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Humanizing Safety

By humanizing your safety program, workers will come to realize that safety isn't just part of the job—it is the job. *p. 6*

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THE MAGAZINE FOR ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERS

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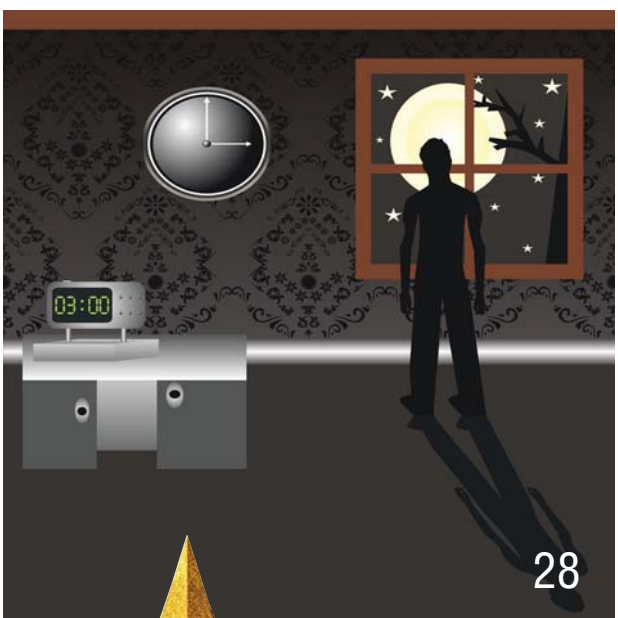

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Get an Early Jump on Your 2024 Plans!

ITEM: We're excited to announce that next year's **Safety Leadership Conference (SLC)** will be held August 26-28, 2024, at the Gaylord Rockies Resort in Denver, Colo.! The theme of our 13th annual SLC will be "Safety First, Leadership Always: Bridging the Gap." After a very successful 2023 event in Orlando, we're pulling out all the stops to ensure SLC 2024 will be even bigger and better than ever. Consider this your invitation to join us as we host safety experts and professionals who share the same goal: achieving world-class safety excellence. There will be keynote presentations; focused safety talks on various compelling topics; exhibits of the latest safety technology and solutions; in-depth workshops; and the presentation of the America's Safest Companies awards for 2024. Go to **safetyleadershipconference.com** for more details.
ITEM: We've also just opened up the Call for Speakers process for SLC 2024. We're looking for safety professionals with great stories to tell and who have practical experience in managing safety operations at their companies or organizations. We're seeking safety leaders who are willing to share best practices in keeping their workforces safe, as well as lessons learned in what works and what doesn't. We want people of all ages, genders, races, and backgrounds who have compelling stories to share with their peers. The five tracks at SLC 2024 will be: Risk Management, Regulatory Compliance, The ROI of Safety, Safety Technology, and Training & Engagement. You can learn more and submit a proposal at **safetyleadershipconference.com/slc2024/callforspeakers**.
ITEM: At SLC 2024, we'll once again be co-located with the Safety+ Symposium hosted by the Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA). Like SLC, the Safety+ Symposium is dedicated to advancing the occupational safety and health profession. Having two prestigious safety events under the same roof at a world-class resort will offer EHS professionals a unique opportunity to share best practices that will help them keep their workplaces safer. For more details, go to **safetyleadershipconference.com**.
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Six Leadership Skills for a Stronger Safety Climate

After years of research and fieldwork, we've identified and validated six key leadership skills that can efficiently enhance your workplace safety climate. Supercharging these skills can lead to a better safety culture and can positively change the narrative about safety performance, outcome reliability and injury reduction.

Download this white paper to discover the relationship between today's safety climate and tomorrow's safety culture, and how you can spark improvements throughout your organization.

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Dave Blanchard
Editor-in-Chief

Safety in Plain Sight

The best safety leaders are able to see what so many others choose not to notice.

The world is not a very safe place to live in right now. You certainly don't need me to point out that obviousism, but from all indications, the "unsafeness" of it all has reached a new heightened threat level, all the more insidious because some of the threats are emerging fully formed from what seemingly had been dormant cocoons. We can stare at something so long that we no longer "see" it anymore, even though the threat is very real.

You can see a ladder lying horizontally in the back of a warehouse. It's been there for weeks… maybe months. Maybe a year, hard to say. Somebody put it there, some time ago, because it needed some repairs. One of the rungs, maybe, was cracked… something like that. Maintenance was going to fix it, or else order a new one. But nobody told the new hire that the ladder was out of commission, and now she's going to be out of work for a while with a busted ankle and a couple cracked ribs. The threat from that ladder was very real, to those who recognized the danger, but nobody thought to act on it.

What about that worker that nobody ever talks to at lunch, but everybody seems to talk about him when he's not around? He made a few weird comments one day, the kind that cause people's eyes to dilate and their mouths to drop open and wonder, "Did he really say that? There's something wrong with that guy!" Word is he was in the middle of some messy domestic stuff, but as long as he got his work done, no need to get HR involved, right?

What about that war that broke out overseas? The politicians and the talking heads on TV and radio get their voters and audiences fired up to choose sides on the debate as to which side are heroes and which side are villains. Your employees start looking at each other differently as they realize they don't all share the same opinion as to who's right, who's wrong. Rather than taking a stand to protect all of your employees from contentious rancor, your senior leadership chooses to say nothing at all. And yesterday, one of your own employees got beat up outside of work because his ethnic heritage comes from the "wrong" side of the debate.

There are clear consequences to turning a blind eye to unsafe situations, whether the situations are broken equipment or broken spirits or an irrational belief that things will get better if you just wish them away. The year 2023 will be known for many things, and a lot of them aren't good things: wars, atrocities, natural as well as human-made disasters exacerbated by negligence, corporate collapses brought on by greed and chicanery, and far too many serious injuries and fatalities in the workplace that could have been prevented.

OSHA was founded more than a half-century ago, and many significant improvements have been made in various areas of workplace safety and the technology to keep people safe is more advanced than ever. And yet, the number of workplace injuries in recent years have been increasing rather than declining. Non-fatal injuries were up 6.3% year-over-year in 2021, and then rose another 4.5% in 2022, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In real numbers, there were 2.3 million injuries on the job last year. So while the total number of injuries has declined significantly over the past 50 years, we're left to wonder why so many workers are still getting hurt.

