

**Business and Industry Services
Mid-Del Technology Center
1621 Maple Drive
Midwest City, OK 73110**

What's Inside

Positive Safety Is a Top-Down Motivation

Where Are the Good People Managers?

Food Safety at Home

Plan to Attend the Safety Conference

Delegating Responsibility Is a Management Training Tool

Where Are the Good People Managers?

One of the many Miller daughters is now a barista with a large coffee house chain. What a fine organization! Great benefits. Decent pay. Good work environment. Fun culture. The company is a success.

But none of that matters to a teen working her first job and experiencing her first boss.

High school senior Molly came to work on a Tuesday at 3:30 p.m., expecting to work till 6:30, and then head back to school for the annual "Back to School Night" event where parents, teachers, and students mingle. Academically No. 3 in her class, Molly thinks these things are important. (Her dad, a solid B- student all of his school life, doesn't remember attending even *one* of these events.)

Continued on page 2

Positive Safety Is a Top-Down Motivation

If the attitude of management toward positive safety in the workplace is that it is a nuisance that is a waste of time and money and something that is done only because it is an OSHA requirement, the attitude can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In this case, management's idea that safety is not worth the expense and time is exactly what it will turn out to be.

If management ignores employee safety concerns, doesn't correct hazards, or fails to provide necessary safety equipment and controls, employees are going to think that management doesn't care about safety. And, if management doesn't care, why should they?

On the other hand, when managers promote a positive safety culture and reward safe behavior, employees will have a positive attitude toward safety. When employees and management are on the same side, the goal of a safer workplace is easier to attain.

A safe workplace creates improved worker morale and job satisfaction. If managers promote positive safety, it will become important to the employees. High worker morale and job satisfaction create worker efficiency and higher production. The bottom line is less absenteeism, which causes the hiring of temporary employees or causes regular employees to "cover" the duties of the absent worker.

Fewer time-loss accidents also have a direct bearing on bottom line figures

because a reduction in accidents means a reduction in the cost to do business. Managers are concerned with the high cost of workers' compensation insurance as evidenced by the constant attempts of the business community to influence state lawmakers to legislate reductions in these costs. Real reduction in worker's compensation insurance can be achieved by reducing accidents. Companies and managers can have more direct control over this and do not have to rely on legislative action.

In addition to the direct costs of accidents, injuries also incur indirect costs. Direct costs include lost productivity,



staff time involved in accident investigation and recordkeeping, training and replacement, possible overtime, administrative overhead, product damage, and possibly increased insurance premiums. These amount to

Continued on page 3

Where Are the Good People Managers? *continued*

Upon arriving, she's told by the 29-year-old "shift leader" that she's actually scheduled to work till 7:30 p.m.—*an hour longer than expected*. When she expresses that's not what the overall store manager had on the schedule, the understanding shift leader says he can



handle it and she can leave at 6:30. Well, she stayed till almost 7 p.m. and then went to school to meet Mom and Dad.

No, she's not perfect—but Molly is honest, punctual, accountable, and hard working. Every retail manager would like to have her on the team. She works hard *and* is learning to deal with some pretty unpleasant customers—with a smile. She's getting a good dose of life, and we're proud of her.

When she arrives at work Saturday, the store manager confronts her—with *three associates watching*—by tersely asking, "So, why did you leave early on Tuesday?!" Caught off guard and embarrassed in front of her co-workers, she tells The Boss of the school event and explains that she hadn't been aware of the schedule change. She also shares that the shift leader told her she could leave early. The 40-something manager glares at the teenager and says these words: "Well, *that's not possible.*"

Huh? What's "not possible," Boss? That you changed the schedule and forgot to notify your staff of the change? That the shift leader authorized her to leave? When you say "that's not possible," are you implying that this team member is lying? This same team member who recently came in at 5:50 a.m.—an hour early—because you urgently needed her to cover for someone who didn't show?

When I heard this story, my first thought was: So where are the well-trained, thoughtful, skilled-in-communication, personally accountable, and caring managers?

Let me be clear: Molly *loves* this job. Will this interaction break her? Heavens no. Did it build trust? Does it cause her to want to please? Is she feeling good about her manager? Will she be excited about getting to her next shift a few minutes early? Did it serve to build her belief in the company?

Not on all counts. The good news is if Molly becomes a "manager," she has learned these lessons young:

- When changing a schedule, be accountable to reach out to all staff affected and let them know. *Communicate!*
- Give assistant managers the authority to make decisions on the spot—in the moment—all by themselves.
- If you don't approve of your shift leader's decision, speak to him/her one-on-one. *Do not* take a *management failure* to the front line associate.
- When you do feel the need to talk to a staff member, ask for an explanation of the situation and listen—really listen—and *do it in private*.
- Ask "What could I have done differently?" and "How can I own the results of my store?" Never ask "Why can't we find good people?"
- And, lastly, thank your lucky stars for any employee who is honest, punctual, accountable, and hard working.

Reprinted with permission from QBQ, Inc.
Helping Organizations Make Personal Accountability a Core Value™ by John G. Miller

Food Safety at Home—Is It Still Good?

