

Safety Comment



From Compliance to Commitment – the strength of leadership

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How many workplace accidents does your company plan on having this year? Unless it is aiming for “zero accidents” in the workplace, then companies are sub-consciously factoring accidents into their annual plan. Because of the nature of the oil and gas industry, the dangers involved, and the potential for major disasters to occur from a simple accident, operators must always make strenuous efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone employed in it.


Recruitment and retention of the right people is always a HR challenge. In a recent health and safety conference address, I issued a golden adage for successfully recruiting and retaining the right people, and engendering a strong sense of respect, loyalty and job fulfillment - treat them well, train them well, and keep them safe

Treat them well - to do this effectively it requires key leadership skills, which can only be acquired through the practical application of fundamental leadership principles. If you're serious about treating your people well, then you need to examine the level of your organization's social intelligence - the ability to get along with people, while gaining their cooperation. Self-awareness and situational awareness are mandatory. The RASF Principle is a golden rule in customer care, and it should also be the golden rule in employee care - Respect, Appreciation, Satisfaction and Fulfillment.

Train them well - successful organizations of the 21st Century are engaged in continual learning, both in hard skill competencies and the soft skills of leadership development. We must constantly sharpen our skills and competencies through regular refresher courses/programs.

Keep them safe - what motivates your people to comply with safety regulations? Are they motivated by Fear, Reward, or Duty? If your people are only complying out of fear or reward, they will never achieve “zero accidents” in the workplace. The motivation must become second nature to them, it must be done out of a sense of duty. The consistent application of a safety principle creates an automatic conditioned response (ACR) in our daily behaviour - this is commitment. If “zero accidents” is our goal, then we must reach this level of commitment and automatic conditioned response, otherwise it's all only empty rhetoric.

Accountability is a two-edged sword. We must stand accountable for our own actions, but we must also hold others accountable for their actions. Safety is everybody's job, and nobody has the authority to let anyone off the hook in complying with safety procedures. Your core asset is your people. Value this asset and teach them the essential leadership skills necessary to bring your company up to the right level of peak performance, raise the morale of the workplace, create performance excellence, instil a sense of pride in achievements and contribution - and raise the level of integrity in your whole organization in the process.

Safety programs are useless unless they are fully implemented and become part of the Automatic Conditioned Response of everyone in the workplace. This requires strong personal leadership skills. Is it time for you to lead your organization? 



Gerry Madigan is a keynote speaker, corporate trainer, performance management specialist, marathon runner, and best-selling author. Check out his latest book, The TMI, a powerful employee engagement initiative – www.thetmi.com Contact Gerry at Gerry@mmitraining.ca

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