Understanding How Leadership Affects Safety Performance

Speaker: Carey Bennett, DEKRA Insight
A Bit of Information About Me

• Union Carbide Corporation/Dow Chemical Corporation
  • 33 years
    • Operations
    • Management
    • Safety
    • Training

• Consolidated Grain and Barge Company (CGB)
  • 8 years
    • Corporate Training Manager
    • Corporate Safety Director

• Regulatory Consultants Incorporated (RCI – DEKRA Insight)
  • 5 years
    • Director of Organizational Development
My Objectives

• Share my experiences as a safety director and a manager.

• Explain how leadership influences safety performance.

• Share recent benchmarking data.
It is a Sad Fact......

14 people died each day in our workplaces.
Number of fatal work injuries by employee status
The Safety Problem

• At no time in history have there been:
  • Better processes and procedures in workplace safety
  • More certified safety professionals

• At the same time, the number of fatal workplace incidents remains pretty flat across the board.

• Forty-five years of workplace safety laws have somehow failed to make significant progress in stopping people from being killed at work!
Why Do You Think This Is Still Happening?

• My opinion: we are still missing one of the major keys to workplace success!

• Workplace safety has not gotten personal yet.

• Yes, we have rules and processes to comply with safety laws.

• But these rules and regs only answer the what, how, when and where of safety.
There’s No Answer For “Why”

• Except:
  • So no one gets hurt.
  • It is a “Best Practice”
  • “That is the way we have always done it.”
  • My favorite – “Because I said so!”
  • And so on…….

• I have come to understand that we have to stop treating safety as a bunch of rules to enforce.

• The problem is that rules don’t really motivate people!
We Need to Rethink Workplace Safety as a Personal Value.

• Safety has got to be able to reach people at a level that’s equal to the caring whispers of someone who matters – someone who says, “I want you around for a long, long time.”

• When we think this way, we understand that safety is all about relationships.
I Hear Each of You Saying, “I care about my people...”

• And I am sure that you do.

• The issue is how we, safety professionals as well as our managers, communicate this to them.

• Think back to your last meeting.

• What was the tone?

• We have to teach our managers better people skills.
How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values and Assumptions

- What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis.
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises.
- How leaders allocate resources.
- Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching.
- How leaders allocate rewards and status.
- How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate.
Safety First – Not!

• A commitment to safety should not be a priority, but a value that shapes decision-making all of the time, at every level.
Safety Culture

• Safety culture is the product of the individual and group values, attitudes, competencies and patterns of behavior that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization's health and safety programs.

• Safety culture is "the way we do things around here," and reflects how we collectively value safety.
A Tale of A Company

• TIR was 6.7
• A new safety program was being implemented
• Very few managers understood their responsibilities in the area of safety
• Production and speed was king
• Company was spread out over 8 states and 108 sites
• Senior management knew a change was needed but were not certain of their role
• Recent Corporate Safety Director just resigned
• Then the phone rings.....
What Were My Findings and Challenges?

• Huge variance in safety process knowledge and management.
• Managers were very good at production.
• Managers were more “doers” than managers.
• Most managers did not understand the basic role of a manager, most were promoted on their technical skills.
• Coaching was not a common skill.
• Communication skills needed improvement.
• People skills, such as performance mgmt., team building and conflict management, were lacking.
What Were My Priorities?

• First, Compliance:
  • Processes and Systems in place
    • Hazard recognition and management
    • Policies and procedures
    • Work processes
    • Injury & incident reporting
    • Tools
    • Auditing
    • Training
    • ETC.....

• Then, Continuous Improvement:
  • More about the people
  • The better you make your people, the more successful you will be
What About Leadership?

• The company had several strong leaders but the primary focus was “making money.”

• There was a huge need to build safety leadership in all levels of the organization.

• My challenge, the same as it is for most every safety director, was how to accomplish this.
Key Ingredients Of An Effective Safety Leadership Strategy

• Success Defined
• Who Leads and Manages Safety
• Desired Management Style
• Roadmap to Desired Destination
• Selection/Alignment of All Safety Programs
• Measurements of Progress and Value Added
• On-Going Communication Plan
Key Roles And Responsibilities for a Leader in Safety

• Establish Priorities

• Setting and Maintaining Levels of Expectations

• Enforcing Accountability

• Challenging the Attainment of Excellence

• Accepting Responsibility for the Results
I Had to Teach Them What Leadership Wasn’t

• Not Power
  • Power derives from status, money, ability to harm, access to information, control of resources, etc.
  • The thug who sticks a gun in your back has “power” but not leadership.