How much food do you have in the pantry, refrigerator, or freezer that has been kept too long and you are not sure if it's still good? Here are a few tips about food storage:

- As long as canned items are stored in a cool, dry area with 50 to 70 degree temperatures, you'll enjoy tasty foods.
- Canned high-acid foods such as juices, tomatoes, fruits, pickles and sauerkraut store well for 12 to 18 months. Canned meats and vegetables will store fine for two to five years.
- Foods in your freezer can last for up to a year, provided the temperature stays at 0 degrees or below. Beef cuts and hamburger can keep their quality for up to a year, while pork products are best eaten in six months or less.
- To enjoy the best quality, use a permanent marker to write the purchase date on items before storing them. And, remember—when in doubt, throw it out!



Plan to Attend . . .

A Safety Conference



featuring Vern Holder
International Safety
Motivation Speaker

When: April 23, 2009
Where: Mid-Del Technology
 BIS Center
 3921 SE 29th Street
 Del City, Oklahoma



- Topics include Zero Accidents and Best Safety Features
- A demonstration will be conducted by Airgas beginning at noon.
- Continental breakfast will be served.

AGENDA

8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:15	Opening
9:15-10:15	Keynote
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:00	Safety Culture
11:00-12:00	Breakout Session
12:00-12:30	Demonstration and Tour

Seating is Limited!

RSVP now to Jennifer Bradford at 405-672-6665

Mid Del Technology Center Technology Center • Business & Industry Training

Positive Safety Is a Top-Down Motivation *continued*

much more than the direct cost of the injury. And they are absorbed entirely by the company. The financial impact of the accident's direct cost depends on a company's specific workers compensation program (the level of deductible, self-insurance, etc.). Each injury's indirect costs are far larger than its direct costs. For example, there is an additional two to five thousand dollars of indirect costs for each thousand dollars of direct costs. So, in reality, the time and money spent in promoting positive safety in the workplace is actually an investment that can pay high dividends in reducing production costs.

The bottom line in positive safety attitudes is that if safety and safety training are important to management, they will be important to employees. Here are several ways to build a positive safety culture:

1 Employees who "own" workplace safety take training seriously. They realize they are partners in safety with

the company. They see that by taking responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their co-workers, they have the power to prevent accidents and injuries. The more empowered they feel, the more enthusiastic they will be about learning what they need to know to prevent on- the-job injuries.

2 Get employees to help with training. Not only will the employee trainers begin to take training more seriously, but so will all the other employees who see the most experienced workers buying into—and participating actively in—the training process.

3 Enforcement and reinforcement count. Safety rules and policies need to be clearly defined and consistently enforced.

Employees need to be rewarded for working safely, hear constant positive feedback about safety behavior from their supervisors, get recognition for paying attention in safety training

sessions and using what they learn on the job. Employees need to be rewarded for taking safety and safety training seriously.

4 Managers might try the following approaches in safety training.

Problem-solving teams give workers the chance to put their expertise to work to identify and correct hazards.

Incident investigation teams help them understand the causes of work accidents and the preventive measures necessary to avoid future incidents.

Safety committees provide employees with the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions about how to improve workplace safety.

More and more business leaders are realizing that safety is not a capital expense—it is an attitude, an attitude that must be demonstrated from the top down.

Delegating Responsibility Is a Management Training Tool

Delegation can be an avenue for dumping failure on subordinates or used as a means to motivate and train others to develop their potential. Without delegation, effective experience never occurs and potential is never reached.



Delegation entrusts the delegate receiving your authority to act and initiate independently with shared responsibility. In short, delegation is an invaluable experience-based training exercise designed to perpetuate positive management practices.

Managers must establish a system to enable the flow of information. This must include regular exchanges between your staff so that each is aware of what the others are doing. It should also include briefings by you on the information which you have received in your role as manager.

Many managers don't delegate because they have a phobia about giving others authority and losing control. However, if you train your staff to apply the same criteria as you would yourself (by example and full explanations) then they will be exercising your control on your behalf.

Delegate gradually. "The degree of delegation should build up gradually; first a small task leading to a little development, then another small task which builds upon the first; when that is achieved, add another stage; and so on.

This is the difference between asking people to scale a sheer wall, and providing them with a staircase."¹

As manager, you must insure against failure. Mistakes should be a learning process where the delegate learns to provide solutions.

"The manager should be able to catch mistakes before they are catastrophic. Since Jimmy made the mistake, he will need some input to develop a solution: so Jimmy must feel safe in approaching you with the problem. Thus you must deal primarily with the solution rather than the cause (look forward, not backwards). The most desirable outcome is that Jimmy provides the solution."¹

Will the job be done as well as if you did it yourself? Probably not! However, the benefits of delegation can be invaluable as a confidence and morale builder as well as a good management tool.

¹Gerard M Blair. *Starting to Manage: The Essential Skills*, Chartwell-Bratt (UK) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (USA).

**Business and Industry Services
Mid-Del Technology Center
3921 Southeast 29th Street
Del City, OK 73115**

BIS Staff

**Mike Heinze, Director
Scott Cline, Assistant Director
Bill Lee, Assistant Director
Forrest Doshier, Safety Coordinator
Julie Farmer, Bid Assistance
Jennifer Bradford, Secretary
Phone: 405-672-6665**