

# From toxic to award winning

How an improvement in workplace culture transformed Kennedy's Timbers



Hon Shannon Fentiman MP Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and skills Development, Michael Kennedy, Chris Whiting MP for Bancroft



**S**everal years ago, Kennedy's Timbers had a toxic workplace and was weeks away from receivership. Owner Michael Kennedy had tried different strategies to turn the business around, none of which worked sustainably. He then tried something radically different – he engaged The Culture Doctor to improve his workplace culture.

Today, Kennedy's Timbers is an incredibly successful business. Twice as profitable as the industry average, Kennedy's Timbers has doubled in size and significantly increased productivity. The business has also just been named Small Employer of the Year at the Queensland / Australian Training Awards.

Michael Kennedy attributes The Culture Doctor with transforming his business.

## The challenge

Kennedy's Timbers had stagnated, was facing major staffing, safety and quality control issues and was trying to stay afloat in a tough competitive market.

“The entire staff turned over every year, staff absenteeism was through the roof, workplace accidents all too common and profitability well below industry average. We knew we had good people, but we were struggling to manage them well, get the most out of them and retain them.” Mr Kennedy said.

## How did The Culture Doctor transform Kennedy's Timbers?

Working with staff, Dr Watt identified the values and beliefs of the staff and aligned them with those of Kennedy's company. The program isn't a generic, off the shelf product; it's tailored around the staff of the business. Staff drive and own the change, so the process is more likely to be successful and sustainable

Staff identified the following values that were important to them:

- Focus on safety
- Continuous improvement to customer service
- Family
- Respected, work ready teams

## A workplace culture program that is measurable and identifies clear strategies for improvement

The Cultural Health Check® program provided a benchmark of the health of Michael Kennedy's workplace culture. Micro-strategies were then identified and implemented to reflect the commitment made by staff and management to live out the values identified in the program. After six months, the health of the culture is measured again and so the continuous improvement process is underway.

The program assisted Mr Kennedy to identify the changes he needed to make as a manager.

## Example of micro-strategies implemented across Kennedy's Timbers

- Staff only work 4 ½ days to spend more time with family
- All staff are routinely tested for drugs and alcohol in a new focus on safety
- Staff down tools to celebrate birthdays & significant personal milestones
- Continuing training and development of staff
- Staff appreciation day
- End of month staff bonding BBQs

### Why the Cultural Health Check is so powerful

"Other workplace culture programs use tools that focus on employees' psychological profiles, our tool focuses on each individual employee's values and beliefs. Why? *Because values drive beliefs, which in turn drive behaviour,*" says Dr Watt, founder of The Culture Doctor.

"You can't see values and beliefs, but you can see the behaviours of people and the behaviours of companies. So what matters is not what you say, but how you behave."



Michael Kennedy and Dr Tony Watt

### Success! Today, Kennedy's Timbers is award winning and twice as profitable as its competitors

Kennedy's Timbers has doubled in size and has significantly increased productivity. The company has expanded and purchased competitors in Victoria and New South Wales, and also established distributors in West Australia and New Zealand.

Staff turnover is 600% lower, absenteeism has been slashed, there are fewer lost time injury days and the company has one of the lowest WorkCover premiums in the Queensland Manufacturing Sector.

The company also won the Queensland Small Employer of the Year in the 2019 Queensland Training Awards.

Michael attributes a huge part of his success to investing in his workplace culture.

"A huge amount of credit must also be given to the staff who have embraced this program and run with it. It's their ongoing passion and commitment to the company that has driven our growth."

### A fierce advocate of workplace culture: "It's as important as doing your tax."

"You can spend time on other areas of your business – continuous improvement, lean manufacturing, but nothing works without getting your culture right."

"I can make money by slashing costs, being pushy and demanding, but that is a miserable way of doing business. Invest in your culture on an ongoing basis, it needs to be in your veins, you have to live it," Michael says.

"It is my strong belief that looking after the culture of your business is as important as doing your tax. The Culture Doctor has completely transformed my business."

For a free one hour consultation, contact The Culture Doctor on **1300 650 080** or email **[info@theculturedoctor.com.au](mailto:info@theculturedoctor.com.au)**