included

* improved equipment and maintenance, including new and lighter vacuum cleaners
* improved training and work procedures, including reorganizing linen storage so cleaning carts carried a lower load
* Replacement of certain cleaning chemicals
* A gradual change of room décor featuring materials which are easier to clean
* Organizational changes.

These led to a marked decrease in both the incidence and severity of injuries and the workers compensation insurance costs came down substantially. There was also a reduction in labor turnover from 60% to 40% per year and an increase in the quality of work.

Cost of changes and process was recuperated within two months due to reduced employee turnover, improved work quality, and a greater-than-expected reduction in the insurance costs.