

# **Safety Culture – Getting Employees to work safely**

**Dan Gresock, Zurich**

# Agenda



- Safety Culture
- Influencing Safety Culture
- Motivating employees to work safely
- Input on Safety Culture

# Safety Culture



- What is “Safety Culture” ?
- What your employees do or how they act when nobody is looking.

# Safety Culture – Continued



- Is there a safety culture at your agency?
- Every organization has a safety culture!
- Is it positive or negative is the real question?

# Safety Culture – Continued



- Two Primary Influences on safety culture
  1. Management
  2. Coworkers
  - Both influence the culture - it can be **positive** or **negative**

# How management influences Safety Culture



- **Leadership** – Provide the necessary environment to foster a safe work environment – time, tool, housekeeping, management guidance, etc.
- **Management's actions** – What you do and how you act will affect the culture
- **Rewards and disciplines** – How you apply will affect culture

# How does leadership affect Safety Culture



## Leadership is not

- Power
- Status
- Authority
- Management
- Common sense

The agency manager may or may not be the leader.

## How does leadership affect Safety Culture– Continued

- Leadership is
  - People want to follow: they give you permission to lead
  - People will follow you beyond your stated authority
- Leaders have the ability to influence safety culture positively and negatively
- Your role is to have a positive influence of Safety Culture and lead others in this direction

# How does management's actions affect Safety Culture?



**Usually the most subtle but speaks the loudest.**

- Manager not following safety rules
  - DOT highway project not wearing high visibility vest
  - Not wearing seatbelt
  - Not using your keyboard tray at your workstation

# How rewards and disciplines affect Safety Culture



## Application of rewards and disciplines

- The major problem is the mismatch between the behavior we want and the behavior we reward
  - Rewarding employee for completing job quickly though he/she violated safety rules

# How rewards and disciplines affect Safety Culture– Continued



## Acts of omission speak very loudly too.

No enforcing existing rules is telling employees it is acceptable

Nurse not using lifting equipment to move a patient

Not wearing safety glasses while operating grinder

# How do Co-workers affect Safety Culture



- **De facto Leader effect** – Every organization has one and they can have a tremendous effect on culture

# What causes accidents?



- Two fundamental causes of accidents?
    1. Unsafe conditions
    2. Unsafe acts
  - Unsafe acts cause 90-95% of all accidents
-

# Why do employees commit unsafe acts?



- There are thousands of reasons but **almost all** have the same root cause
  - They are doing what they think their supervisor wants them to do
  - How do employees determine what is important to you?
  - By your actions & rewards and disciplines
-

# Creating a Positive Safety Culture



- Four steps you can take to improve your Safety Culture
  1. Hold yourself accountable for safety – Agency or Individual
  2. Set safety goals
  3. Monitor and measure your success
  4. Develop your leadership skills

# Establishing a culture takes time....and consistency



- You are what you repeatedly do, therefore excellence is not an act but a habit”- Aristotle
  - “Champions are champions not because they do anything extraordinary but because they do the ordinary things better than anybody else”.- Chuck Noll
-

# Experts



- Alan Pepoy
- Dave Bucy
- Donna Emmert
- Kerry Burns

# Questions for the experts

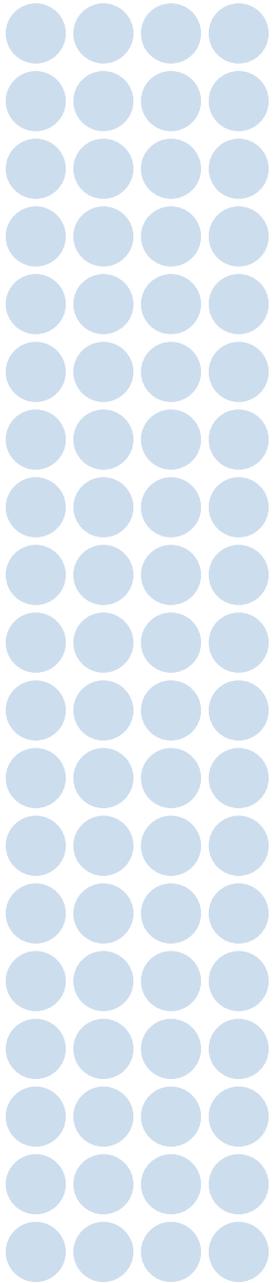


- Tell us your experience as it relates to safety culture. Please elaborate on your experience with an organization that had a negative safety culture and how they resolved this issue. (What were the problems and what did they do to fix them?) **Kerry Burns**
- Based on your experience, please tell us what strategies have worked in getting employees to follow the safety rules. **Donna Emmert**
- Please tell us how safety accountability programs impact safety culture. **Alan Pepoy**
- If you were given the responsibility for managing safety at one of the State agencies, summarize the safety strategies you would apply to help create a positive safety culture. **Dave Bucy**

# CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE



Dave Bucy  
Zurich Services Risk Engineering



# CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE



- **Obtain Top Management "Buy-in"** - This is the very first step that needs to be accomplished. Top managers must be on board. If they are not, safety and health will compete against core business issues.
- They need to understand the need for change and be willing to support it. Showing the costs to the organization in terms of dollars (direct and indirect costs of accidents) that are being lost, and the organizational costs can be compelling reasons for looking at needing to do something different.
- Because losses due to accidents are bottom line costs to the organization, controlling these will more than pay for the needed changes.

# CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE



- **Conduct Self Assessments/Bench Marking** - To get where you want to go, you must know where you are starting from. A variety of self-audit mechanisms can be employed to compare your site processes with other recognized models of excellence, visiting other sites to gain first hand information is also invaluable.
- **Initial Training** of Management-Supervisory staff, and safety and health committee members. This may include both safety and health training and any needed management, team building, hazard recognition, or communication training, etc. This gives you a core group of people to draw upon as resources and also gets key personnel onboard with needed changes.

# CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE



**Align the Organization** by establishing a shared vision of safety and health goals and objectives vs. agency efforts. Upper management must be willing to support by providing resources (time) and holding managers and supervisors accountable for doing the same. The entire management and supervisory staff need to set the example and lead the change. It's more about leadership than management.

**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. How the organization is to deal with competing pressures and agency priorities, versus safety and health, needs to be clearly spelled out.

**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. Signs of a strong culture is when the individuals hold themselves accountable.

# CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE



- **Develop Measures** and an ongoing measurement and feedback system. Drive the system with upstream activity measures that encourages positive change.
- **Develop Policies for Recognition**, rewards, incentives, and ceremonies. Again, reward employees for doing the right things and encourage participation in the upstream activities. Continually reevaluate these policies to ensure their effectiveness and to ensure that they do not become entitlement programs.

Thank you!