

# WorkSafe

Tools for building safer workplaces in B.C.

WorkSafeMagazine.com  
September / October 2010

## Driver's seat

When work goes on the road,  
safety comes along for the ride

This issue: **SMART STICKY TAPE** | **REBAR REVISITED** | **SUPERIOR SUPERVISORS**



# BACK IN BUSINESS

By Carol-Anne Doucet



An industrial distribution company has discovered a sticky solution to address the high rate of heavy lifting injuries.

**G**ood things come in small packages. And, if they're from Acklands-Grainger, they come in medium and large packages too, thanks to an innovative idea that delivers daily reinforcement to its employees about the need to prevent back injuries – one heft at a time.

It's Think Twice, Lift Once – a campaign sponsored by WorkSafeBC and the B.C. Chiropractic Association (BCCA) to promote back safety – that's creating the buzz, says David Comuzzi, a regional director for Acklands-Grainger, Canada's largest distributor of industrial, safety, and fastener products. Comuzzi says the innovative campaign has prompted the distributor's drop-in customers to swap stories about slipped disks while shopping for safety respirators and drill bits.

During a recent two-month pilot, Comuzzi and his team wrapped

their Vancouver and Burnaby outlets with safety messages urging customers – construction workers, janitors, warehouse workers, and other tradespeople – to think twice before lifting. Along with posting safety displays at their entrances and on their counters, Comuzzi's team inserted every imaginable promotion item inside each customer's parcel – from fridge magnets to brochures to safety stickers – all bearing the Think Twice, Lift Once slogan.

But it's what was on the outside of each parcel that got customers talking. Instead of using innocuous beige adhesive to tape their parcels, Acklands-Grainger and the campaign co-sponsors custom-printed roll upon roll of brightly coloured, Think Twice, Lift Once masking tape and used it to fasten each one – a simple idea that triggered unexpected results.

Christine Gildenstern, warehouse associate at Acklands-Grainger, displays the new tape that's making a statement on the shop floor.

*“What we saw surprised us. Because Think Twice, Lift Once was taped to their parcels...some customers began talking with our staff and other store patrons about their own experiences with injuries. It was almost like our customers were sharing their war stories.”*

*—David Comuzzi,  
regional director for Acklands-Grainger*



## The little strip of tape that could

“What we saw surprised us,” Comuzzi says. “Because Think Twice, Lift Once was taped to their parcels, when they came to pick up their supplies at the order counter, some customers began talking with our staff and other store patrons about their own experiences with injuries. It was almost like our customers were sharing their war stories.”

Acklands-Grainger serves roughly 200 walk-in customers every day in each of its Burnaby and Vancouver branches. Those branches handle a high volume of customer orders – about 100 a day each – all of which carry the Think Twice, Lift Once slogan. And that means, Comuzzi says, that the campaign's safety slogan might have wound its way through B.C., having the same effect as a message in a bottle.

“While our Burnaby and Vancouver branches serve their respective communities, it's conceivable one of our parcels – packaged with the Think Twice, Lift Once message – reached someone in Terrace or Tofino,” he says.

The more people who see the message, the better, says Terri Holizki, WorkSafeBC Industry and Labour Services manager. “Back strains account for 24 percent of all work-related injuries and nearly 20 percent of all days lost to work. By building greater awareness, we're hoping we can spare workers from back pain, which can be quite debilitating,” she says. “The good news, though, is back injuries are preventable.”

## Company plans to build on campaign's success

Holizki adds that WorkSafeBC chose Acklands-Grainger for the pilot because the company has a strong safety culture and serves the industries that are most likely to see high rates of back injuries. In addition to the pilot, WorkSafeBC and the BCCA ran two back safety television spots, one of which was filmed at Acklands-Grainger's Burnaby outlet.

While the pilot is now completed, Comuzzi says he's hoping it was just the beginning of something bigger. “We thought it was an outstanding campaign, and would like to see it expanded to some of our other branches, ideally throughout B.C.,” he says.

As for his advice to other employers, Comuzzi wraps it up neatly. “There are lots of opportunities for community partnerships to support workplace safety. Companies like ours simply have to go out and find them.” **W**

