

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

What's Inside

It Takes Time to Develop a Good Safety Culture

Everyone Wins When Teams Work Well Together

MDTC Upgrades Safety Training Facilities

Outsourcing Training Can Provide Answers

It Takes Time to Develop a Good Safety Culture

It is worth the effort! It can be done! It can happen!

It's no secret that to maintain the best possible, accident-free workplace, you must develop a culture in which safety comes first. But, it takes time. There is no magic wand or magic formula. Just saying the words will not work, and a band-aid type training program can be a waste of time. A true safety culture promotes positive behavior and looks to change or fix negative behavior. Changes in cultural behavior may be needed, and they are not changed overnight. Continuous safety improvement is an ongoing process

that requires an investment in time, effort, and dedication.

Anyone can create a written safety program, but it takes a real commitment from everyone involved to create, implement, or improve a complete safety culture. The goal of developing a safety culture is to instill the qualities that motivate workers to strive to achieve safety excellence. It can be developed only if all staff work together. Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, a workplace is only as safe as the least-concerned worker. A positive safety culture

Continued on page 2

Everyone Wins When Teams Work Well Together

Adapted from an article by Paula Switzer of Switzer Resource Group

Geese can fly farther and more efficiently as a flock in formation than an individual goose can. The leader in a V formation provides a draft for the others and the leadership changes periodically. Henry Ford said, "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." And H. E. Luccock, Yale divinity professor, adds, "No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it."

Teamwork provides great benefits:

- **Getting everyone on the same page.** When people understand the goal or objective, they can get on with the tasks that need to be done. They do not waste time on unnecessary work

because of unclear expectations.

- **Creating better outcomes.** There is no question that when people bring their unique talents to a supportive environment, where trust and respect are the norm, the end result is a better product.
- **Providing value to your customers.** When a team works well together, customers can feel it. There is a sense of good will and a desire to work with people who are pleasant and enjoy what they do. Peter



Block once said, "You can't treat a customer any better than you treat each other." You may think you are hiding your "dirty linen," but your customers know whether or not you are working as a team.

Continued on page 3

It Takes Time to Develop a Good Safety Culture *continued*



means every worker is personally committed to his or her own safety as well as the safety of each colleague. A real safety culture is a complete safety attitude that becomes part of the individual's lifestyle and daily habits—whether the individual is at home or at work.

Good safety practices result in good business outcomes. Here are some primary considerations when developing or improving a positive safety culture:

1 **Conduct an Assessment**

If there is a genuine desire to improve the workplace safety culture, the first step is to determine the existing culture. For example, safety attitudes may very well differ between work sections or shifts.

A positive safety culture exists when safety considerations are present in each administrative or production decision. A negative safety culture exists when there are attitudes such as, "Accidents are just going to happen, and they are a part of the job." An assessment should divulge the safety culture status by different demographics: age, shift, section, etc. An assessment of the present safety culture creates a starting point. The findings will aid in the development of an action plan, any needed emphasis, and training.

2 **Provide Leadership**

A safety culture means that the safety attitudes of management and supervisory personnel are reflected throughout the entire workforce in strong leadership, careful planning, and maintenance.

Administrative and management examples are crucial. Research reveals that the leadership philosophy of an organization influences workers' safety performance. For example, companies with the lowest lost-time injury rates have the highest level of management commitment and employee involvement.

Safety considerations become a part of all production procedures.

Strong leaders promote openness and communication about safety, solicit feedback, and involve employees in establishing safety goals. Trust is important. Employees must feel they can express thoughts and report accidents or incidents without being blamed or punished.

Managers must lead by example. If a manager does not wear a hardhat or safety glasses in designated areas, employees will take note. Then a climate of "everyone does it" creeps in, and the safety culture loses integrity and credibility.

3 **Provide Safety Education**

Training should teach the worker "how to do" and not "what not to do." Employees need to understand that safety training and positive safety behavior promote their individual well-being and are not just a company or OSHA requirement.

Safety education and learning must be ongoing and relevant. Safety procedures should be mandatory. People who make unsafe choices and make mistakes need additional education and coaching.

Safety should be communicated through all established means: newsletters, posters, bulletin boards, handbooks, committee meetings, etc.

4 **Establish Accountability**

"Safety is everyone's responsibility." Workers are accountable for production goals, and the same should be true for safety goals.

Goals should be set and successes and failures documented. When goals are met, reward individuals or groups. Assess progress regularly and adjust the plan, communication strategy or training program as needed.

Never assume that people know what their responsibilities are. Tell them. Managers need to check whether employees know the code of conduct that defines safety, and they need to insist on applicable behaviors.

5 **Practice Reinforcement**

Make sure all levels of staff practice positive safety behavior. Nothing will do more to destroy a safe workplace than when managers and supervisors feel they are above the rules, but positive safety behavior by the upper echelon will do wonders in making the workplace safe.

Accident and incident investigation techniques are a good learning tool. Determine the cause of the accident, injury or unsafe behavior and use it to train the employee to correct his/her action. Repeated unsafe behavior not properly dealt with can undermine a positive safety culture. Workers who continue to make safety errors should be terminated so that the safety of others will be maintained. A positive approach and commitment to safe behavior will ensure a culture of safety for years to come.

