

### Building safety culture & safety awareness

Need a robust Safety Management System

The exact form of the S.M.S. will be determined by consultation with the stake-holders but it is likely to include most of the following

- \*Compliance with statute law
- \*Compliance with common law principles
- \*Senior management commitment
- \*OHS policy
- \*Safety committees
- \*Safety meetings
- \*Safety as part of performance appraisal
- \*Supervisors and employees trained and held accountable for safety
- \*Hazard Identification / Risk Assessment / Hazard Control
- \*Incident investigation
- \*Safety inspections
- \*Good housekeeping
- \*Comprehensive induction programme
- \*Goals
- \*Auditing
- \*Emergency response plans
- \*Management of low probability/ high consequence risk
- \*OHS management plans
- \*Core objectives
- \*Role of the health & safety professional
- \*Benchmarking
- \*Safety procedures
- \*Communications
- \*Focus on class 1 damage
- \*Leadership
- \*Employee Assistance Programmes (E.A.P.)
- \*Claims management / Rehabilitation
- \* Internal standards of OHS excellence

### Safety Culture / Awareness

Ways to build safety culture / safety awareness

Advertisements for positions with you have a safety requirement, P.D.'s have safety stipulations, performance appraisal assesses safety performance and responsibilities.

A safety committee that is trained in their role and an effective safety committee

Safety representatives that are trained and play an active role in the S.M.S.

Comprehensive induction programme-Probably need separate programmes for offices and outside work.

Based on my time with BHP I would suggest you need a one day safety management course for supervisors and managers to train them in higher order safety issues.

Risk assessment is a fundamental requirement of the Workplace Health & Safety Act and many larger companies approach to safety, those who interact with clients need to understand how to

carry out this function. Recommend training in hazard identification / risk assessment / hazard control

Involvement of employees in developing safe working procedures using the job safety analysis technique also has a place

Active involvement of employees in the safety programme eg. By involving them in safety inspections is a good idea.

Promotion of safety in corporate publications and the web-site.

Encouraging and publicly rewarding safety innovations and good performance

Regular safety meetings

Safety as the first agenda item on management meetings

Special emphasis programmes-skin cancer awareness, cholesterol testing, drink driving etc, promotional materials are available free of charge from various bodies.

Practice of emergency procedures

Regular audits involving the workforce and feeding back audit results to them

Safety expectations of clients are widely circulated to relevant personnel

C.E.O. publicises he has an open-door policy on safety matters

Safety person who prods, promotes, follow-ups on issues raised, demands a high standard and harasses when the standard is not maintained.

Sounds a bit corny but the big companies have a safety motto, eg. BHP Coal's motto was

“Safety First-Production will follow”

Involvement / participation in the safety programme by employees

Many big employers have a “Safety Charter” that employees and management sign off on when employees start.

Companies with high performing safety programmes often have off-the-job safety promotions

The area of providing alcohol at company functions is fraught with danger. I enjoy a beer as much as the next bloke but it is a risky area for employers. Some companies make a public statement about their policies in this area, only provide light beer (yes I know this will not go over well always but you are making a statement), restrict availability of wine, ensure no spirits are available and ensure snacks are always available, have lots of ice water available and encourage its use, cab vouchers available should they be needed, people are harangued about drink driving at every function. Just need to ensure the team building benefits of such sessions are greater than the risks of liability should someone be injured in a car prang after a company function. Need defined policies in place to limit your liability in case anything goes wrong.

Suppliers of safety equipment eg. Fire extinguishers, first-aid kits often have promotions whereby products can be purchased for employees at a discounted rate.

### **Safety leadership in practice**

#### **Quotable quote**

“The people are fashioned according to the example of their king and edicts are less powerful than the life (example) of the king”

Claudian, c. 365, Egyptian epic poet

Krause describes what excellent safety leadership looks like

#### 1 Vision

The most senior executive must “see” what safety excellence looks like. The leader must convey his vision in a compelling manner through action.

#### 2 Credibility

When an excellent safety leader says something others believe it and do not question his motives.

#### 3 Collaboration

Collaboration encompasses working well with others, encouraging input, helping others, expressing confidence in others support others decisions and gaining commitment.

#### 4 Feedback & Recognition

An excellent safety leader provides effective feedback and recognises people for their accomplishments.

