"For safety's sake—do something."

Creating a Positive Safety Culture

Moving from a safety policy to a safety culture requires guidelines that are aligned with the organizational brand, mission statement, principles, and values.

Doing this will actually allow the change to make sense as most people understand that the employer holds a lot of risk. It is important for policies and procedures to be clearly communicated, but along with that communication should be the why. Employees respond better if they understand why something is happening. Communication must be clear and expectations understood but must come from both the top down and the bottom up. Employees must be held to what is expected as long as the expectation is clear.

We must motivate employees to be safer on their own and cannot force or monitor them around the clock. Engaging employees in safety means not only creating awareness of what to do, but also why it's important to them. Safety discussions must go beyond numbers, accident reports, and checklists – what's really at stake are the lives of individuals. When people start to think in terms of what is at stake or what is the risk / loss, they will inherently pay closer attention. A company with a strong safety culture will have a commitment to safety from both leadership and workers.

Companies that can convey care, compassion, and a desire for everyone to go home at night will have a better response than those that solely deliver a message of restrictions or punishment for missing the mark. Safety requires buy-in and commitment from all levels of the organization, starting with senior leaders and driving down. Leadership must model the same behaviors that is expected from the employee which shows commitment and value. Another way to build a successful safety culture is to get input from the employees on issues, challenges, policies, and procedures that will ultimately affect them. One way that SSOE does this is by using surveys and holding lunch and learns with stakeholders. Nothing brings people together better than food!

Examples of a Safety Culture

- Employees have a say in the direction of the company, at least respective to safety.
- Workers are encouraged to submit unsafe conditions.
- Submissions are handled quickly and the risk is removed.
- Everyone is equally held accountable for safety.
- Supervisors lead by example.
- Employees are trained so they understand what is required.
- Employees are held to what is expected as long as the expectation is clear.
- Safety and health are included in all meetings and is the first thing covered to show its importance to everyone.

A SAFE CULTURE AT HOME, WORK, AND PLAY