

STRATEGY

Business is like war in one respect. If its grand strategy is correct, any number of tactical errors can be made and yet the enterprise proves successful.

—General Robert E. Woods

If you are still reading, you have probably decided either to move forward or at least to explore the possibility of doing so. Always remember that STEPS is not a new program. It has no necessary additional structure and no set timetable. It simply asks you to utilize existing structure wherever possible and to progress systematically through this series of STEPS to ensure that you have the necessary reinforcement to promote excellence and then have the capabilities to get in control of your safety issues by prioritizing and addressing them one at a time.

It has been suggested to us many times that an assessment should be the starting place for the journey to Safety Culture ExcellenceSM rather than developing a safety strategy. In our experience, when you begin with the assessment, your strategy can become simply a plan to address your weaknesses rather than a true strategy. It is like planning your life based on a visit to your doctor's office. A strategy should give direction and meaning to everything else you do in safety. If you have this in place before you assess your current status, you tend to move forward toward your goal rather than from side to side addressing your perceived issues reactively. One of the challenges of Safety Culture Excellence is to move from strictly reactive to proactive efforts. Developing a safety strategy is the first and most important step toward doing so.

- Goals:**
- To move from avoiding failure to achieving success
 - To include excellence in the safety vocabulary
 - To align all safety activities around an overarching strategy
 - To illicit extra effort by defining the rationale of safety
 - To provide a clear and repeatable direction toward success
 - To align and motivate workplace behaviors to accomplish the strategic goals

2 MILESTONE 1 STRATEGY

Methods: A leadership training and workshop or multiple workshops to develop a Safety Strategy

- STEPS:**
- 1.1 Purpose
 - 1.2 Core Values
 - 1.3 Vision
 - 1.4 Long- and Short-Term Goals
 - 1.5 Objectives
 - 1.6 Marketing
 - 1.7 Initiatives
 - 1.8 Safety Excellence Accountability System
 - 1.9 Identify and Enable Change Agents
 - 1.10 Measure/Adjust
 - 1.11 Continuous Improvement

Now that leaders have decided to move forward and have the big picture of what a safety strategy entails, they can participate in a workshop or series of workshops to fill in the details of a customized strategy for the organization. The following sections are dedicated to each of the 11 elements of a safety strategy. If it has been too long since the first training/workshop in which the leaders reviewed the materials mentioned previously, it may be wise to review each of the 11 elements on the diagram in more detail from the previous section. Do not be concerned if you do not complete every detail of the strategy in this session. Strategies are living things that need to grow and change as thinking and issues change. If leaders cannot flesh in their strategies in a reasonable time or seem to be stalled in their thinking, it is usually best to skip over that section and move on through the others. You can revisit the skipped session at the end, but there is still no pressure to develop the strategy during this session. It is better to get it right than to get it right now! Remember also that you are going to go through each of the STEPS and that strategies might become clearer during that activity.

Icebreaker Activity: To begin the discussion about strategy, get leaders to think about a strategy that may be more familiar than safety strategy. The example we are using here involves a strategy to dominate market share for a product or service. (If this example is too foreign to what the organization does or if you have a better example at hand, please use another one for this activity.) If this was the challenge, the leaders might follow a model like the one in Figure 1.1. In each of these STEPS ask the leaders for their answers to the questions and how these answers could help develop a strategy.

The STEPS of this process are as follows:

1. Make the business case for the product or service. What is its function? Why is it needed? Who will buy it? What other products or services are on the market and how do they compare? All these questions would be answered, and a statement of purpose would be developed. It would explain not only the product or service but also how the organization would benefit by offering it.



Figure 1.1 Ice breaker activity: Example strategy to dominate the market.

2. A pilot customer would be identified based on the profile of the product, and this customer would be asked to test the product and endorse it. During the course of this process, the product might be found to have faults or weaknesses or there might simply be opportunities to make it better and more suited for purpose.
3. This would continue until the customer either accepted or rejected the product. The voice of the customer (VOC) would be heard and taken into consideration in both the design and the marketing approach for the product.
4. The organization would conduct, or contract for, market research. This research would establish the product's potential place, but this would also look for trends in the product type. Is this a product with a growing demand, a steady demand, or a diminishing demand? Is the price of similar products moving in a definable direction?
5. An analysis would be made to determine how valuable it would be for the organization to make and market this product. What are the profit margins and the volume potential? How long would it take to begin and how much would it cost to begin? What would profits look like over the projected life of the product?
6. Who is the competition and who could become the competition? How would they compete and what impact would competition have on the profits and life cycle of the product?
7. How will the organization brand the product? What is its name, logo, who is the spokesperson? How will the product be viewed by the potential buyers and how can that best be managed?

