

Encouraging Positive Employee Attitudes Toward Safety



Employee attitudes toward safety can impact your workforce and your bottom line.

Build a culture of safety in your organization by encouraging and rewarding employees who model and demonstrate a positive attitude.

Employee attitudes toward health and safety in the workplace can impact productivity, engagement and ultimately your bottom line. An employee who models a positive attitude toward safety can help other team members adopt a similar perspective and contribute to greater engagement in workplace safety practices and overall improvement in a safer work environment.

Safety practices and protocols are sometimes viewed by workers as an obstacle, or viewed as requiring additional effort. This negative view can have a tremendous effect on the manner in which the work gets done. Resistance to safety policies can lead to cutting corners, resistance to new policies and dangerous behavior which can in turn lead to increased accidents and injuries, increased accident-related costs.

As a DSP owner, it is important to encourage positive attitudes toward safety and address negative attitudes before they result in more serious problems.

Strategies that encourage positive attitudes toward safety

Change a negative to a positive

It's not easy to change a negative attitude towards safety and it's a lengthy process. However, the impacts of a positive safety culture are well worth the energy. As employees feel more valued (and safe), productivity and quality of work go up and thus an increase in profitability can be noted. Additionally, employees are less likely to leave the company. So investing in safety means investing in the company.

Influence attitudes through culture

Changing negativity takes time and dedication. A critical first step is to create a culture that recognizes the importance of safety in your workplace. Show each DSP team member the impact they can have on achieving safety and provide an understanding of how each task, policy, process and safety meeting matters to the DSP as a whole.

A good way to educate employees is to incorporate real life examples of accidents and their consequences. Real life examples and illustration of consequences brings safety measures into sharper focus and makes their contribution more tangible. Education about safety risks also helps prevent complacency as drivers are once again made aware of the hazards they face while at work.

Lead by example

Commitment from the DSP owners or safety management is very important in turning around negative attitudes. When DSP owners or safety management demonstrates that safety is important to them by, for example, participating in safety training, it shows workers their health and safety is important to their employer.

DSP owners or safety management should also listen more closely to concerns employees have about health and safety. Consult with employees about their work and the pressures they face. If DSP owners, safety management or supervisors act on signals they receive from employees, it will most likely reflect positively. After all, people want to feel listened to.

Reward positive behavior

Recognize workers who display positive safety behaviors. A compliment goes a long way and will make employees feel good about their efforts. This positive feeling will help increase proactive safety behavior and influence other team members to adopt a similar positive perspective.

Address negative behavior

Allowing behavior that ignores safety rules encourages further disregard for safety and increases the chance of accident or injury in your workplace. But blaming workers for safety breaches can also be counterproductive and can increase the chance that the employee will not report future issues. Instead of placing blame, focus on learning from errors. Provide context to the rules by emphasizing that safety regulations are in place to help ensure a safe environment for all.

Having Positive Mentors

When fostering a culture of safety, identifying mentors in your workplace can be an extremely effective tool. The attitudes of experienced employees become very important. Experienced workers score high with leadership abilities, detail-oriented tasks, organization, listening, writing skills, and problem-solving. Their greatest asset is experience, or 'workplace wisdom'. They've learned how to get along with people, solve problems without drama and call for help when necessary. They know where to focus their efforts to deal with unexpected problems and prevent costly mistakes and accidents.

These skills make experienced employees invaluable as demonstrators of sound work practices and safety attitudes. They model desirable positive behaviors and follow the rules. It's natural to set up formal or informal relationships where new and inexperienced workers can be mentored by experienced workers with the attitudes and skills you would like modeled in your workplace.

There are many ways to identify workers who have demonstrated positive safety attitudes, ones who will prove valuable role models. Often, they are the ones with the ability to think first and take action once they've formulated an assessment. These people recognize potential hazards before they have had time to cause problems, and deal with them appropriately.

Conclusion

There are few better ways to build a positive attitude toward health and safety for employees than investing in a culture of safety. Leading by example, recognizing team members with a positive attitude and designating safety leaders and mentors will set the tone and demonstrate your ongoing commitment to a safe work environment.

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