Mid-Del Technology Center Assistance

The Business and Industry Services Center at Mid-Del is available to help your business, company or organization improve its safety culture. Improved safety measures can reduce the number of accidents (including reduction of associated costs), improve morale and enhance production.

For more information on developing a positive safety culture, call Forrest Doshier at 405.672.6665 or e-mail fdoshier@mid-del.k12.ok.us

Everyone Wins When Teams Work Well Together *continued*

• **Enjoying your work.** High-functioning teams bring a sense of energy to their work. Healthy conflict and disagreement are welcomed, and feedback is given in the spirit of continuous improvement. Turnover decreases, morale improves and people have more fun.

BUILDING BETTER TEAMS

So, what do you need to do to start building better teams? And how do you get buy-in?

Here are a few suggestions:

■ **Start at the top.** It is imperative to have senior leadership support for any team-building initiative.

■ **Communicate regularly.** Share information often and in different formats with the team.

■ **Explain the reason for the team initiative.** People need to understand how they fit into the bigger picture, as well as the WIIFM factor (*What's In It For Me?*).

■ **Give the team as much control as possible.** When a team has a sense of ownership, team members are eager to take responsibility and become accountable.

■ **Be an encourager.** Seek ways to recognize the team's progress, clear roadblocks for them, and create internal champions who appreciate the value of their work.

Team building is not a one-time event. It is an attitude, a philosophy of how to treat people. It is a way of being. You have to keep your team-building efforts front and center.

As a leader, you must continue to beat the drum for building teams. You must encourage growth, insight and healthy disagreement. Another great quote about teams says: "We are most effective as a team when we compliment each other without embarrassment and disagree without fear." Model this behavior and your teams will be more successful.

You also must champion diversity and different work styles, which will result in a better product for your customers. Help team members understand the "natural role" they each play on the team. And, teach them a process for handing off the baton to the right person at the right time. This can help speed up product development, provide smoother roll-outs and installations, and utilize the unique talents each member brings to the team.

Everyone wins when teams work well: the employee, the company and the customer. As Margaret Mead so eloquently said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Mid-Del To Host OSHA Training

Mid-Del Technology Center's Business and Industry Training Center, 3921 Southeast 29th Street in Del City, will host four OSHA training courses conducted by The University of Texas at Arlington's Region VI OSHA Education Center. The courses and dates are:

OSHA 3110 Fall Protection • April 6-8, 2010	\$595
OSHA 510 Standards for the Construction Industry • April 13-16, 2010.....	\$595
OSHA 511OG Standards for General Industry - Oil & Gas • April 20-23, 2010.....	\$595
OSHA 7845 Recordkeeping Rule Seminar • April 23, 2010.....	\$195

For additional information and registration online, contact uta.edu/ded/osha or call 866.909.9190.

MDTC Upgrades Safety Training Facilities

Mid-Del Technology Center's Business and Industry department has increased its ability to offer state-of-the-art safety training by constructing a training facility that will enhance

training in the areas of confined space, trenching and shoring, fall protection, lockout/tagout, ladder and scaffolding safety, and HAZWOPER. Designed by Forrest Doshier, a portable storage pod

has been revamped to allow it to be used for multiple safety courses.

The department also now has a SkyTrak (courtesy of Oklahoma CareerTech) to enhance aerial lift safety training. The SkyTrak is being refurbished so it can be put into service.



Outsourcing Training Can Provide Answers

There are many reasons why outsourcing training can prove to be advantageous to any company or organization. And Mid-Del Technology Center's Business and Industry Services Center is in a unique position to help companies and organizations accomplish their training goals.

For example, a company or organization may have a small staff and few (if any) qualified trainers. But as part of Oklahoma's CareerTech system, with its networking capabilities, the Center can offer companies and organizations customized training to meet their specific needs. Administrative and management skills and computer applications are a specialty.

Creating a comprehensive safety training program in-house from the ground up is an expensive, time-consuming endeavor. There may be complex regulations to comply with, such as those governing safety or environmental

issues. Keeping training up to date to reflect the constantly changing regulations can be just as daunting. The Center can help with a safety program review and recommend training solutions.

In today's economic situation many companies, striving to rein in costs and improve core services, have found outsourcing training pieces of the organization has helped them meet those goals. Think about it: training new employees is expensive, especially in high turnover jobs. Each new employee may need one to three weeks (or more) of training before being able to start working. Internal training budgets have been decimated in recent years, squeezing the time and resources in-house trainers can devote to content development and efficient delivery methods in an increasingly

global marketplace. As a tax-supported facility, the Center can offer training at an affordable cost.

The Center works with several employers in diverse industries. Every client receives the benefit of the experiences acquired from all of these workplaces.

Outsourcing training may be of great value to your company or organization. To learn more, call **Mike Heinze, Scott Cline, or Forrest Doshier at 405.672.6665** to discuss your training needs.



**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**