

Building a Strong Safety Culture

No one wants to see anyone injured, but building a safety culture requires more than just looking at safety as an injury-prevention program. It's more than following rules and meeting minimum standards. Employees must be respectful of each other, display courtesy and care about each other. Safety is a teamwork philosophy.

According to OSHA, in a strong safety culture, everyone feels responsible for safety and pursues it on a daily basis; employees go beyond "the call of duty" to identify unsafe conditions and behaviors, and intervene to correct them. For instance, in a strong safety culture any worker would feel comfortable walking up to the plant manager or CEO and reminding him or her to wear safety glasses.

A company with a strong safety culture typically experiences few at-risk behaviors, consequently they also experience low accident rates, low turn-over, low absenteeism, and high productivity.

There are several major processes and milestones that are needed to successfully implement a change process for safety and health. It is best to focus yourself on the process rather than individual tasks. Focus on the "forest" not the "trees" and make mid-course adjustments as needed. Remember to not lose sight of your intended goals, and don't get distracted or allow obstacles to interfere with your mission.

Obtain Top Management "Buy-in" – Senior level managers must be on board. If they are not, safety and health will compete against core business issues such as production and profitability, a battle that will almost always be lost.

Build Trust - Trust will occur as different levels within the organization work together and begin to see success.

Conduct Self Assessments/Bench Marking - To get where you want to go, you must know where you are starting from.

Develop Site Safety Vision along with key policies, goals, measures, and strategic and operational plans.

Define Specific Roles and responsibilities for safety and health at all levels of the organization. Safety and health must be viewed as everyone's responsibility.

Develop a System of Accountability for all levels of the organization. Everyone must play by the same rules and be held accountable for their areas of responsibility

Develop Measures and an ongoing measurement and feedback system.

Develop Policies for Recognition - Reward employees for doing the right things and encourage participation.

Awareness Training and Kick-off - A kick-off celebration can be used to announce it's a "new day" and seek buy-in for any new procedures and programs.

Continually Measure performance, **Communicate Results**, and **Celebrate Successes**. Posting results is very important to sustaining efforts and keeping everyone motivated. Everyone needs to be updated throughout the process

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com