• Not Status
  • Status or position may enhance the opportunity for leadership
  • Some in high status or position haven’t a clue on how to lead

• Not Authority
  • A person may have subordinates but not followers
  • People will only follow if the person acts as a leader

• Not Management
  • Management is an organizational skill
  • Managers preside over processes, functions, programs

• Not Common Sense
  • Common sense – what is it? How do we develop it?
  • Good sense is individual. Common sense would result in common leadership styles.
Each Level Has Its Place In Safety

Senior Management
- Sets the Tone
- Establishes the Priorities
- Defines the Destination for Change

Middle Management
- Reinforces the Direction from Senior Mgt.
- Enables the 1st Line Managers to Lead
- Follows Up for Consistency

First Line Management
- Directly Oversees the Activities of the Hourly Employees
- This is the Most Influential Position of Leadership
- Establishes the Level of Compliance for Their Team

Hourly Employees
- Learns and Complies with All Safety Rules and Procedures
- Identifies and Manages the Risks in All Tasks Performed
- Looks Out for the Safety of Other Employees
Improving Safety Communication Skills

• Effective safety communication is the cornerstone of a healthy organizational safety culture.

• The status of safety in your organization is largely determined by how safety is talked about, from the “boardroom to the breakroom.”
Accepting Responsibility for Results

• When leaders lead safety, they also accept the results of their leadership.

• They don't blame others or look for scapegoats when accidents happen or incident rates go up.

• They know they must lead in both good times and bad.

• They can lead the organization from good to great, or from bad to good, if needed.
## Teach P-L-O-C

### Company Management Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should Have in Place Now:</th>
<th>Should Have in Place by December 31:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) 2016 Strategic Plan</td>
<td>1) Coaching Plan for each direct report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Your Team's tactical plan to support the Company 2016 Strategic Plan</td>
<td>1) Conduct and document a coaching session for each direct report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Plan

1) Open discussion of the Company 2016 Strategic Plan with your team

2) Weekly Team Communication Session (This week's tasks-last week's accomplishments)

3) Written Performance Expectations for your team members

4) Identify and remove any barriers impairing team performance

5) Lead by example

6) Be a "teaching" manager

### Lead

1) Established job roles and responsibilities

2) Clear management reporting structure

3) Key team work processes are documented and understood by all team members.

### Organize

1) Observe and confirm employees' understanding of job duties and competence

2) Establish performance measures and routinely track progress against these measures

### Control

3) Frequent feedback and coaching one-on-one with each team member

4) Recognize and celebrate team performance and contributions at least twice annually
Time Spent On Each Function Varies With Position

- Top-Level Executive
- Middle-Level Manager
- First-Level Manager

TIME

- Planning
- Organization
- Staffing
- Leading
- Controlling
Motivation

• Is what makes people stay on-task and focused on workplace performance.

• Supervisors, who aren’t motivated to reach their crews at the human level, will revert to policing and rules enforcement.

• And if they themselves aren’t motivated, you can be sure their crews won’t be either.

• What results is a stagnant safety culture.
Motivation is about Building Commitment vs. Compliance

**Compliance**
- Do things to get something or to avoid punishment.
- Do only what I am told to do.
- Safety is a priority only if nothing else is important at the time.
- Focused on the rules.
- Positional authority is used to “make” people do things.

**Commitment**
- Do things because I am energized and committed to safety.
- Inspired to strive for excellence.
- I am recognized for my contributions.
- I develop positive relationships and build new skills.
- Safety is a core value.
- My focus is risk and I am concerned about everyone’s safety.
- Influential leadership is used to build commitment.
Building Relationships

• Workplace safety lies in the relationship between the frontline employees, the employee’s immediate manager, and the bond among the entire crew.

• No initiatives, directives, or culture improvement ideas can have positive results if the frontline manager hasn’t established real working relationships.

• The frontline manager needs to be the tipping point between safety compliance and safety success.
One of the Keys

• The relationship between the first line manager and the hourly employee is one of the most powerful and has a tremendous impact on the success of any program or process.

• Look at your most successful teams, what is the manager/employee relationship like?

• Should this be duplicated?
Employee Satisfaction and Employee Engagement – What Do They Mean?

