



Creating a Culture of Safety in Your Organization - Part 1: Leadership

Just as your corporate culture includes and affects all employees – from top management to front line workers – so does a safety culture. Consider what your organization would look like if only top executives or only line employees practiced safe habits in the workplace. You would see inconsistencies in process, gaps in buy-in and more incidents and injuries. A safety culture can only grow when everyone in the company embraces safety as a key component in their everyday work.

SAFETY LEADERSHIP - STARTING AT THE TOP

In order to fully integrate safety into the business core culture, leaders must actively promote and foster a culture where safety is expressed as a core value. This may only be done by demonstrating a strong, genuine, continuous and personal commitment to safety. The CEO or president sets the tone for the safety culture, which frames the level of importance of safety within the organization.

5 STEPS FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE SAFETY LEADERSHIP

1. Create a safety vision: Cultural change requires effort and persistence, and is best embraced when leaders and employees view the change as essential to the organization's success. Assess the impact the change will have so that you can plan a way to explain it to the team and involve them in the execution.

2. Establish a core team: Including employees on the core team responsible for leading the change effort goes a long way toward successful execution.

The team is responsible for communicating the need for change, anticipating reactions and addressing concerns, designing and executing the change, monitoring results and publicizing successes.

3. Communicate and support the vision and key values: The safety culture vision is achieved when all employees demonstrate that they embrace safety in their daily work. That is, when they believe that working safely is "the right way to do things." Employees need to observe that management believes it, in order to support the change.

4. Communicate what is changing and why: Employees need to understand the importance of the change. The urgency to change should be tied to important business goals and successes, and most importantly, the value of every worker to the success of the business.

5. Give leaders and managers feedback on their safety leadership: Set regular meetings to review processes and find ways to continuously improve their engagement.

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