PMA COMPANIES

Engagement:
Key to Creating Safer Workplaces

Employee buy-in to safety can be challenging, yet can reap many benefits, including safer workers and decreased workers' compensation costs.

Looking to advance your organization's safety program in 2023? One of the most effective ways is to create meaningful employee engagement in your safety initiatives. This involves transforming employee participation beyond compliance and procedural adherence to employee ownership for their safety and creating a safe workplace. Keep in mind it all starts with senior leadership making a commitment to safety and demonstrating their commitment through action and engagement.

In this article, you'll learn practical tips for enhancing employee buy-in, how to extend engagement into safety, and the surprising role of employee wellness initiatives.

Gallup recently reported that only **32% of workers considered themselves engaged in their work and 17% considered themselves "actively disengaged."** Complacency or distractions are often cited as a cause of workplace incidents.

If you want employees to be focused and safe—and not distracted by repetitive or routine work—it may help to engage them with the following:

• **Setting Goals:** Front-line leaders should learn to create goals for individual workers to give them focus and something to strive for. Once the goals have been set, look for ways to incentivize participation.

• **Incentivizing Participation:** Whether the incentive is an employee-of-the-month award, a rock-star parking spot, a thank-you gift card or pizza party to mark milestones, helping an employee see the results of their success will encourage them to reach for more.

• **Offering Internal Opportunities:** Completing the same tasks day after day will lead to routine and eventually complacency. Promotion from within the organization is highly beneficial for the

CREATE A WIN-WIN – HEALTHY EMPLOYEES + ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging employee well-being with programs and resources to help them live healthier reinforces your concern for their welfare and deepens engagement. It is becoming more widely acknowledged that employee health should not rest solely with human resources departments, but should also be part of your risk control strategy.

Want to put this into action? PMA Risk Control's Employee Wellness Model provides an essential layer of prevention not found in traditional service approaches. Reach out to your PMA Risk Control Consultant or check out this article to learn more.

organization as tenured employees have already developed a rapport with colleagues and are familiar with the work. This also creates a circle of opportunity.

• **Diversifying Work Tasks:** Developing a cross-training program allows for greater team flexibility and engagement.

Six-Point Checklist –
How Does Your Organization Measure Up?
Engaged employees more readily embrace your safety initiatives. Lay the foundation of engagement in your organization and then apply those principles to your safety program. Hazard assessments, controls, and safety policies and procedures are important, however, without a high level of participation in your safety program, it will never be as successful as it could be.

How does your organization measure up in safety engagement?

1. Establishing Safety as a Core Organizational Value – all employees need to be part of your safety initiatives. Start at the new hire process. Communicate the value your organization places on safety and share safety materials during the job interview. Describe your safety environment and what they'll experience if hired. Include safety in your onboarding process. Set time intervals – for example, 30, 60, 90 days – to reinforce their initial safety training. Consider daily safety topics and huddles to make your program sustainable.

2. Clearly Defining Safety Roles and Responsibilities – make safety part of every employee's job description. Let them know their responsibilities and your organization's safety goals and objectives.

3. Immersing Employees in Safety – make sure employees understand their specific workplace hazards, how your safety program addresses them, and the actions they need to take to work safely. Create an active safety committee that investigates the root causes of loss and conveys post-accident learnings to their staffs.

4. Making Safety Part of the Conversation – communicate continually about safety by maximizing the strategies most effective for your employees, such as messaging apps, text messages, emails, intranet postings, posters and bulletin boards, in-person or virtual information sessions, toolbox talks or safety huddles.

5. Giving Feedback and Recognition on Safety Matters – helps to create positive change and buy-in from employees.

6. Empowering Employees as Safety Partners – solicit employee feedback. Employees should be comfortable reporting safety issues, knowing that it will not be met with retribution. Follow up and let them know how their concerns are being addressed.

From CEOs to Shop Floor Supervisors
Senior leadership and management need to be your safety champions. Employees should see leadership involved in safety with visible roles in your program's success.

And at the same time, front-line supervisors are key to a successful program. They need to be engaged and relentlessly promoting safety among their staffs. They are the direct line of communication with your labor force and should convey safety messages from senior levels. Equally important, when employees give feedback on safety matters, the front-line needs to make sure that information is conveyed to the appropriate parties.

Employees need to take an active role in your safety program. Let them know it is their program and that you look to them to make the program successful. Creating a culture where employees embrace your safety initiatives for the sake of themselves, their co-workers and your organization is the ideal model.

For more information, check out PMA Websource®, our portal for PMA clients with a wealth of practical, actionable risk control information.

Or reach out to your PMA Risk Control Consultant or contact us at heretohelp@pmagroup.com.

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