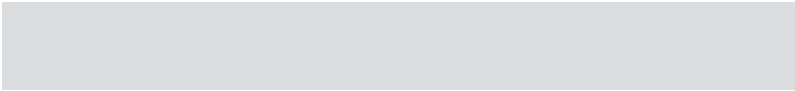


5 Ways to Strengthen Your EHS Culture



An Integrated EHS Strategy Is Key to Growth

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Introduction

Workplace safety and injury prevention are worthy of serious investments. By creating a safe workplace and making it your top priority, your organization can prevent injuries and improve operational efficiency.

Have you ever wondered what separates the best performing companies from the average performers? How do some companies receive so many safety accolades? How do they improve safety records year after year?

It all starts with cultivating a culture of safety in the workplace. With the right training procedures, companies can expect to see a major transformation in the way employees approach safety. By creating a safe workplace—and making it a top priority to promote sustainable business practices—your organization can prevent incidents and improve operational efficiency.

A commitment to employee safety means approaching the matter from all angles. Plus, you should be innovative as you develop and promote safety plans. In this eBook, we'll go through five environmental, health and safety (EHS) practices that will improve your organization's culture.



Help Your Employees Visualize Safety

Attack Root Causes of Accidents with Posters

Why post just one plain safety poster in the break room when you can diversify your techniques and improve safety with just a little creativity? A well-placed poster can reignite interest in safety issues, especially if it's eye-catching, fresh, and of course: relevant. One of the causes of injuries at work is when employees aren't aware that a danger exists. Posters can help with localized awareness of specific danger zones: consider a potential danger caused by an active machine, for example. Employees who are not familiar with the machine or the work area can be warned of danger with a well-placed poster that alerts them to the presence of a hazard, such as the presence of moving parts.

Don't Be Afraid to Use Humor for Safety Slogans

Encouraging a culture of safety is a lot easier when you can approach the matter from several angles. One of them can be humor. In fact, sometimes a few lines of humor may go a lot further than anything else if you're trying to surround your employees with safety reminder slogans.

If the voice in your head must ask "is this safe?" then it probably isn't. Sarcasm, wit, and outright humor will get noticed on your visuals if done properly with a professional tone. One great example is the poster below, where just a touch of subtle humor really homes in on an important safety theme.

Choose and Create Your Visual Aids from a Marketing Perspective

Just as a marketer would do, consider your audience when selecting visual aids for safety. What engages them? What speaks to their needs and concerns? Get inside their minds and assess your current visual aids from that perspective. Do they grab attention and deliver the message in a memorable way? Keep things fresh by treating your safety visuals like revolving collections from a museum: switch them out for new ones when they become stale. A series of posters that build upon one another can be effective, too. Anything that grabs attention and keep everyone's mind on safety is beneficial.

Safety culture is more than simply talking about safety and holding training sessions. It's an integral part of everything you do, from simple office tasks to risky machine work.

Visualize Your EHS Data

When you're teaching teams about EHS metrics, data visualization is essential because you're reaching people of different ages, educational levels, and styles of learning. As you are presenting EHS data, you want to make sure all stakeholders are responsive and alert with your materials to help the environment, prevent workplace injuries, and most importantly—to save lives.

Your goal in reporting and presenting metrics in a visualized manner is to help you maximize awareness, productivity, and connectivity with your staff. New technologies, like EHS software, can help teams visualize strengths and weaknesses in day-to-day business operations.

Communicate with Data

Using various forms of charts can empower you to effectively communicate your EHS progress. Comparing a few key data points can inform others.

Pie Charts: For example, if you're showing the most common injuries on the job, you can demonstrate the most common types of incidents occurring in a particular facility. Make sure your pie chart is clearly labeled to give a simple visual representation of the data you are displaying.

Column Charts: Whether you're trying to show incident breakdowns by month or the number of Corrective Actions and Preventive Actions (CAPA) completed, column charts are a great way to display different data points. This chart type is helpful since it can show—and compare—data changes over a certain time period.

Trend Charts: Displaying your data trends over time is advantageous. Trend lines give your organization insight regarding historical and current performance, and based on those points, management can make changes to the EHS program.

Dashboards: Combining all of your metrics into a dashboard is another great way to illustrate your organization's progress. With EHS software, you can easily setup an interactive dashboard for your colleagues to navigate and interact with different charts and KPIs.

Remember to keep in mind the different ways you plan to distribute your deliverables. Some staff members may want a hard copy of the reports while others may prefer to view them on a monitor, tablet, or mobile device. However, data posters are a great way to showcase the organization's overall EHS performance. Not only are they eye-catching, but posters also help deliver engagement across the workforce, program, and beyond.