• **Employee Satisfaction**: A measurement of an employee’s “happiness” with current job and conditions; it does not measure how much effort the employee is willing to expend.

• **Employee Engagement**: A measurement of an employee’s emotional commitment to the organization; it takes into account the amount of discretionary effort an employee expends on behalf of the organization.
Understanding the Positive Management Approach

RELATIONSHIPS HAVE TO BE IN LINE FOR POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TO BE EFFECTIVE
Understanding How to Give Effective Feedback

• How would you rate your feedback skills?
• Feedback is how you change the organization!
• How does feedback affect our performance?
How the Process Works

- **Behavior**: an observable act
- **Attitude**: an internal compass that can describe our feelings, emotions and foundational perceptions about a given subject

![Diagram showing the relationship between Behavior, Attitude, Culture, and Feedback.](image-url)
How This Applies to Behavior

Antecedent Beliefs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dirty</td>
<td>…yucky!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratched</td>
<td>…the frustration of poor visibility!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>…the frustration of wasted time!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messes up hair</td>
<td>…foolish, ugly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one else does</td>
<td>…like an oddball!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never have</td>
<td>…the extra effort required to change!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not needed</td>
<td>…forced, imposed upon!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Antecedent Beliefs are VERY POWERFUL!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dirty</td>
<td>Fails to wear face shield while grinding</td>
<td>Feels clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratched</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can see better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saves time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messes up hair</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hair stays nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one else does</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fits in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never have yet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gets disciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loses eyesight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many people wear their face shield while grinding in spite of all of the consequences pushing on them not to wear it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Pre-behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dirty</td>
<td></td>
<td>...yucky!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never have</td>
<td>...the extra effort required to change!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This work is not safe without a face shield</td>
<td>...anxious sensing what happens when a grinding wheel explodes!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t have to be a genius to know that it’s not very bright to play the odds with your eyesight!</td>
<td>...contempt for the idea of unnecessary, stupid risk-taking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m too smart for that!</td>
<td>...pride of self worth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This work makes me anxious without a face shield!
You’d have to be really stupid to play the odds with your eyesight!
I’m too smart for that!

Old Consequence

Right now I feel...
yucky!
the frustration of poor visibility!
the frustration of wasted time!
foolish, ugly!
like an oddball!
the extra effort required to change!

New Consequence

changes to...
...I’m not a baby!
...It’s worth the extra effort!
...It’s worth my time!
...Who cares!
...I’m right about this!
...I’ll make the change!
How powerful is this protective effect?

VERY POWERFUL!
One’s antecedent beliefs are critical to safety!

This work makes me anxious without a face shield!
You’d have to be really stupid to play the odds with your eyesight!
I’m too smart for that!

Our problem then becomes:
How best to help people gain protective antecedent beliefs?
Cognitive Science

- For discovering how we think, understand, and know things.
  - Just as behavioral science is for understanding behavior, cognitive science is for understanding cognitions.
  - Behavioral science and cognitive science are related.
Attribution Theory

Attribution: an explanation of a behavior

I see you grinding without face protection and I think to myself, you are doing that unsafe act because...

- You have a bad attitude about safety.
- You are in a rush and forgot to put it on.

Or...

- You couldn’t find the face shield.
- The face shield is broken.

These are INTERNAL attributions.

These are EXTERNAL attributions.
Powerfully Influence Behavior!

- Research has shown that we act in ways that are consistent with...
  - Our self-attributions
  - Our beliefs about human nature (which includes ourselves)
For Example

- Self-attributions
  - People who make positive attributions about their own abilities are less likely to give up in the face of challenge than those who make negative attributions.
    - Positive: I’ve faced setbacks before and prevailed; I will again!
    - Negative: This always happens to me. I was never any good at this stuff!

- Children who are told that they have a reputation for being very neat, clean up after themselves much more than those who are merely praised for cleaning up.
The Power of Self-Attributions

• Function as Antecedents
  • They are beliefs (often unconscious) you hold about yourself that influence the decisions you make about how to act.
  • E.g., They make you interpret the grinding situation as one in which you require protection.

• Provide Internal Consequences
  • They are the source of emotions that are present right now when you think about an action.
  • E.g., They make you a little uncomfortable at the thought of grinding without a face shield.

• Change Natural Consequences
  • E.g., Instead of feeling squeamish at getting dirty, you feel you are not a baby to let that yucky feeling make you do something stupid.
Where Do You Get Your Self-Attributions?