The answer, of course, is that even the best safety leaders can only do so much. At our recent Safety Leadership Conference in Orlando, attendees heard (from multiple sources) that the two hardest things a safety manager has to do (not necessarily in this order) are:

1. Convince employees about the importance of workplace safety. Nobody ever really thinks something bad is going to happen to them.
2. Convince senior management about the importance of workplace safety. For too many senior managers, safety is a cost, not an investment.

All the evidence points to the conclusion that the best-run companies, the most profitable companies, the most attractive companies to investors and prospective employees, are those that do the most to protect their workers and their communities. Companies that set out to establish a culture of safety excellence are those that ultimately succeed. But getting to that point takes a special talent—an inner vision—and special people, the safety leaders who come to work with their eyes wide open, insistent that "nobody is going to get hurt on the job today. Not on my watch."

Send an e-mail with your thoughts to dblanchard@endeavorb2b.com.

Adrienne Selko
Senior Editor

Why Aren't We Marketing EHS as the Valuable Career It Is?

Some of the best ideas in safety are coming from the newest to join the profession.

Whenever I interview safety professionals, I feel the passion they have for their job and how proud they are to be in this profession. And then I wonder why this profession isn't on the top of the list for every young worker.

Cally Edgren, senior director of sustainability at Assent, an industry veteran with 20 years of experience in safety leadership at manufacturing companies, knows why, and more importantly, what to do about it. "It's time for the EHS community to share the story that the profession has broader social implications and that we need to get out of the old mindset that our job is only to keep our company and workers safe."

So, I sought out a young worker to get her take on this. Maggie Cahoon is a health and safety specialist with Haley & Aldrich who has been in the field since 2020. And already, the passion for her work shines through.

"I firmly believe that safety is one of the best professions as it allows you to interact on a day-to-day basis with people and really make an impact on someone's life," she said.

In college she wanted to find a profession where she could "meet with people and talk with them about what makes their day difficult and what challenges they face and how I can make their lives easier."

And it turned out that the safety profession met those needs. But she feels that the profession doesn't highlight its best features. "I don't think the profession really promotes the reality of the job, which is that about 75% of the time, I'm working with people and helping them get home safely. The technical side of things are less a part of the job than many people might think."

To Cahoon and many of her generation, helping people expands beyond the "walls" of the building and is a driving force when choosing a profession. The company she chose offers a few days off per year to do community projects. "We are given the choice of what organizations we work with, including nonprofits, local service organizations and educational institutions."

Again, those days of service in the community weren't included in the recruiting pitch. It showed up during the discussion around the benefit package.

This is a miscalculation, Cahoon points out. "When you present your organization as one that does good for the community, your company has a better reputation, which makes it more attractive and can lead to more business opportunities. That attraction is also felt internally. Post-pandemic, doing things in the community together gave our employees an internal sense of community that helps with retention."

Of course, it's the culture that dictates whether an organization can provide the service aspect of the job that the younger generation wants. Having leadership that is open to new views is essential. Cahoon believes that companies need to move away from the attitude that the way we have always done things is the way we need to do them in the future. Younger workers' methods of work and their preferred work environment—which includes a well-defined connection to the outside world—need to be considered.

Across the conversations that I have had with EHS professionals, I have seen an emphasis on the connection to the larger community. What's sometimes missing is the vocalization to potential employees as to the progress that is being made and how EHS is an ideal career.

If companies would spend more time talking to young EHS professionals like Cahoon they would understand that the dedication that they have to the field is clearly present in the next generation.

Send an e-mail with your thoughts to aselko@endeavorb2b.com.

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Humanizing Safety:
The 7 Traits That Define Successful Safety Professionals

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By humanizing your safety program, workers will come to realize that safety isn't just part of the job—it is the job.

By Terry Evans and Roger Audino

As safety professionals look to build or strengthen safety cultures throughout their enterprises, drive continuous improvement, improve productivity, and achieve operational excellence, they may benefit from learning seven traits shared by successful leaders who humanize safety.

While focusing on peer-to-peer safety practices that predated the current focus on data and analytics, safety leaders have been able to balance technology and information with worker engagement, motivation and communication.

Whether your immediate focus is to improve employee engagement, introduce new processes, or completely transform the safety culture of your organization, embracing the following characteristics can help you achieve results faster, easier and with the added benefit of sustainability.

1. BE AUTHENTIC.

As you try to build your safety program, people will not believe in you or trust you if you are not authentic. They must believe in you before they believe in your message. Authenticity comes from within, so you literally have to walk the talk.

Go on Gemba walks; get out onto the factory floor, the worksite, or wherever work is being performed and speak with employees one-on-one. Listen intently to your people and hear what they say. Ask the question: "If there's one thing that we could change to make your job safer, what would it be?"

Keep track of how many times Gemba walks are done by your safety team members and how often you've implemented change based upon the feedback you've received. Some words of wisdom: Talk with your team—and not down to them. Embrace empathy; put yourself in the workers' shoes and make a genuine effort to understand what they're experiencing.

2. BECOME INFLUENTIAL.

This goes hand in glove with authenticity. In effect, your authenticity will determine your ability to influence the behavior of others. You can't be influential over someone you don't have a relationship with. So, drop the act: Don't undermine your authenticity by trying to "act" like a manager or a safety professional instead of just being who you are.

Be present in the workforce and take advantage of opportunities to engage workers individually in informal situations, such as the break room, to help remove the barriers your different roles place between you and other employees. Remember as well that safety can't be a one-person show; it involves continually finding and recruiting influencers at your jobsite, bringing them into your group, and keeping them engaged. This enables you to maintain and expand the influence of your safety team on the workplace.

Keep these influential workers engaged by taking a proactive and genuine interest in what they're doing and by finding out what's important in their lives. Don't underestimate the power of rewards. Their significance is in recognizing an individual for an action or behavior and doesn't need to have monetary value. For example, simple incentives, such as safety performance or leadership stickers (which construction workers often proudly display on their helmets), help keep influencers motivated. They are one of the keys to influencing behavior in the workplace when your safety team is not present.

3. BE A SERVANT LEADER.

The concept of servant leadership is a nontraditional leadership philosophy, involving behaviors and practices that emphasize the well-being of those being served (i.e., employees and customers).