Toolbox Talks

How are you promoting a safety culture in your company? Toolbox talks can help.

When was the last time you overheard employees discussing safety on the job site? You're more likely to hear them talking about the upcoming football game. But every day, employees face workplace hazards that slip by under the radar of managers. How can you raise your team's awareness, so they might become part of creating a stronger culture of safety?

Toolbox Talks: A Two-Way Discussion About Safety

Toolbox talks are an important component of a winning EHS program. They allow groups to focus on a particular issue in an informal manner that encourages full participation in a non-threatening environment. With topics ranging from forklift safety to computer ergonomics, these talks are meant to bring the discussion to the floor: so everyone can join in, contribute their ideas, and exchange feedback with managers.

Tips for Running Successful Toolbox Talks

While there are no rules for conducting toolbox talks, here's a framework to start with. Once you've run a few of these discussions, you can improvise and tailor your talks to the groups you're meeting with.

Keep it short. Considered less formal than a training session, these talks can be short: just 15 minutes is all it takes to cover a few issues (or just one), then move on.

Define a term. If your topic is Confined Spaces, make sure everyone is on the same page with what defines a confined space.

Make it relevant. Bring the safety issue into context with the group's work lives. Stir up conversation about how the issue presents itself in your facility where they work.

Ask if anyone needs training. Because of your discussion, it may become apparent that re-training is necessary. Begin by asking the group if they feel this is true.

Carefully planning events and participating in safety meetings such as Toolbox Talks can help identify and mitigate potential workplace risk.

Here are a few examples of toolbox talks for the workplace.

Toolbox Talk #1: Ladder Safety

It's hard to think of any company where a ladder isn't involved at some point or another. Even dentists' offices might use a ladder occasionally, even if it's to hang holiday decorations. That's why a ladder safety toolbox talk is almost always a good idea.

Some companies don't allow the use of aluminum portable ladders, since they are conductive of electricity and therefore present a danger. A toolbox talk is the perfect time to remind everyone. Here are a few more points to make:

- Use spreaders on step ladders
- Never stand on the top two rungs of a ladder
- Secure the site when using a ladder

Toolbox Talk #2: Forklift Safety

Since forklift accidents are a primary cause of danger in the workplace, this is an important topic to discuss. Be sure to include everyone in the warehouse, including drivers of forklifts.

Toolbox Talk #3: Computer Ergonomics

Over the past two decades, every industry has seen a shift towards technology and computer-based systems. For many workers that means more time spent at a desk using a mouse and viewing a monitor. One popular way to address the safe use of computers is to focus on the issue during one of your regular toolbox talks.

Here's a quick list of a few issues that can be covered:

- Configuring your chair
- Preventative exercises
- Symptoms of problems arising from poor computer ergonomics

There are hundreds of EHS topics to cover in your toolbox talks—more than we can cover here. Hopefully this has sparked your imagination and you're already planning your own talk: one that's relevant to your workplace.

For help with your toolbox talks, refer to the OSHA website. You can find OSHA QuickCards™ designed to summarize safe practices for several safety issues.



Teach Responsibility with Job Safety Analysis (JSA)

The importance of good training procedures can not be over-emphasized if you're trying to foster a culture of safety. Here's a quick primer to get you started with using a specific tool to emphasize responsibility.

Teaching Responsibility Is Key

There's no easy answer of course, but many of the companies who are successful in creating a strong safety culture have one thing in common: they use proven ways of teaching responsibility. Through a careful strategy of implementing effective training procedures, they're able to bring every worker in on the process of creating a safe work environment.

Top Tool: Job Safety Analysis

One of the best training procedures we know of is job safety analysis (JSA). A JSA is just one of many ways you can control occupational hazards.

The process is designed to identify potential workplace safety hazards, and provides employees with recommendations on how to reduce and eliminate these risks. It's a good habit to perform JSA before you begin working on a task, especially when heavy machinery is involved. It includes the following steps:

- Identify the basic steps involved in a particular job or task.
- Identify the hazards and potential hazards with each step. Be sure to zoom out and consider the entire job environment around each job step.
- Make safety recommendations for each step.

When you're working on the field, always remember to apply best practices and JSA to ensure a safe workplace.

Here are two things you need to know about JSAs.

1. Make JSA a Regular Thing at Your Company

There is no company in this world where everything stands still and nothing changes.

For that reason, the JSA should be performed regularly. Once a year is probably too infrequent. You'll miss out on updating your team if there's a change in a job step, or if new employees come on board. In both cases, you'll need to review your JSA and update it if necessary. When you're working in the field, always remember to apply best practices and JSA to ensure a safe workplace.

