

SAFETY CULTURE

A Guide to Effective Measurement and Improvement



QUICK REFERENCE CARD

THE COMPOSITION OF A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE

A strong safety culture consists of **Shared Beliefs**, **Sound Philosophy** and **Practices** as well as **Healthy Attitudes**.

SHARED BELIEFS

A strong safety culture requires a **strong commitment** from the top. Safety must be a **corporate value**, not just “another thing to get done”.

SOUND PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

An organization must have a vision that is supported at the top and **senior management** must develop a clear and concise plan to achieve the vision.

HEALTHY ATTITUDES

Internal motivation needs to be established to ensure success. **Culture change** is a process that, once embraced by the people, brings about lasting change that is passed on from generation to generation in a natural way.

BENEFITS OF A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE

- Impact on Competitiveness
- Impact on Profitability
- Impact on Reliability

EVIDENCE OF A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE

Research has pointed out certain organizational characteristics as evidence of a strong safety culture.

- Strong Leadership Commitment And Involvement
- Good housekeeping
- A well trained and well skilled workforce
- An extensive health and safety orientation program

THE UNIQUE AND INFLUENTIAL ROLE OF THE CEO

The **CEO** (or most senior executive) in an organization’s role is to instill **pride** amongst their board members in the organization’s health and safety record and commitment. To give them a **clear idea** of how the organization benchmarks relative to their competitors and how **improvement** can impact the bottom line.

THE 5 STEP PROCESS TO POSITIVE CULTURE CHANGE

1. Establish a **vision** of the desired safety culture
2. Develop a **strategy** to realize the desired changes and allocate budget resources, personnel, training, and time
3. Gather **input** to assess the existing culture's strengths and weaknesses
4. Implement a **strategy** that tracks safety performance and holds people accountable
5. Positively reinforce **safe** behavioral practices

STEP ONE: ESTABLISH A VISION

The simplest and best way to develop a vision and desired safety culture is to capture your thoughts in a policy, assign responsibilities and develop procedures.

STEP TWO: DEVELOP A STRATEGY

Changing safety culture is not an **overnight job**, neither is it ever fully completed. It can take **several years** to change, and even longer before it starts showing real results on the injury demographic scorecard.

STEP THREE: GATHER INPUT

- Regional communication
- Document review
- Physical inspections
- Employee perception surveys
- Convert your data

STEP FOUR: IMPLEMENT A STRATEGY

- Establish baselines for each measure
- Establish specific goals or targets for each measure
- Assign responsibility for collecting and analyzing the data
- Compare actual performance against the set targets
- Develop corrective actions

STEP FIVE: POSITIVELY REINFORCE SAFE BEHAVIORAL PRACTICES

There are many **strategies** and **action** items that can be used to improve the safety culture of your organization. The best ones will be based on the **safety culture profile** of your organization.

BEHAVIOUR BASED SAFETY 5 STEPS

Behaviour based safety is best described as the application of **the science of behaviour change** to real world problems. Behaviour based safety **focuses** on what people do, **analyzes** why they do it, and then applies a **research supported intervention strategy** to change what people do.

There are five steps most commonly used to achieving a behavior based safety program.

1. Identification
2. Record
3. Reinforcement
4. Evaluating Change
5. Program Review

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION

The starting point for the process of creating positive safety behaviors begins with identifying behavioural issues associated with unsafe acts in the workplace. These can be quickly identified by examining the organization's existing **incident records**, **near miss reports**, standard or safe **working procedures** and completed **risk assessments**.

STEP 2: RECORD

Recording is the next step in the change strategy process. The data is captured by **trained observers**. Observers should be trained to have a full understanding of:

- Why the organization is undertaking this process
- Rationale for workers' unsafe behaviors and how these behaviors can be eliminated
- Methodology behind creating the safety performance indicators
- How to set performance targets with their peers
- How to recognize and manage resistance to change
- How to give constructive feedback to others
- The ground rules for observations
- Who to file the observation data with

STEP 3: REINFORCEMENT

Improvement of safe working behaviors has **real** and **tangible** benefits to employers. Ultimately at the end of the process the organization should see **improvement** in product **quality**, production **quantity** and overall safety statistics. These improvements cannot be achieved without the **reinforcement of positive working behaviors**.

STEP 4: EVALUATING CHANGE

The fourth step of the process is to evaluate the extent which the positive reinforcement is having on unsafe behaviors. The evaluation process is **conducting concurrently** with the **positive reinforcement** and **recognition** process. There should be weekly meetings to discuss findings of the observers.

STEP 5: PROGRAM REVIEW

Follow through is predicated on appropriate actions based on **fact** and the **evaluation** of data. This data provides for the formulation of a new set of safety performance indicators. These new indicators must be **specific**, clearly **communicated**, **simple** and easily **attainable**. It is imperative to continue **coaching** on the basis of significant, verifiable **performance** and **results**. In essence, this is continued **monitoring** and **evaluation** of the change data.

Figure 1

Safety Culture Assessment