8. Who, exactly, are the potential buyers of this product? What are their demographics: income level, neighborhoods, work places, what do they read or watch, and how can they best be reached?
9. The organization would decide how to measure the key indicators of the success of this product launch and ongoing life span. What is the return on investment (ROI)? What is the market share and the rate of market capture? What is the percentage of market saturation?

All these STEPS and questions would be a part of the planning and consideration for such a strategy. How many of these apply to a safety strategy? Can we do significantly less in developing a safety strategy than we do in a new product strategy and expect the same probability and degree of success? The sad truth is that most organizations run other aspects of business with much greater attention to detail than they do with safety. This is the reason that many excellent organizations have less-than-excellent safety performance.

With this level of detail and this comparison of safety strategy to other strategy, the leaders of the organization should begin to consider the elements of a safety strategy. Refer back to the STEPS in Figure 4 in “Making the Decision to Pursue Safety Culture Excellence” that are relisted as the headings of each of the sections in the workshop.

Case Study: Recently, a plant manager led an all-hands meeting with supervisors. He did so with the intent of discovering what was contributing to recent injuries. He also wanted to understand if the supervisors were helping or hindering the efforts to improve. Unexpectedly, one of the supervisors asked the question, “Could you help me understand what the strategic direction in safety is?” The plant manager responded honestly, “Well, that is actually a good question. I don’t believe we have a clear direction in safety.”

The manager looked around the room and asked for confirmation from his department leaders. The body language uncomfortably indicated agreement. The supervisor then politely responded in a hushed tone with a very profound question. He bravely inquired, “Sir, if you don’t know what you want us to do, how are we supposed to know? And, how are we supposed to act accordingly?” This supervisor expressed a concern shared by many first-line leaders.

Many well-intentioned executives believe that their strategic safety direction has been successfully communicated. The sad truth is they are often wrong. Irish playwright, George Bernard Shaw, once said, “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” If there is no clear, memorable, and repeatable direction, can we really expect people to be working in unison toward the same goals?

Filling in the Details of the Safety Strategy: The remainder of this workshop consists of 11 exercises, each of which is designed to fill in the details of the 11 parts of an effective safety strategy. As you proceed, remember the icebreaker activity and do not fall into the mindset that safety is simpler than other business goals, or that a strategy of getting better by some percent or simply starting a new initiative is really adequate to drive excellence. Encourage the participants to use this workshop to do some deep analysis of how and where and why safety is critical to the



Figure 1.2 Identifying purpose.

organization and what it is really about. We would like you to come away from this workshop with not only a strategy but also a group of leaders who really “get” what safety is about, why it is critical, and how to make it excellent.

STEP 1.1 PURPOSE

Background Materials

Organizational leaders should be challenged to do some soul-searching and to really determine why they choose to work toward safety excellence. There is seldom one single answer to this question. Use the diagram in Figure 1.2 to center this discussion.

- *Business purpose.* There is often a business reason or reasons for improving safety. Some may want to reduce the costs and/or other negative effects of accidents. Others may see competitive advantage such as landing contracts with client companies who demand safety excellence as a condition of doing business. Others may consider safety failure as a major distraction to production or quality.
- *Safety purpose.* Safety professionals may have their own rationale for beginning new initiatives as a part of their overall strategies of managing safety for the organization. They may be aiming for greater participation in safety efforts by nonsafety personnel or better understanding of risks.
- *Altruistic purpose.* In addition to business and safety reasons, many organizations want to improve safety simply because they care about people and want to reduce pain and suffering. For many, the reality of workplace injuries is personal. If you have had a friend or loved one injured on the job, you may simply want to spare others the experience of such misfortune.