2. Make the JSA a Team Project

The JSA is a procedure that is best done collaboratively: get the whole team involved when you're writing one up. In fact, the JSA involves a "hidden" motive: the act of getting everyone involved in completing the analysis helps promote safety in and of itself! Therefore, the JSA should be viewed as a team-building activity.

EHS managers who complete one by themselves are selling the process short. If you haven't tried using JSA, now might be the time. You'll be promoting teamwork, helping to onboard new employees, and promoting a culture of safety all at once.





Workplace Ergonomics

Pick any industry, any job field, and ergonomics always come into play.

Somewhere during the day of any worker in any occupation, there's some type of risk of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). One of the most productive ways to strengthen your safety culture is in the area of ergonomics. These solutions tend to be cost effective, and easy to implement. Preventing MSDs is one way of improving workplace health and safety programs.

The Role of Ergonomics

MSDs are caused by a wide variety of work-related tasks—from bad posture and repetitive motion to lifting heavy objects too often, to experiencing whole-body vibration or working with your neck in the wrong position, ergonomics have a strong impact on everyone who works. Nobody is exempt, which is why it's vital that ergonomics become a central part of your safety culture.

OSHA identifies seven key elements for a proper ergonomic process.¹

1. Management support
2. Worker involvement
3. Training
4. Identification of problems
5. Early reporting of MSD
6. Solutions to control hazards
7. Process evaluation

If your health and safety program doesn't cover ergonomics, then you should consider incorporating at least some of the basic concepts and techniques. Here's a quick primer for doing just that.

The Basics of Ergonomics

You may not be trained for a full-fledged ergonomic intervention at your company, but there are lots of things you can do to improve worker health and safety on your own.

1. U.S. Department of Labor. Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace. Washington, D.C. 2014.

By law, it is the responsibility of the employer to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their employees and one way to do this is by implementing ergonomic principles.

Reduce prolonged sitting. Consider Sit Stand Desks, learn about the physiology of sitting, and think creatively on turning sitting work into standing work.

Examine lifting safety. Back injuries are one of the most common types of MSD injuries in the workplace. Review protocol with your employees. Hold toolbox talks and go over PPE, stretching, and knowing personal restrictions. Have materials delivered where they are as close as possible to where they need to be stored, to reduce the need for heavy lifting. Evaluate your storage: storing things at waist-height is helpful in preventing back injuries.

Know laboratory risk factors. If there's a lab at your company, it comes with its own set of ergonomic risks. Many actions associated with working in a lab, such as "pipetting", microtome work, operating a microscope, or working in an anaerobic chamber (the list goes on) present unique dangers to the musculoskeletal system. Have an assessment done to determine which parts of these processes can be altered to improve ergonomics.

These are just the basics of ergonomics—there's a whole world of risk factors out there waiting to be discovered! With an appropriate and effective ergonomic process, your organization can help reduce work-related MSDs and maintain a healthier, safer workplace for employees.





Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility

Does promoting sustainability help engage employees in the culture of safety?

Sustainable practices are generating more than just goodwill at many companies. When EHS professionals incorporate initiatives, like recycling programs, into everyday practices, they're working to strengthen the culture of safety. Here's how that works.

What Makes Recycling Programs Successful?

To understand how recycling can feed a stronger safety culture, it's important to first see what it takes to run a successful one. What makes a good recycling program? Let's take the example of beverage bottles: to get everyone on board with recycling them at work, you'll need the following:

- The idea that recycling practices span all aspects of work life, not just in isolated moments in the break room

- A sense of pride that drives employees to recycle and contribute to the overall well-being of their company
- A comfort level among everyone that facilitates community policing without negative connotations

According to a 2013 Gibbs and Soell study², 73% of employees are more likely to practice sustainability at home as a result of being eco-friendly in the workplace. Encouraging your employees to make sustainable decisions—whether at home or in the workplace—is a great investment and will contribute to a cleaner planet.

The Same Can Be Said for a Strong Safety Culture

Of course, a culture of safety is a lot more involved than a simple recycling program. However, by starting small, you're encouraging the type of behavior that eventually also contributes to your overall culture at work.

2. Walker, Leon. Environmental Leader. Employees Take Corporate Sustainability Efforts Home, Study Says. Fort Collins, CO. 2013.

It's all about engaging and motivating employees to "do the right thing." Helping them understand the need for, and the benefits of recycling is similar to the process you'd take when onboarding them to an overall culture of safety. In both cases, you're working on attitudes, beliefs, and values to achieve your goals rather than uninspired training programs, hawk-like micro supervision, and threats of punishment.