- Generalizing from observations about how you feel and act.
- Being told about yourself by others.
- Developing ideas to explain other people’s behavior.
- Thinking about human nature.
- Absorbing cultural views about human nature.

*We get our attributions through behaving and interacting with others.*
This means YOU are in a position to influence other people’s self-attributions because your interactions impact their attributions.
Feedback

- **Behavior**: an observable act
- **Attitude**: an internal compass that can describe our feelings, emotions and foundational perceptions about a given subject

*Through Feedback, You Impact Attitude & Behavior*
Transformational Leadership Dimensions

**Inspiring** – Painting a picture for people about where you see the organization going, and helping them see (and become enthused about) their role in that future state.

**Influencing** – Affecting the performance of those around you by acting in ways that build respect, trust, and admiration.

**Challenging** – Helping people to change their paradigms about how things are done and to think creatively about how to do things differently.

**Engaging** – helping each individual to be successful, such as by coaching, mentoring, providing feedback, etc.
It Takes Both...

Vision

Objectives

Goals

Activities

Results

Values

Practices

Behaviors

Leadership

Management
Leadership Lessons from the Front Lines

- Culture cannot be delegated *(so don’t even go there)*.
- Culture must be “the accountability of line leadership”.
- Align the organization around the behaviors that define the values.
- Create the RIGHT opportunities for involvement.
- Flawless execution requires crystal clarity.
- Regularly measure and report on key elements.
- Expect turbulence and do not be afraid to impose your WILL.
Four Principles to Guide Leaders in Taking Ownership For Creation of a Safe Workplace

1. Hold yourself accountable first. When leaders emphasize worker responsibility, they put the burden on individuals who have the least control and the most to lose.

2. Know how safety really works. Too many leaders don’t understand the systemic nature of safety and focus on the wrong data. Their lack of understanding creates a sense that safety is somehow outside their control. Educate yourself about the body of major safety concepts and practices in operations, and know what you don’t know.
Four Principles to Guide Leaders in Taking Ownership For Creation of a Safe Workplace

3. Lead safety as if your family worked there. What would you do differently if you knew the risks in your workplace also affected your spouse or child? Keeping in mind the irreplaceable person behind every injury statistic helps you prioritize your actions – and remember that workers are your partners in safety, not your adversaries.

4. Have a strategy. The leader’s job is to guide the organization to its destination – and that job is no different in safety. Always be able to articulate safety expectations and performance levels for one to five years down the road.
Building Strong Emotional Commitment

- Leaders must act differently if they are going to affect culture change.
- Leaders tend to do what they are comfortable doing.
- This is a result of conditioning and personality.
- Behavioral change will be difficult to sustain long enough to become comfortable.
- The only motivator strong enough and reliable enough to sustain is your value for safety.
- Leaders must become acutely aware of where safety resides in their value system.
What People Want Out of Work

- Clear expectations.
- Meaningful work.
- A connection to broader organizational goals.
- Involvement leads to commitment.
- Productive relationships with their leaders and co-workers.
- Opportunity for development.
How to Teach Leadership

• Who does it the best?
  • Train on concepts
  • Create situations
  • Observe performance
  • Provide feedback
  • Recognize
Benchmarking and Metrics

• DEKRA Insight (RCI Safety) sponsored
• Average two per year
• Free to attend
• Safety directors helping safety directors
• Building relationships and sharing successes
Company Incident Numbers

Where would your company be?
Pro Active Incident Rate

LTIR Top Quartile
58.8

LTIR Bottom Quartile
21.4
Actual Training

LTIR Top Quartile
1711.12

LTIR Bottom Quartile
1211
Traits of an Effective Safety Management System

• Communication from top management to frontline employee
• Up-to-date information readily available
• Ability to measure results across entire organization
• Ability to analyze data
• Simplicity
• Effective employee engagement
• Improved results
Without Leadership

“Only three things happen naturally in organizations: friction, confusion, and underperformance. Everything else requires leadership.”

- Peter Drucker
Presentation Take-Aways

• Good leadership is about influencing your people in positive direction and promoting continuous improvement.
• Train your managers on people skills.
• Learn and teach how to give effective feedback.
• Get a good SMS – don’t fight technology, get involved.
• Good safety is HARD, effort equals results.

You want better results, make your people better!
Thank You!