



## 5 Characteristics of a World Class Safety Management System

The Campbell Institute, the National Safety Council center of excellence for environmental, health and safety management, is the leading authority on safety best practices. Members of the Campbell Institute Research & Knowledge subcommittee conducted a comparative analysis of ten award-winning organizations to identify best practices that are common within recognized world class safety programs.

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BEST SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS

One overarching theme observed within these organizations is that world class organizations fundamentally believe that safety is at the core of business vitality and intrinsic to operational excellence and financial performance. These organizations embrace this concept and build it into the very foundation of their safety management system (SMS). A world-class safety management system models the following five key characteristics that organizations can incorporate in their own safety processes.

#### 1. Leadership

Safety excellence hinges upon the ability of individuals throughout an organization – from the CEO to frontline employees – to contribute to building and sustaining an organizational culture that places safety on par with business performance. Management must lead by example which will drive employees to feel engaged with the message and empowered to make a difference.

#### 2. Integrated systems approach

Organizations that have successfully utilized a systems-based approach to safety management have done so by adopting and adapting existing industry standards and international guidelines to ensure that safety is seamlessly integrated across all business functions, structures, and geographies, including consideration of contractors. World-class safety organizations also integrate their systems across safety systems, and in many cases, quality, security and sustainability. By utilizing this integrated approach, safety processes and values become embedded in the way the company does business, rather than an additional initiative that requires special attention.

#### 3. Performance measurement

Organizations with world-class safety records rely on a combination of leading and lagging indicators to promote and monitor continuous improvement activities of safety management systems. By focusing on both types of measurements, the organization is able to evaluate the effectiveness of the entire management system, with an eye towards specific measurable improvement.

#### 4. Alignment to core organizational initiatives

All businesses face complexities and the uncertainty of running a successful business. Regardless of these challenges, world class safety organizations keep safety firmly aligned with other organizational objectives, strategies, and values. This alignment is done through corporate visioning, strategic planning



and budgeting activities. Also, corporate does not compromise on safety efforts, regardless of where the facility is located.

### 5. Corporate citizenship and off-the-job employee safety

In addition to striving for safety excellence on the job, world-class organizations extend their efforts to promote the health and safety of their employees off-site, as well as investing resources in the surrounding communities and environment. Off-the-job initiatives and corporate citizenship are supported through the sponsorship of programs and events, volunteering, community outreach, and improving global issues.

World class organizations make a meaningful difference in the way their business performs, the lives of their employees, the communities that surround them and the environment. Ultimately, while the characteristics outlined can help lead your organization toward a world class safety program, it is important to note that you must design your safety management system in a manner that is unique and tailored to your specific organization, with a goal of continual improvement.

**Source:** *Defining World Class EHS: An Analysis of leading EHS management system practices of Robert W.Campbell Award Winners, The Campbell Institute, National Safety Council*

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