Don't Forget About Corporate Social Responsibility

There are a lot of reasons companies are developing their social conscious these days. You've probably heard that it's good for your company to have a well-developed corporate social responsibility (CSR) program. Depending on whom you ask, the reasons range from attracting the right kind of employees to simply feeling good about where you work.

A sustainable business means providing products and services that satisfy the customers without jeopardizing the environment. Companies that build sustainability into their business models are the ones that are long-lived.

To help businesses achieve environmental efficiency, ISO 14001 and 26000 were created. Both of these environmental management standards provide organizations with a framework for protecting the environment while delivering value to customers. They are also intended to give guidance to organizations on how to achieve social responsibility. To learn more about these standards, visit the [International Organization for Standardization](#).

Great for the Bottom Line

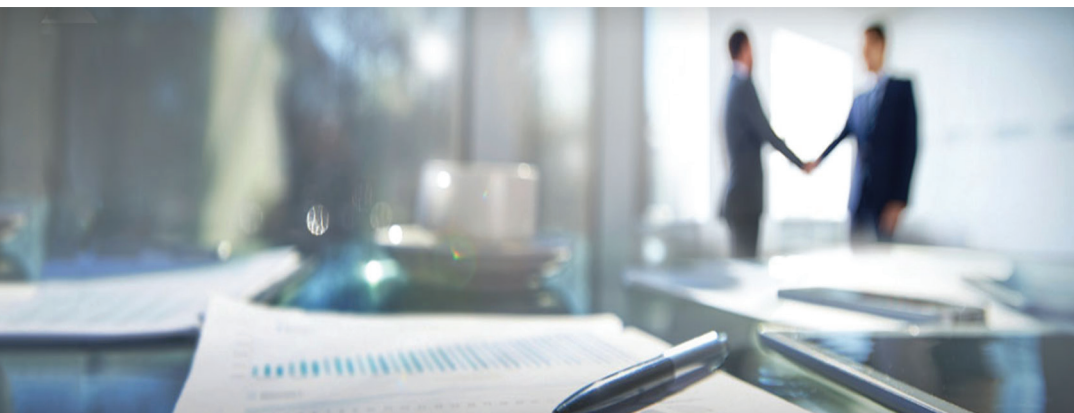
Not everyone realizes that a good CSR program can benefit a company in some surprising ways, too. The most surprising, and perhaps the most important? Achieving a favorable return on EHS investment.

This is the reason you'll probably be most compelled to disbelieve, but it's true: CSR can improve profits. Researchers from IO Sustainability and Babson College³ conducted a study and found that CSR programs can help companies do the following:

- Control financial risk
- Reduce credit spread
- Avoid market losses
- Reduce share price volatility
- Increase chances of having their investment grade rated higher
- Improve their market value
- Add a price premium

It's of best practice to frequently monitor, manage, and report on resource consumption and various sustainability KPIs. With the help of sustainability reporting software, companies can set environmental objectives and targets to achieve sustainable business practices. It helps sustainability leaders streamline their EHS operations while reducing business costs and carbon footprint.

3. Rochlin, Steve, IO Sustainability and Babson College Research Teams. Corporate responsibility has potential to deliver financial returns, IO Sustainability and Babson College report finds. Alexandria, VA. 2015.



Final Comments

The concept of employees becoming engaged in a common purpose at work can start simple, like creating an EHS plan. If you can instill pride, buy-in, and success with starting a safety culture at work, you've laid some excellent groundwork for the future of EHS at your company.

With all five of these practices, you'll want to apply creativity, patience and an open mind when it comes to getting messages across. Remember: cultivating an EHS culture is a lot like growing a garden: it takes time, consistent effort, and all the right conditions in place for growth.

Whether you plan to improve the way you manage incidents, safety training, compliance, or sustainability, software can help your team adopt a responsible attitude so EHS becomes ingrained in your company culture. Learn how by following the link below or visiting our website and blog.

www.ehsinsight.com



About EHS Insight

EHS Insight is the world's most flexible, powerful, easy to use environmental, health and safety software. Since 2009, the team at EHS Insight have been on a mission to make the world a better place. Today, more than a hundred thousand users in more than 45 countries rely on EHS Insight software, services, and support to transform the way they work and to lower the environmental impact of their operations. EHS Insight is software for improving EHS performance by managing risk and increasing efficiency. An effective management system is necessary to prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace and severe impacts to the environment. It's important. It's the right thing to do. EHS Insight makes it easier.



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