#### 5 Accountability

An excellent safety leader gives workers a fair appraisal of safety efforts and results, clearly communicates people’s roles in safety and fosters the sense that people are responsible for the level of safety in their organisational unit.

#### 6 Communication

As a great communicator the leader encourages people to deliver honest, complete information about safety (even if unfavourable), keeps people informed and communicates frequently and effectively up, down and across the organisation.

#### 7 Values safety

An excellent safety leader acts to support safety values and principles. He leads by example and clearly communicates that safe behaviour is expected.

#### 8 Action-oriented

An excellent safety leader is proactive rather than reactive in addressing safety issues. He gives timely, considered responses to safety concerns, demonstrates a sense of personal energy and urgency to achieve safety results and demonstrates a performance driven focus by delivering results with speed and excellence.

### **Schein relates how leaders embed and transmit change**

The most powerful mechanisms for culture embedding and reinforcement are-

What leaders pay attention to, measure and control

Leader reactions to critical incidents and organisational crises

Deliberate role modelling, teaching and coaching by leaders

Criteria for allocation of rewards and status

Criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement and ex-communication

### **What leaders pay attention to, measure and control**

One of the best mechanisms leaders have for communicating what they believe in or care about is what they pay attention to (What is noticed and commented upon, to what is measured, controlled, rewarded and in other ways systematically dealt with) Even casual remarks and questions that are consistently geared to a certain area can be as potent as formal control mechanisms and

measurements. Other powerful signals that subordinates interpret for evidence of the leaders assumptions are what they observe does not get reacted to.

#### Leader reactions to critical incidents and crises

When an organisation faces a crisis the manner in which leaders deal with it creates new norms, values and working procedures and reveals important underlying assumptions.

A good time to observe an organisation is when an act of insubordination occurs. No better opportunity exists for leaders to send signals about their own assumptions about human nature and relationships than when they themselves are challenged.

#### Criteria for recruitment, selection etc

Leaders who are trying to ensure that their values and assumptions will be learned they must create a reward, promotion and status system that is consistent with those assumptions. Whereas the message initially gets across in the daily behaviour of the leader it is judged in the long run by whether the important rewards are allocated consistently with daily behaviour. One of the most subtle ways culture gets embedded is in the initial selection of new members. Basic assumptions are further reinforced through criteria of who does or does not get promoted, who is retired early and who is excommunicated.

#### Design of physical space, facades, buildings

This category is intended to encompass all the visible features of the organisation that clients, customers, vendors, new employees and visitors would encounter.

#### Stories about important events and people

As a group develops and accumulates a history, some of this history becomes embodied in stories about events and leadership behaviour. The storey reinforces assumptions and teaches assumptions to newcomers. Leaders cannot always control what will be said about them in stories; though they can certainly reinforce stories they feel good about and launch stories that carry the desired messages.

#### Formal statements about organisational philosophy, values

The formal statement is an attempt by leaders to state explicitly what their values and assumptions are.

Let me tell you about the most inspirational leader I have worked with

John Grubb

Quiet, unassuming, humble, high expectations of himself & others

Manager Operations BHP Coal

2 purple hearts from being shot in his role as an infantry commander in Vietnam

Mormon preacher but he did not ram his religious beliefs down others throats

Exceptional work ethic

John used a pencil instead of a biro because pencils are cheaper, John flew economy class when he was entitled to first class, other managers drove Fairlaines, Statesmen & Volvos John drove a Magna.

Mining engineer

For about a year this author worked with John Grubb who could best be described as a charismatic leader who had an overriding commitment to safety This individual would turn up at operating sites in the middle of the night to see how safety was being managed. He would jump on a haultruck and go with the operator while the truck was loaded, the manager would question the operators about safety and tell them that he expected safety to be their top priority. This manager let his subordinates know he expected nothing less than 100% commitment to safety; those who did not comply were not around long. Word quickly got around about the manager's safety expectations, single-handly he raised the profile of safety in the organisation.

References

Krause, T., 2004, *Influencing the behaviour of senior leadership*, Professional Safety, June 2004, American Society of Safety Engineers, Des Plaines, Illinois

Schein, E., 1992, *Organisational culture and leadership*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Edn., Josey Bass, London