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Safety Culture: Evidence-Based Safety Culture Assessment

Introduction

A strong safety culture is paramount to the well-being of employees, the success and overall health of any organization. Companies that prioritize safety foster a work environment where employees feel protected, valued, empowered, productive, comfortable, and increase engagement. This will ultimately lead to an overall improvement of company morale, help win more jobs, reduce workplace injuries, cost of injuries, and insurance premiums.

However, there are instances where a workplace safety culture feels like it's been neglected, posing potential



risks to both personnel and the company's overall success.

This article explores the importance of a robust safety culture, signs of a deteriorating one, and when seeking external help becomes crucial for rectifying the situation.

Signs of a Negative or Declining Safety Culture

1. A rise or lack of reporting workplace incidents and accidents is a clear indicator of a safety culture in decline. Whether it's minor injuries, near misses, or more severe

accidents, these events signal the need for a comprehensive safety reassessment.

2. When employees disengage from safety protocols, fail to participate in training, or neglect to report hazards, it suggests a disconnect between the workforce and the safety culture. Lack of engagement may be indicative of a broader issue that requires attention.

3. If safety training or procedures are outdated, insufficient, or poorly executed, employees may not have the necessary knowledge

or guidance to perform their tasks safely. This lack of education and updated protocols can contribute to an unsafe work environment.

4. A workplace with a poor safety culture often experiences higher turnover rates. Employees may seek employment elsewhere due to concerns about their well-being, resulting in a negative impact on the company's stability and reputation.

5. Poorly maintained equipment or machinery serves as a visible manifestation of a deteriorating safety culture, signaling a lack of commitment to preventive measures and employee well-being. It reflects a systemic breakdown in the maintenance processes, posing heightened risks and indicating a potential neglect of crucial safety protocols within the organization.

6. The toleration or encouragement of unsafe work practices is a clear indication of a deteriorating safety culture within an organization. Such behaviors not only compromise the well-being of employees but also reflect a disregard for established safety protocols. This permissive environment fosters a culture where risk-taking is normalized, eroding the foundational principles of a safety-conscious workplace,

and increasing the likelihood of accidents or injuries.

7. The lack of follow-through on safety concerns serves as a red flag for a deteriorating safety culture within an organization. When reported safety issues go unaddressed or receive inadequate attention, it communicates a failure in the commitment to prioritize employee well-being. This negligence not only compromises the safety of the workforce but also undermines trust in the reporting system, discouraging employees from actively participating in maintaining a safe work environment. In essence, the lack of decisive action on safety concerns

reflects a systemic breakdown in the organization's dedication to fostering a robust safety culture.

Foundation of a Positive and Healthy Safety Culture

A positive and healthy safety culture is built on company values and mission, clear rules and procedures, leadership training and engagement, recognition, ownership, self-verification, open communication, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Regular training, hazard identification, and a proactive approach to risk management contribute to a strong foundation.



An organization's values and vision serve as the compass guiding the development and sustenance of a robust safety culture, embedding a shared commitment to employee well-being and risk mitigation into the very fabric of its mission.

Clear and well-communicated rules and procedures form the cornerstone of a strong safety culture, providing a structured framework that empowers employees to navigate their work environment with confidence.

The active involvement and dedication of leadership are pivotal elements in cultivating a positive safety culture, fostering a workplace where commitment to safety is not just a policy but a shared value embraced at all levels of the organization.

Recognition of safe practices and achievements within the workplace not only reinforces a positive safety culture but also motivates employees to actively contribute to a secure and collaborative work environment.

Encouraging a sense of ownership empowers every individual in the organization to prioritize safety, fostering a culture where each member actively contributes to the collective responsibility of maintaining a secure and healthy work environment.

Self-verification in safety culture entails encouraging employees and the company to actively confirm and uphold adherence to safety protocols. This promotes a collective sense of responsibility and ongoing commitment to enhancing workplace safety.

Effective communication lies at the heart of a robust safety culture, fostering transparency, timely sharing of information, and open dialogue, all of which are essential for creating an environment where safety is a shared priority among all members of the organization.

Conclusion

Maintaining a positive safety culture is an ongoing process that requires commitment, communication, and a proactive approach to risk management. Recognizing the signs of a deteriorating safety culture and seeking external help when needed can make a significant difference in creating a workplace that prioritizes the well-being of its employees and the success of the organization. A safe workplace is a thriving workplace, and investing in a positive safety culture pays dividends in the long run.

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