



JJ McDonald & Sons Group
Partners in Civil Construction



JMS attracts skilled staff and increases employee loyalty through new HR initiative

A recent survey by the Civil Contractors Federation (CCF) identified 'labour shortages' as a key issue in the last year and will continue to be a major challenge in the years to come.

JJ McDonald & Sons Group (JMS) is a fourth generation Civil Construction Company with its head office in Townsville, North Queensland.

Over the past 2 years the business has grown substantially from 140 employees at 6 sites to over 350 at 12 different locations.

We speak to Lisa McCulloch, Employee Relations Manager at JMS to see how they are addressing the challenge of finding and retaining the right employees.

How have the labour shortages affected your business?

In two ways: it is hard to actually get good quality employees and you have to pay more money for them, a lot more money.

What is JMS doing to solve the problem?

We are trying to promote the culture and values of the company; the fact that it is family owned and we offer other benefits than just strictly money.

Autopia is something extra that we can offer them, we talk about it with our staff positions as part of the recruitment process.

What about employee loyalty?

In our industry turnover can be up to 30% every year in some operational roles. They don't need to stay because there is heaps of work out there, they can always go somewhere else.

Does Autopia change this?

They won't know if their next employer will do it... having a car lease makes them more likely to stay... so far nobody with a car lease has left.

How costly can employee turnover be?

If you are looking at a project manager or someone like that you have to pay recruitment fee of 12%...even just to put operators on, by the time you do pre-employment medicals, induction and training it becomes quite expensive. The biggest cost is actually the loss of income that those employees could have generated for us.

Did you allow car leasing before Autopia?

We did have a couple of people on them but not in any big way. It wasn't as easy before with the other companies and there weren't any good reasons to bother promoting it.

How did you find out about Autopia?

We didn't really have a set company so one of our employees that wanted to do a novated lease did some research. She called a bunch of companies and Autopia really stood out.

Why did you choose Autopia?

It's easier (laughs). One of the other companies wouldn't return our phone calls. You'd ring them and a week later they still hadn't rung you back... getting invoices out of them... they were just quite difficult to deal with, no customer service on their behalf.

A lot of our operational staff work weird hours and we need someone flexible enough to deal with employees when it's convenient for them. With Autopia it's all pretty simple and not time consuming from the company side of it, it's not like there are hours and hours of work involved in setting someone up.

How many employees do you think will use Autopia in the future?

A lot of people are interested; so far I think pretty much everyone that has enquired has taken a car. I think it was perceived years ago that it was something only upper management did whereas now it is something that everyone is looking at... and we all like to save money from the taxman.

What would you say to other employers about Autopia?

I'd recommend them. It's easy to manage from our end... easy to deal with... better retention of our staff.



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