Traditional leadership typically focuses on strategy, goals, financial performance and customer satisfaction as top priorities. While those standards are important, they are inherently limited; servant leaders go further, focusing on creating an environment where their teams can thrive and accomplish their highest-impact work. This selfless leadership approach believes elevating the team will, in turn, raise the level of all aspects of the team's performance. Reimagine your self-image and embrace the concept: "I'm here to serve the greater good of this group of people whom I work with."

Finally, to be a servant leader, you need to make it part of who you are; you can't just try to project this mindset when you're out in the workplace. Ways to be a servant leader include: being a mentor, leading by example, bringing influencers into the safety tribe, appreciating how critical they are to your safety initiative, and being honest and engaging so they continue to trust you and believe in you.

4. FOCUS ON LONG-TERM RESULTS.

When you look at the big picture of your overall safety program, chart your progress along a continuum. Recognize that making a series of what might be

considered small changes to achieve marginal gains ultimately will add up to sustainable performance improvement over the long run.

By keeping track of the face-to-face interactions that you and your team have with individual workers along with any incremental gains that result from these dialogues, you're creating a sustainable pattern of continuous improvement in safety performance. This will lead to the achievement of your long-term objectives for safety, such as incident reduction and productivity improvement.

5. BE COURAGEOUS.

There's a time when every safety leader must speak up in their interactions with management and senior executives, explaining what's needed from them to help improve safety and performance. Unfortunately, too often, we're all guilty of not being courageous enough and fall short of what we need to do—or ask for—to make sure leadership provides the support or resources needed to advance a safety initiative.

By recognizing our own shortcomings, we can try to avoid cascading a lack of courage within your team and throughout the workforce. Encourage your team members and workers to speak up. Strive to increase participation in your safety program. Keep track of how many people actively participate in your safety meetings. Instill courage in your workers from top to bottom, bottom to top and across the entire enterprise. Actively recruit volunteers to help with training, instruction, improved work processes and safety regimens.

6. BECOME A DATA 'BEAST.'

Scrutinize available loss and incident data on a timely basis to find out what's working and what's not in your safety initiative. What's being neglected? What doesn't translate from your training to the performance on the work floor? Use data to help determine where you need to focus attention, not only with respect to business processes and operations but—more importantly—in identifying breakdowns with people, communications, coaching and training.

Review your leading indicators system with people who understand what are statistically significant contributors to safety improvement. Capture information from your coaching interactions. Record achievements and certifications. Don't overlook the need to constantly measure your human-to-human interactions.

Track leading indicators over lagging indicators. Recognize that incident rates, while important, are the result of many complex actions outside the control of the safety program and therefore are a poor indicator of safety performance. Leading indicators focused on the actions of your team are directly under the control; thus, they are much more relevant indicators of your safety program's effectiveness. Remember, what gets measured is what gets done.

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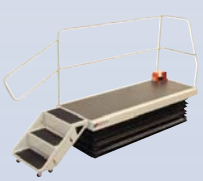

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At the same time, your safety team members, operational supervisors and workers need to be comfortable with leveraging technology; today, there's still too much paper-based incident data and other safety related documentation. Collecting, recording and sharing information on paper delays the ability to act quickly.

Understand what data you need to collect to drive where you direct your team's influence. Focusing only on the metrics can put blinders on the human element. Recognize that while policies, procedures and paper all contain a great deal of information, it's people who are influential.

Use the data you get from hazard assessments, coaching interactions and follow-up to training. Across your operations, the comfort level with your safety program will increase when workers at all levels realize the focus on safety is primarily for the benefit of each individual worker rather than solely to support the company's profit objectives.

For instance, tracking and using workers' compensation costs are important, but they can be disassociated from the people on the work floor. Show workers data that are most important to them. Know what data to collect to influence what people focus on in their jobs.

7. TAKE ACTION.

The combination of all these traits enables and encourages workers to participate actively in your safety program. It won't happen overnight. It will take time to improve consistency as more workers embrace your efforts and want to be part of your safety tribe. Giving people timely feedback and follow-up on how their suggestions resulted in actions (or were reviewed, considered, or discussed) will keep them motivated, encourage them to spread the word, and increase participation in safety programs.

By engaging in these dialogues, you give more people in your organization the ability to be part of the process. As a result, you'll see material changes in your safety program, including more robust and timely safety inspections and investigations of incidents and near misses.

By humanizing your safety program, listening to your people, getting their input and buy-in, and obtaining their feedback, workers at every level will come to realize that safety isn't just part of the job—it is the job. When that happens, you'll see material changes in your safety program, including fewer incidents and near misses, better productivity, greater employee satisfaction, and continuous improvement in overall safety performance. **EHS**

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How Knowledge Sharing can Boost EHS Compliance

Here are three common barriers to environmental reporting compliance—and three ways to overcome them.

By Luke Jacobs

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Environment, health and safety (EHS) professionals in manufacturing are faced with the challenge of maintaining a safe workplace for employees across multiple facilities. This is in addition to maintaining compliance with any highly regulated industry standards on a daily basis.

EHS professionals play an integral role in ensuring reporting compliance, preserving environmental health, and mitigating noncompliance risks across the entire business operations. This includes managing reporting deadlines and inventories for an extensive amount of chemicals, collecting environmental data for Tier II reports, and maintaining Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) compliance. When these tasks and data are scattered, it can feel like an impossible job for one person, or even a team of EHS professionals, to handle.

The reality of environmental compliance is that it requires proactive planning and collaboration from the corporate back office to the shop floor. Transforming and streamlining environmental compliance processes across the entire organization can relieve the otherwise heavy workload of an organization's EHS professionals and improve overall productivity. This collaboration can also help business continuity through change management and ensure visible and trustworthy data.

3 BARRIERS TO ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Knowledge sharing and compliance systems allow companies to operate more efficiently. But before a company can dive into any knowledge sharing, its leaders must understand the obstacles that are currently making environmental compliance difficult; they must learn how to better harness relevant information across different facilities. Here are three areas where we often see logjams.

1. Data silos

One of the most significant obstacles for EHS professionals is gathering accurate and timely compliance data. Scattershot data monitoring and data collection across multiple facilities by multiple people open the door to reporting errors and missed deadlines.