Many organizations have a statement of organizational purpose or vision. These are designed to summarize what the organization is all about and what they see as their purpose for doing what they do or for making what they make. These statements, if created well, can inspire and give direction to the employees. They serve as a constant reminder that what they are doing has a greater purpose than the task of the moment. A well-crafted statement of purpose can provide the same benefits to your safety strategy. It can also be the beginning of sharing the rationale for this effort with the other members of your organization to get their hearts and minds involved in helping to succeed.

Questions for STEP 1.1

1. How would excellent safety benefit your business?
2. How would excellent safety benefit the safety department?
3. What altruistic, humanitarian goals of the organization would excellent safety accomplish?
4. Can we turn these three purpose statements into a purpose or vision statement?
5. Would the members of our organization respond well to such a statement?

STEP 1.2 CORE VALUES

Background Materials

In most of the examples our clients have given where they have made initial statements of the value of safety, these statements tend to reflect situational rather than core values. A situational value is a value that prompts an employee to act a certain way in a certain situation. Statements about the priority of safety versus productivity are good examples of situational values. They basically tell workers, “When you must choose to take a risk to get the job done more quickly, this is how we want you to make that decision.”

Core values, on the other hand, are universal and transcend the limitations of specific situations. They might apply to specific situations, but they are not limited to them. Values are created when perceptions and behaviors are reinforced continuously, at or near the point of decisions. Figure 1.3 has some examples of generic organizational core values. These are principles upon which the organization wants to base its business decisions and direction. It is the moral and philosophical compass of the organization. Such a statement of core values in safety is rare, but it is extremely valuable in achieving safety excellence.

Beware of statements that are exaggerated or simply unattainable. Many organizations have stated that “safety is job 1” or “safety is our first priority” or that “nothing is important enough to put our employees at risk” only to have it backfire and actually hurt their safety excellence efforts. The reality for most organizations is that they are in business to make a product or to provide a service and that doing

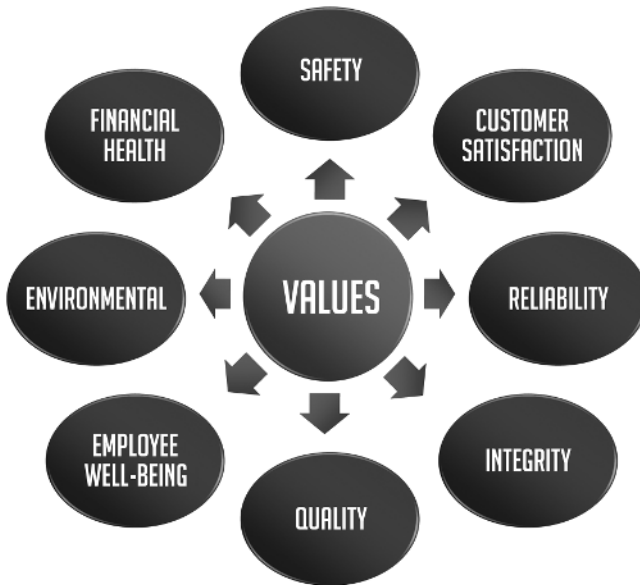


Figure 1.3 Generic organizational core values.

so involves some inherent risks. Conscious organizations do their best to manage those risks and to minimize the probability of workers getting injured on the job. In our experience, no organization has ever created a perfectly safe work place nor trained and managed the perfectly safe workforce. Even if they did, their workers would still be at risk at home, in public, and on the streets and highways. Safety perfection is not realistic, but safety excellence is both attainable and attained already by some organizations. Statements of safety core values should be centered around organizational best efforts, not perfection.

Some examples of safety core values might include:

- *Honesty.* Making sure to be completely open and honest in all safety discussions and reporting
- *Consideration.* Caring about the safety of others and taking action to protect them when necessary
- *Service.* Being willing to do one's part in any safety activity or program
- *Resources.* Making sure that everyone has needed equipment, assistance, and information to be safe
- *Example.* Every employee should consider themselves a role model for safety and always be a good safety example for their fellow workers
- *Compliance.* We will do our very best to know and comply with every law and regulation for safety that applies to our industry
- *Excellence.* We will never consider any number or kind of accident as inevitable or nonpreventable and will continuously strive to become more perfect in our safety performance

Testing Core Values

Another way to think about how you envision and strategically define your safety core values is simply to remember that if you say it, your employees will test it. Ask yourself, can we pass the test? Can we actually do what we say we will do and what we imply? If you say “safety first,” does it mean that you will always shut the plant to fix a safety problem? Does it mean that production will always be allowed to suffer if it impacts safety? Does it mean that leaders will always consider safety first before profits or competitive advantage or their own careers? Basically, can your performance reinforce your statements? If not, the statement will likely do more harm than good! Before your employees get a chance to test your core values, test them yourselves and only adopt and communicate the ones that pass your test.

