Five Tips to Create Safety Excitement in the Workplace

While safety should be the top priority of every company, realistically this isn't always the case. Safety programs meet resistance for several reasons, including the belief that they're too expensive or ineffective. However, a good safety program is not only effective for reducing injury, illness, and death - it can save you money. Statistics prove that successful safety programs save companies money through lower workers' compensation costs, insurance premium rates, and indirect costs due to injury reduction. The National Safety Council estimates that a non-lost time injury will cost a company approximately $7,000, a disabling injury will cost approximately $38,000, and a workplace fatality can cost around $1,110,000. Despite the substantial amount of money your company could save, the best safety programs are motivated by employee safety.

How can you design a safety program that will create excitement?

- **Get support from senior management**. Koppers Industries, a former winner of NSC's Green Cross for Safety Excellence Achievement Award, disseminates its safety communications directly from the CEO, who meets monthly with an executive level safety council. If management doesn't stand behind your safety efforts, it's much more difficult to ensure employee participation.

- **Generate open communication and involvement from all employees**. Effective communication flows in two directions, from management to employees and from employees back to management. Employees at all levels should be encouraged to voice concerns and offer suggestions. Addressing their suggestions in a timely manner helps to demonstrate that your company takes safety seriously. Also, involve your employees in pro-active safety activities such as safety inspections, job safety analyses and job safety observations on a regular basis.

- **Form a volunteer safety committee**. Forced participation on a safety committee may not be effective, depending on the climate and culture of your organization. Instead, it may be helpful to position involvement with the committee as an opportunity to broaden employees' skill sets. Not only will committee members gain technical skills in safety, but they can also gain professional skills like meeting management and problem solving that will make them more competitive in the long run.

- **Implement a recognition program**. Take the time to recognize employees who are promoting safe ty within your organization. You don't have to create an elaborate incentive prize system; sometimes a simple thanks can go a long way. Be creative. The people at Air Systems Components have created a "Caught in the Act" program where employees who are working safely get their picture taken, which is then posted in the plant. People enjoy and respond to positive recognition in all forms.

- **Communicate often**. Create a safety newsletter or bulletin board for your company. Let employees and management know the strides that your safety committee is making. Take advantage of National Safety Month as a time to provide extra awareness and training for your employees.

If you have a safety success story to share with other NSC members, please send an email to memberadvantage@nsc.org. Sharing safety program tips on what works and what doesn't work is another great way to help other member companies.

Sources:

Minter, S. "The Power of Positive Safety." Occupational Hazards. V. 65, No. 3 (March 2003): pp.39-41.
OR-OSHA Online Course 101-Module 1,2,3
www.cbs.state.or.us/external/osha/educate/training/pages/101xm1.html
Injury Facts, 2004 Edition. National Safety Council. Work Injury Costs, p. 51.

*Copyright 2005. *National Safety Council* All Rights Reserved.*

Content from the National Safety Council Members-Only Website is available for you to re-use for educational purposes through your internal employee communications. We do ask that the National Safety Council is credited as follows, "Permission to reprint granted by the National Safety Council, a membership organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health" or "Copyright National Safety Council, All Rights Reserved"