Gartner reports that 94% of businesses believe the data they hold is inaccurate. Furthermore, poor data quality is presumed responsible for an average $15 million per year in losses. Not only can accurate data be lost in different locations, but employers are also wasting valuable human capital in the time spent collecting data. The more background knowledge shared between groups, the more visibility there is. This can result in more trust in the data and its sources.

By utilizing technology, specifically, a unified data system that centralizes all the environmental data for a given program area, EHS professionals can have a "single source of truth," eliminating the need to start over every reporting cycle and ensuring they are more confident about the data they're reporting.

2. EHS employee turnover

Without a centralized system for information, fulfilling environmental compliance reporting tasks can get complicated. Employees who monitor hazardous chemicals in individual facility operations play an important role in capturing relevant and auditable data.

If an employee takes another internal position or leaves the company altogether, that valuable institutional knowledge is lost. The Great Resignation, layoffs and high U.S. employee annual voluntary turnover rate could negatively impact safety departments because of non-standardized processes, whereby different people are constantly taking over the data collection and reporting tasks.

Establishing streamlined and standardized processes within environmental compliance programs is integral to knowledge sharing because it reduces switching costs and

lost time due to employee turnover. This allows new employees to step in and pick up the slack quickly while maintaining data integrity.

3. Changing state and federal regulations

EHS professionals must adhere to ever-changing and highly regulated environmental laws. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can add new chemicals to its extremely hazardous substances (EHSs) list and alter threshold planning quantities (TPQs) at any given time. If companies don't subsequently meet these new or updated requirements, they may fall into noncompliance and face financial penalties.

TPQs limit the number of hazardous substances at a particular location to minimize the risk of an accident occurring. But in order to remain compliant, companies must be aware of all hazardous chemicals on-site at a given time. This can be challenging for individuals in a manual system; however, with electronic reporting, companies can quickly and easily determine if they exceed the stipulated TPQ for that particular material and keep audit-ready data on hand.

3 WAYS TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

So, what's the solution to overcoming these obstacles? Work smarter, not harder.

While this may seem to trivialize the issue, this cliché couldn't be more accurate. EHS teams in a manufacturing setting should reconsider the way they approach data collection, especially as they experience high occurrences of growth and change management in their organization. It's simply not sustainable to have siloed environmental data that is scattered across different locations.

Empowering employees with constant collaboration and a single source of truth for environmental data allows for strategic decision-making and proactive compliance. This can save on noncompliance risks, people hours and internal costs. Here are three ways automated reporting can help.

1. Connect with, and educate, the greater team.

Once leaders understand the issues that contribute to an inefficient environmental compliance system, it's time to sync with the greater team.

According to a Gallup report, only 44% of employees see how their individual goals connect to organizational goals. This statistic highlights a major opportunity for business leaders.

When organizations empower EHS professionals to communicate with different teams across the organization, educate on regulatory expectations and explain laws that impact day-to-day work, they can naturally move the needle toward a more productive and compliant workplace. However, EHS employees can't be the only ones prioritizing environmental compliance throughout the organization.

Executive-level support and collaboration with EHS teams are necessary to gain buy-in to new safety standards, thereby creating a stronger culture of workplace safety. And when business leaders allow all employees to learn more about regulatory requirements for environmental compliance and ask questions, those employees are more likely to be part of the solution.

2. Invest in tools that meet organizational needs.

If the goal is to increase shared knowledge between EHS, production and other teams (e.g., accounting and purchasing), channels need to exist for this information exchange to take place. Organizations can leverage technology to radically transform how EHS professionals—and other compliance stakeholders—collect and share knowledge by taking these steps.

Here are four areas to consider investing in:

- Consider what parts of the data collection and report compilation process can be standardized and automated, then streamline those processes to simplify year-to-year Tier II report-building.
- Build dashboards to keep a bird's-eye view of data. Dashboards that provide a 360-degree view of an organization ensure EHS teams and company executives are kept up to date.
- Implement EHS software that can eliminate menial and time-consuming tasks. Environmental management systems can free up EHS professionals' time to allow them to focus on more strategic initiatives.
- Challenge EHS professionals to advise on technology decisions. As different solutions are tested, leaning on these employees to weigh in during the decision-making process increases the chance those tools and technologies are actually used. This, in turn, guarantees the money an organization invests in digital tools enhances the employee experience and boosts overall productivity.

3. Ensure positive business and environmental outcomes.

EHS technology is an up-front investment but can help cut company costs over time. From a company culture standpoint, digital tools can play an important role in employee retention and performance. International Data Corporation's recent productivity study stated that companies with collaborative work environments see 30% less staff turnover—and 30% higher productivity per employee.

Maintaining environmental compliance is essential to companies for reputational, legal and ethical reasons. Organizations that invest in their environmental teams and find digital tools that support their enterprise needs reap the benefits.

Knowledge sharing creates a well-informed, positive safety culture that catalyzes more cross-function between teams. In turn, this leads to a safer and more productive organization. **EHS**

Luke Jacobs is CEO and one of the co-founders of Encamp, a provider of EHS compliance software.

An Inclusive Approach to Safety

If you want to improve safety in your organization, a good starting point is to look at your company's approach to inclusion.

By Kimberly Kellermann

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Having worked in leadership roles in manufacturing for 25 years, I have long been aware of the link between inclusion and safety. When an organization is inclusive and engenders a sense of belonging, people are more likely to keep themselves and others safe.

UNIQUE AND INCLUDED

It's important to understand what is meant by inclusion. Diversity, equity and inclusion are often lumped together, almost as if they are synonymous. Yet this is not the case, and it is important to know the difference in order to unravel the connection between inclusion and safety.

It is perfectly possible for an organization to be diverse and equitable—providing equal rights and opportunities for all—without being inclusive. Employees may be treated fairly, but they will only feel included when they also know they are trusted, have a sense of belonging and feel their voice is heard.

The link to safety here is clear: A psychologically safe working environment is one of trust, shared values and confidence, wherein all team members feel comfortable speaking without fear. When this type of culture thrives, individuals are empowered to do their best and teams are more likely to perform well and adapt effectively.

In essence, the characteristics of inclusive and psychologically safe environments are the same. Given this, what can we do as safety leaders to nurture both inclusion and psychological safety in our workplaces?

