Making Safety Work

ERM, Kathleen Goossens

## Are you struggling to eliminate major injuries and fatalities?

Your company takes the safety of your people very seriously and has invested a great deal in safety measures over many years. Good safety results are considered intrinsic to the success and growth of the business. Leaders and supervisors spend a lot of time on safety: training, toolbox talks, safety days, leadership safety visits, etc. Whilst there has been an overall reduction in minor injuries, the same reduction is not apparent with regard to serious incidents and fatalities. Performance seems to have plateaued and you are unclear what else you can do to create a sustainable step change.

Creating a Sustainable Safety Culture

It is widely recognised that more than 80% of industrial incidents are attributable to human and organisational failures. Safety performance is a continuing source of risk to business and an increasing focus of business leadership. In many organisations, comprehensive safety processes, procedures and trainings are in place, and various audit programs indicate compliance. Yet serious injuries and fatalities persist. Despite the significant investment in safety management controls, the primary factors found to contribute to fatal and serious incidents are poor hazard identification or risk assessment, unintentional violations, inadequate supervision, improper decision-making or lack of judgment.

Achieving a sustainable step change in safety performance and culture does not require more processes – it requires breathing new life into your existing safety programs through equipping leaders and empowering the workforce with the practical skills to effect change. Unleashing the potential in your organisation and through your people will have a positive impact on your safety performance and will create the engagement, enthusiasm and skills amongst your people to sustain progress.

At the heart of delivering a transformation in safety performance and culture is informed, visible and active leadership. In ERM's experience, leaders, the culture they create, the processes they use and how their actions drive the behaviours of others, that lie at the heart of creating sustainable safety, as illustrated below.
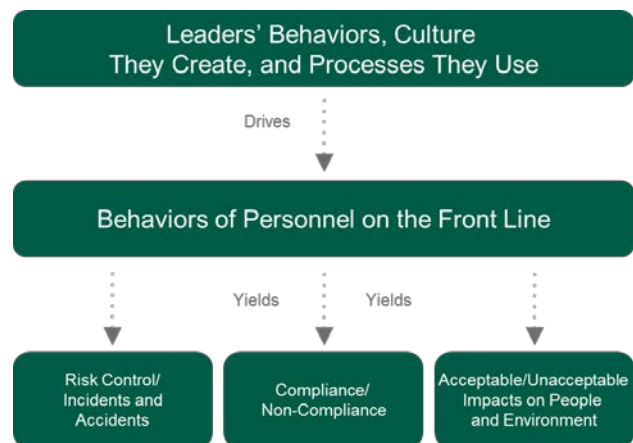
Building a case for change for leaders

Whilst the influence of leaders cannot be underestimated – telling leaders they should change doesn't work. Creating a personal and organisational imperative for leaders to change should be based on data and focused on events and actual conditions on-site – such as serious incident or near-miss events and observations of at-risk conditions and behaviours. This helps leaders understand where there are failures in risk management and has them appreciate the impact that they, as leaders, have on their people and the resultant behaviours that occur. Creating this compelling case for change is essential to generate the leadership alignment necessary to drive the interventions required.

Equipping leaders with practical skills

Through training and coaching, ERM equips leaders with the practical skills that empower them to be more effective in managing risk and in effecting change.

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Improved hazard recognition and powerful high-impact engagement techniques enable leaders to become supportive coaches for their teams and teach others to use these methods. ERM coaches leaders on practical actions they can take to transform the value derived from the established core safety processes.

This proven technique yields excellent results. Many clients have described how this approach has helped leaders grow and become better leaders – and not just with regard to safety.

Join ERM at the 9th Annual HSE Excellence Europe Forum in Luxembourg from the 19th to the 21st of May, where you can learn more about our approach and where we will be leading an interactive workshop on hazard recognition and high-impact engagement techniques.

For more information contact

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