

## BUSINESS BOFFIN

### Tips when outsourcing health and safety support

**Phil Chambers of Strategic Safety Systems explains what to consider when outsourcing health and safety support**



It makes a lot of sense to outsource health and safety support, but I've seen some shocking examples provided by others at companies I visit; not legally wrong, just totally ineffective. So, what should you look for when choosing who can provide such support?

#### **Experience and qualifications**

This should go without saying, but there are examples where the provider of the support has no experience in that sector. Occasionally, I have to decline work because I am not competent in that speciality. So, you should ask them to verify that they have provided support in the same or comparable sectors to yours. For assurance on qualifications, someone who is CMIOSH should be OK as they are obliged to operate within their competencies; with others, you will need to look more closely. Surprisingly, some trade association advisors are not at this level.

#### **Avoid masses of paperwork**

Ask to see examples of their work. A thick folder with lots of forms and padding is an indication to be concerned about this provider; it is just not workable. What you should look for are concise records and actions plans. For example, a set of risk assessments is not enough; what you want is an action plan arising from those assessments. And some organisations just provide masses of forms and text and then expect you to do the work!

#### **Avoid the tick-box/clipboard mentality**

This might be difficult to spot without watching how somebody operates. But what you should look for is someone who gets close, communicates with operators and understands what they do, not someone in a suit standing at a distance with a clipboard.

#### **Avoid tie-in contracts**

Some providers expect to sign you up for 2 years or so. Avoid these like the plague.

#### **Look for someone who will minimise their work**

Done properly, health and safety support should be a diminishing requirement as you get on top of issues and gain ownership. So you should look for someone who is working towards reducing their input in future years.

#### **Ask to see references or testimonials**

This is something you would do when employing someone, so why not do it when you are considering them as a service provider? Our testimonials are on the home page of our website.

If you have any questions on health and safety, call Phil on 07768 011667 or e-mail him at [phil@strategicsafety.co.uk](mailto:phil@strategicsafety.co.uk).