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

When your employees feel truly included, they are likely to have the confidence and enthusiasm to be themselves, voice opinions and thoughts without fear or embarrassment, share ideas and innovate, ask for help, and do their best work.

As safety leaders, we can foster a culture of inclusion—and hence psychological safety—by actively modeling these behaviors ourselves. We need to get out onto the production floor as much as possible to talk, learn and share ideas. We need to ask questions and listen to the views and ideas of our production colleagues. After all, they are the experts in their roles. Our goal should be to ensure our facilities are respectful and collaborative environments.

At the heart of this is building trust. Trust is multifaceted, difficult to define, hard to establish and easily lost. To instill trust successfully, it is essential we communicate authentically, in a way that resonates with our colleagues and meets them where they are. A strong, nuanced and behavior-driven leadership approach is the greatest tool in our box. Lead by example. Lead with consideration to exactly where the individuals on your team are at. Lead with empathy, compassion and without fear of vulnerability.

BEHAVIORS AND COMMUNICATION

Leaders modeling inclusive, psychologically safe behavior is highly effective at a micro level. But how can we ensure that everyone across the organization gets the message?

Go back to basics to define key, nonnegotiable behaviors that underpin safety in your organization. For example, you might identify that you want colleagues everywhere—regardless of culture or context—to always intervene if they feel a situation or behavior might be unsafe, either by speaking up or by stopping work.

You will then need to communicate this vital message to colleagues clearly and repeatedly; only through constant reinforcement will people have the confidence to put the messaging into practice. Empowering individual leaders to adapt the way messages are cascaded to their teams can have a huge bearing on how well they are understood and internalized, particularly if your organization is global. Although the high-level message transcends culture and context, the specifics can be varied to meet local needs. Leaders who communicate well with their teams are powerful catalysts for inclusion and psychological safety.

FROM SAFETY, SUCCESS

The bottom line: If you want to improve safety in your organization, a good starting point is to look at your company's approach to inclusion. By improving this, you will lay the foundations for creating a psychologically safe environment. As a result, people will have the confidence to speak up if they're not sure how to do something. To ask for help rather than taking an unnecessary risk out of ignorance. To suggest better, safer ways of doing things. To care about their team and keep each other safe.

In my experience, don't underestimate the wider impact of this. Embed psychological safety among your workforce, and you'll lay the groundwork for an exponential increase in the success of the entire organization. We see time and time again that workplaces where leaders establish an atmosphere of compassion, support and respect are those that demonstrate cohesion during periods of turbulence. Now, more than ever, creating a measured, top-down strategy for communicating psychologically safe behaviors is fundamental for the survival and success of organizations in every sector.

An unquestioned environment of inclusion and trust will not only keep people safe—it will bring out the best in the entire organization. **EHS**

Kimberly Kellermann is senior vice president of the Global Operations Group at Greif, a provider of industrial packaging products and services.

EHS Technology:

ADOBE

It's All in the Data

The latest tech innovations are not only keeping workers safer but are also showing a solid ROI.

By Adrienne Selko

It seems like almost every day a new technology hits our radar, and that's certainly true for EHS professionals. Innovations and new tools are emerging that are designed to keep the workforce safe, or at least safer.

Many of these new solutions focus on providing more visibility into the myriad processes that comprise an employee's workflow, whether it be applications that can determine if machinery is operating correctly, or devices that can assist employees in performing their jobs in a more ergonomically correct manner, or autonomous vehicles such as drones that can provide aerial views of particularly danger areas. On a broader scale, both internal and external environments can be improved as the result of software which can take a variety of measurements, analyze data and often suggest action steps.

While much of the technology has been focused on identifying risk, future applications will be more proactive about predicting risk. In fact, a recent survey from analyst firm Verdantix found that 44% of respondents ranked proactive risk management as either the first or second most influential factor driving their budgets.

This proactive perspective is especially useful to address one of the areas that is increasingly coming under the EHS umbrella, namely ESG (environmental, social and governance). While publicly listed companies must report Scope 1 and 2 emissions, Scope 3 will become mandatory within the next year. Verdantix points to such technologies as continuous emissions monitoring systems (CEMS), carbon management software, digital product passports, digital permits to work, and IoT sensors for environmental monitoring as being useful for ESG compliance.

Another tech trend that is beginning to show some inroads is the use of connected worker solutions. These technologies include virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). However, according to Verdantix, the business case of these technologies is not as promising as companies thought. The

Verdantix analysts note, in their EHS tech roadmap, that "cost, ergonomic issues and poor image quality have all contributed to [VR's] slow uptake by EHS executives."

On the other hand, technological advancements can provide a good return on investment when it comes to reducing injuries from musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). An October 2023 survey from the National Safety Council (NSC) found that passive exoskeletons have been shown to reduce muscle activity by up to 40% and, in one case study, decreased worker fatigue by 45% while boosting organizational output by nearly 10%.

The NSC adds that wearable sensors, which can provide real-time feedback, can reduce back injuries caused by poor posture, over-reaching and improper lifting.

WEARABLES AND SENSORS

Other wearables such as smart clothing can also monitor body movements and provide feedback. Wearables have been shown to reduce worker strain in both warehouses and manufacturing in general. One example are gloves that are able to reduce potentially harmful hand movements by up to 20% within three months.

> "On a braoder scale, both internal and external environments can be improved as the result of software.

Smart helmets are another example of how sensors, and in this case augmented reality, can be built into a product. According to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, smart helmets have been linked to improvements in productivity and workplace safety. One of the ways sensors can do this is by using a health monitoring function that tracks focus and cognitive states as well as vital statistics. The data can identify if a worker is too tired or unfocused to safely perform a job.

Wearables can also monitor the environment. For industries such as chemical refining, oil & gas, and others that involve exposure to toxic substances, these devices can track, report and even alert emergency teams if necessary.

As these sensors are showing, it's the collection and analysis of data that is central to preventative actions. Here are some examples of companies that are using technology to improve safety in their workplaces:

ADVICS North America

Using sensors and software, this manufacturer of automotive brake systems found a 23% reduction in overall risk by finding the optimal configuration of a conveyor. The improved configuration led to a 66% reduction in right arm risk.

Using another type of software to improve ergonomics, the company experienced a 61% reduction in spine risks and a 41% reduction in shoulder risk.

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This third-party logistics provider (3PL), which manages more than 90 facilities, wanted to improve safety for pickers at its most physically demanding warehouses. With employees wearing a clip-on device on their shirt, the sensor provides both audible and vibration feedback alerting employees of hazardous movements they might make. The feedback from the sensor has resulted in a 22% reduction of hazardous movements.

Peugeot

This auto manufacturer uses a virtual reality safety program that provides interactive 360-degree movies. The company reports that the more than 40,000 workers who have used this training retained information better and were more engaged.

EVALUATING TECHNOLOGY

As the current technologies improve and new ones are introduced, companies face the question of how best to evaluate safety solutions. The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) offers these tips from Jeff Hoyle, director of ergonomics services at The Ergonomics Center at North Carolina State University:

- Cost:As these technologies become more widely available, costs will decrease and more companies will realize a positive return on investment, including greater injury prevention.
- Scalability: Many of these technologies are designed to assess a single person, such as computer vision technology and some wearables.
- Data accuracy:Many companies claim to produce accurate data, but Hoyle has reservations about claims because of his own pilot testing of computer vision systems. “There’s a lot of promise, but additional validation testing is needed,” he notes.
- Data security and privacy:Videos of employees and risk metrics must be protected.
- Data processing power:The amount of data generated is enormous and the processing power needed to analyze it can be expensive, Hoyle says.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

To help companies continue to navigate the safety technology frontier, the NSC has created a research initiative called Work to Zero. It has defined more than 100 EHS technologies that the organization feels are effective at reducing risks. It has created a searchable collection of information, called Safety Tech ai, that includes a variety of mediums to provide information about trends.

With the exponential growth rate of technological development, it is safe to say that EHS professionals will continue to uncover and benefit from increasingly innovative ways to protect workers. **EHS**

Highlights from Safety

Orlando World Conference Center
MARRIOTT

Three days of safety excellence from SLC 2023 in Orlando, captured in photos.

By Dave Blanchard

"Establishing a Culture of Safety Excellence" was the theme of the 12th annual Safety Leadership Conference (SLC 2023), held September 18-20, in Orlando, Florida. Roughly 300 safety professionals spent three days networking, sharing best practices, and learning from their peers how to build and sustain world-class safety cultures.

The event included keynote presentations from Ben Andrew, Rick Fulwiler and Stephen Jenkins; workshops; facility tours of Mitsubishi Power and Nautique Boat Company; a Tabletop Expo; and 15 sessions organized into five topic areas: Risk Management, Regulatory Compliance, The ROI of Safety, Safety Technology, and Training & Engagement. And thanks to our co-location partnership with VPPPA, SLC attendees were also able to attend some of the VPPPA's Safety+ sessions.

As in years past, one of the highlights of SLC 2023 was a gala event honoring the 10 winners of the 2023 America's Safest Companies awards.

The following pages offer visual highlights from SLC 2023 (unless otherwise noted, all photos were taken by Endeavor's Robert Schoenberger), but of course these are just snapshots from an event that's already happened. If you want to make sure you're part of the industry's leading event dedicated to safety leadership, make plans now to attend Safety Leadership Conference 2024, August 26-28, in Denver, Colorado. Hope to see you there! **EHS**

Leadership Conference 2023

Ben Andrew, NFI Industries

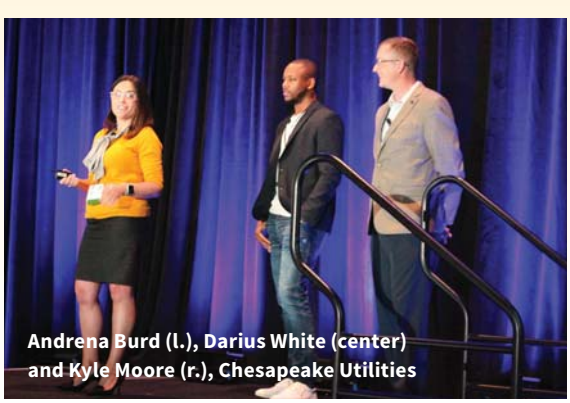
Stephen Jenkins, Cintas

Rick Fulwiler, TLA

Nautique Boat Company Tour

Mitsubishi Power Tour

Greg Pass, YKK


Andrena Burd (l.), Darius White (center) and Kyle Moore (r.), Chesapeake Utilities

ACCO Brands

Performance Contractors

Yaskawa America

America's Safest Companies Winners

ACCO Brands
Cajun Industries
Jordan Foster Construction
Loven Contracting
MasterBrand Cabinets
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Performance Contractors
Price Electric
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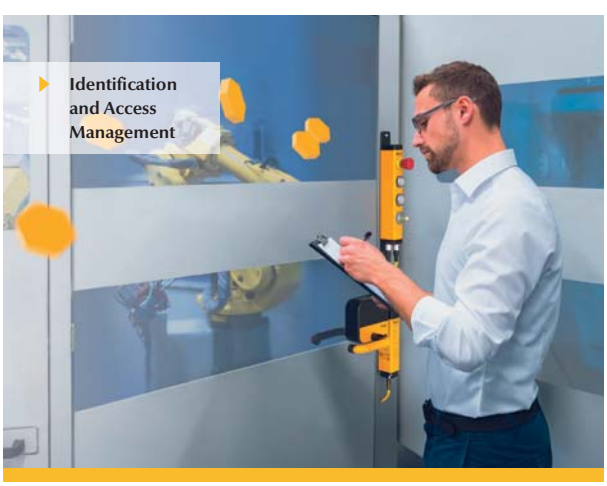

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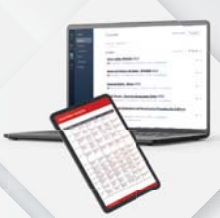

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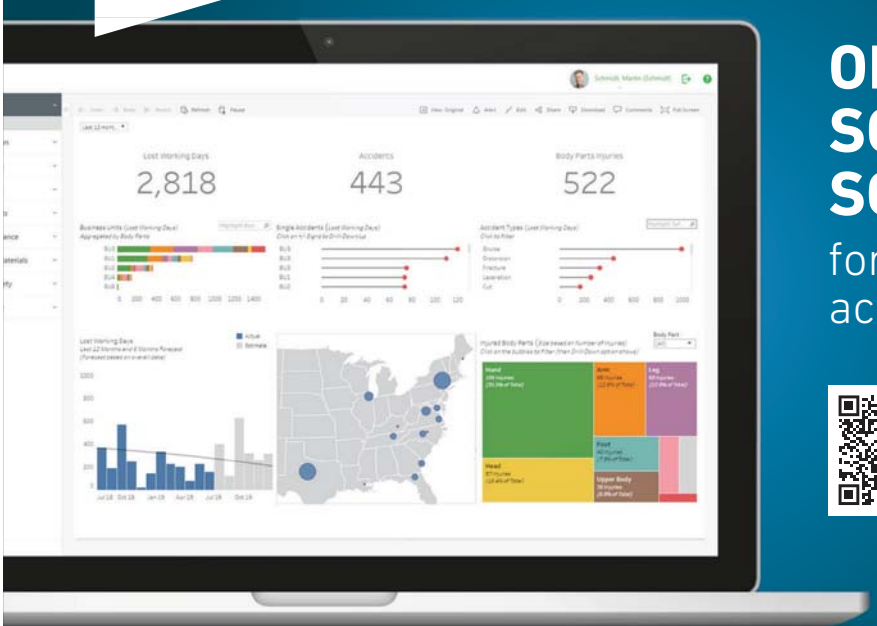

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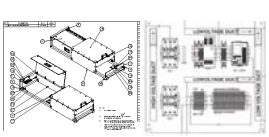

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10 New Trends That Keep Me Up at Night

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Is your safety and overall business strategy aligned and prepared for today's realities?

By Shawn M. Galloway

Workplaces have changed (some drastically) since 2020, making previous safety strategies obsolete. We must change our approach to meet these new realities; otherwise, we can expect broader organizational challenges in the days ahead. Ten new trends are significantly impacting overall performance and culture in most industries. A new strategy is needed.

In my 2023 book, *Bridge to Excellence: Building Capacity for Sustainable Performance*, I outlined what it takes to build sustainable excellence within a business using the metaphor of building a bridge. I also cautioned readers (or listeners) of the book that constant inspection and maintenance are required, as unexpected things will inevitably occur that will stress the bridge. As such, I've been on the constant lookout for potential stressors. Unfortunately, I've found them everywhere, and they are not just impacting safety performance and safety culture.

The following are workplace indicators, or trends, that concern me—and should concern you, too.

1 Workplace shortages and decreased expertise. This is seen in attrition, increasing attendance issues, and reducing average knowledge levels and competencies.

2 Engagement scores are decreasing, and active disengagement is increasing. This is especially true among remote employees, who aren't as connected to their organization's mission and purpose.

3 Less training and new training new. There is decreased time training new employees in their work, and new employees are training new employees. This creates cultures of decreased understanding of hazards and risks associated with the work.

4 Corrective actions are more paperwork and PPE. When comparing thousands of corrective actions taken after an injury against the hierarchy of controls, most fall into the additional administrative controls or PPE category. Combined with the previous trend of more junior employees training new hires, this creates additional potential for error or injury.

5 Decreased oversight. This is observed with first- and second-line supervision and safety professionals not in the field or on the floor as much as needed to observe work as it occurs and proactively seek out deviations to

address influences before they result in an unwanted event. Additionally, in several organizations, the experience levels of these leadership groups are also decreasing. This results in less technical or operational knowledge of the standards by which the work should be performed safely.

6 **Normalization of deviance.** The previous themes contribute to many operational environments where it is becoming culturally normal to perform work incongruent with the standard or how the work was planned.

7 **Persistent supply chain disruptions.** This results in increasing stress with operational leaders who still need to meet production or productivity targets, leading to workers performing the work without necessary parts, equipment, chemicals, etc. In several organizations, this is observed in work being performed out-of-scope or out-of-process.

8 **Heightened anxiety, stress and mental health concerns.** The suicide rate has increased over the past 10 years. If that isn't concerning enough, tensions are increasing in the workplace and the broader community, leading to concerns about unintentionally triggering someone. Many operational leaders are privately voicing to me their hesitancy to stop a job or talk to an employee about unacceptable, unsafe or at-risk behavior.

9 **Fatalities are increasing.** Despite talk about proactively identifying and mitigating potential serious injury or fatality (SIF) exposures, occupational fatality rates are rising.

10 **Production or productivity targets remain.** Despite the reality of the new workplaces and the evidence of the previous themes, few organizations have reduced their production or productivity targets, creating additional opportunities for error-likely situations. Additionally, leadership expects safety performance to continuously improve.

When we are surprised by undesirable results, we are often either blind to the indicators or are not giving them their deserved attention. Undesirable safety performance is often a symptom of larger issues in the broader workplace and organizational culture.

When safety performance continues to trend poorly, we also find deviations from quality, delivery, reliability, efficiency or cost expectations. When this happens, it is no longer a safety problem; it is an organizational problem requiring operational leadership to get involved and develop a new and broader strategy.

Consider reviewing these observed trends with your leadership team. Is your safety and overall business strategy aligned and prepared for today's realities? **EHS**

Shawn M. Galloway is CEO of ProAct Safety; host of the podcast, "Safety Culture Excellence"; and a past keynote speaker at* EHS Today*'s Safety Leadership Conference.

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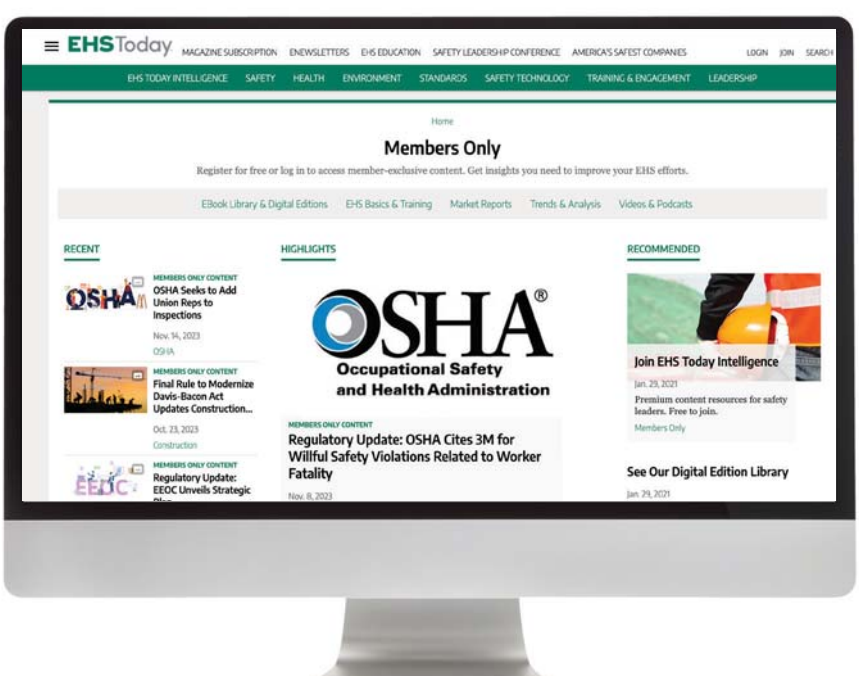

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Steel-toed Dress Shoes

Keen's San Jose Oxford bridges the gap between board meetings and floor meetings. Highlights include an air-infused Luftcell midsole, lightweight aluminum safety toes, and an oil and slip-resistant rubber outsole that easily sheds water. A nylon shank provides support for active work shifts, while non-mutilating construction makes them ideal for use around finished goods.

Keen

www.keenfootwear.com

Indoor Air Quality Monitor

The Extech VPC260 6-channel particle counter is a lightweight and ergonomic air quality monitor for commercial buildings, manufacturing facilities and cleanrooms. The meter measures and displays up to 6 channels of particle sizes (down to 0.3 µm), air temperature, relative humidity, dew point, and wet bulb. Once particles are detected, technicians can check for harmful air pollutants, such as exhaust, smoke, respirable crystalline silica dust (RCS), and airborne combustible dust. All data can be exported to easily generate reports and documentation. The device ships fully tested and calibrated, so it's out-of-the-box ready.

Teledyne FLIR LLC

www.flir.com

Industrial Goggle

Bollé Safety has launched its latest industrial goggle. The Globe's lightly translucent frame offers a better perception of the environment without glare thanks to the company's proprietary Platinum Lite Technology, which includes an anti-fog and anti-scratch lens coating. These goggles are lightweight and feature an adjustable fit, panoramic vision and wide adjustable strap that can mount over helmets.

Bollé Safety

www.bolle-safety.com/us

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Nicole Stempak
Managing Editor

A Sign of Commitment

Safety is more than a catchy phrase; it's a pledge to protect workers.

I'm a fan of clever, or corny, business road signs. Usually.

But there's a dentist office near home that irks me. One of their rotating messages reads: "Safety first. Who are we kidding? Coffee first. Safety 3rd or 4th."

The dentist's office is located at a busy intersection, and I've almost gotten into an accident several times because of drivers running red lights and cars pulling out of parking lots too close to oncoming traffic or making too wide of turns. I must practice defensive driving on those roads, and it's nothing to make light of.

While I know the dentist office's sign is meant to be funny, it speaks to a problem for safety professionals. I often hear safety professionals talk about—well, criticize—slogans that make light of safety or make it a personal choice.

We talk about how safety is everybody's responsibility, and that's true. But I think the onus rests with employers, which make decisions every day about operations and what risks they're willing to accept with respect to their employees' health and safety.

It seems disingenuous to emblazon slogans on T-shirts or banners hung on sides of buildings and call it a day. That's because it states the obvious, while also entirely missing the point.

I struggled to describe why safety slogans irk me, but author Connie Schultz found the words in her novel, *Daughters of Erietown*. Schultz's novel was set in a fictional Ohio town in the mid-20th century, but the message is as timely as ever. In the book, one of the main characters works at a plant with a sign that reads "THE BEST SAFETY DEVICE IS A CAREFUL MAN."

If you'll indulge me, I'd like to share her character's reaction to the sign:

> "Isn't that the dumbest-a** thing you've ever seen?" asked Malone, a fifteen-year veteran of the plant and a union steward. "As if our being careful is the only problem in this sh*thole. Like it's Pete Keller's and Lenny Mulholland's fault that they can't breathe anymore, their lungs are so ruined. Or Johnny McHenry's fault that the company hadn't replaced that bent fuel shutoff valve on the power boiler. Blew him sky-high and took his f*ckin' arms. Because Johnny wasn't a careful man."

I so enjoy writing profiles for EHS Today's America's Safest Companies award program and reading about companies doing safety right. But there are plenty of companies that aren't, even in the United States, as evidenced by the press releases I receive from OSHA each week. And these are just the incidents we know of.

In *EHS Today*'s 2023 National Safety & Salary Survey, 32% of respondents don't think their organization prioritizes safety over other production and/or other business demands. The optimists will say a majority is, but I say there's plenty of room for improvement. So, where does that leave safety professionals at this moment in time?

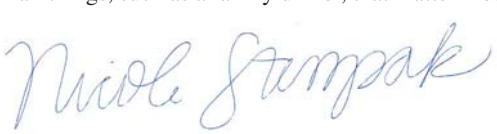
As an observer, I say it leaves you in the precarious position of trying to prevent injuries while also trying to sell workers on following safety protocols and getting support from management. In our annual safety survey, someone compared working in safety to being Sisyphus, who pushed a boulder up a hill day after day for eternity.

That is certainly a tough place to be, especially because that burden will get heavier over time. My suggestion is, instead of focusing on the uphill battle, look at the situation through a different lens.

At the 2023 Safety Leadership Conference, keynote speaker Rick Fulwiler said he disagreed with the idea of a safety culture. Rather, he said safety should be a core value across the organization. In other words, safety is the default way of doing business. Safety becomes the way forward for all kinds of great changes and improvements.

You know your organization and your challenges. Is there a way you can work within the existing system to help change it? Your efforts need not be flashy, and they don't—in fact, they shouldn't—require a large sign on the wall.

It can be as simple as having employees put a picture of a loved one in their hard hat to remind them why they should take the extra couple minutes to secure their harnesses. It's a small way to show the bigger picture. In the end, it's the small things, such as a family dinner, that matter most of all.



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