Questions for STEP 1.2

1. What core values for safety are already identified in the organization?
2. Have we identified core values in other areas that apply to safety?
3. What basic qualities would we like to instill in our safety efforts?
4. What are some things we do not want people doing in the name of safety?
5. When we mention safety, what qualities and principles would we like people to automatically think of?
6. What is the ideal example we, the leaders, could set to direct the efforts?
7. Can we build the concept of excellence into our core values in a way that helps everyone understand it better?
8. Can we brainstorm a list of core values that meet our organizational needs now?

STEP 1.3 VISION

Background Materials

Leaders should begin to develop a mental picture that can be perfected and shared with the organization of what can be achieved in terms of safety excellence. This vision should begin with the idea of what safety excellence looks like. Again, this is not a one-dimensional view and may have several different facets. The vision may include what the organization is doing, how communication is happening, what workers are focused on, and so on. It is important to envision more than simply results based on lagging indicators. For example, do not simply say that safety success looks like zero accidents. That is the result, not the effort it takes to produce the result. Even if you reach zero accidents, what will keep you there?

Rather than trying to describe your whole world, try to create a vision that will inspire and direct workers to help you achieve more excellent performance. Hit the high points and describe the overall effort rather than the minute details of it. How will efforts be more focused and directed? How will everyone work more

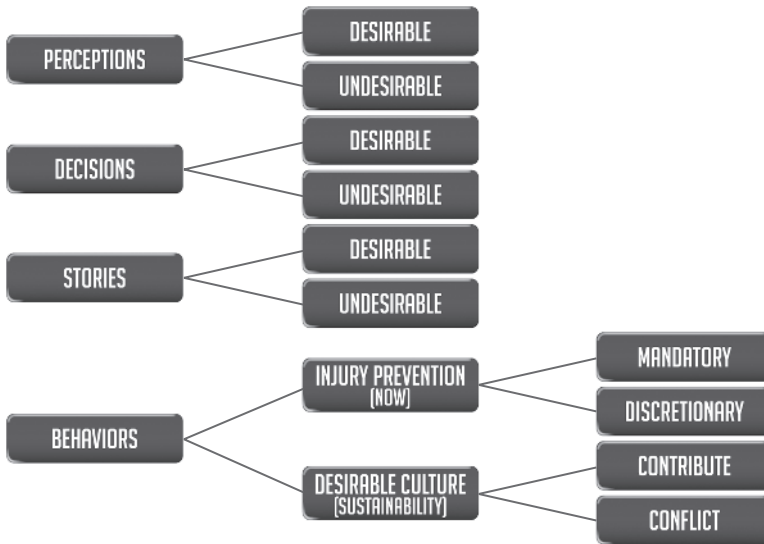


Figure 1.4 Targets for visioning.

collaboratively? How much clearer will everyone's role be? What new ways will we have to measure success rather than just accident rates? How will safety performance be more excellent and what will that mean to the organization and each member of it?

Visioning, if done correctly, creates focus. In Figure 1.4, there is a chart to help you consider what targets you should have for your visioning exercise. There are four targets that are common when improving a safety culture: changing perceptions, changing decisions, changing stories, or changing behaviors. The vision can involve any or all of these targets as needed.

The final analysis of a vision is whether or not it describes a state or place that is appealing enough to motivate effort to get there. Does the vision create desire and inspire a longing for something better or dissatisfaction with the current condition or both? Think about the inspiring visions of famous leaders that have moved peoples and nations to great action: Franklin Roosevelt's vision of what it would take to win the war, or John Kennedy's vision of sending a man to the moon, or Martin Luther King's vision of overcoming racial prejudice. All of these visions motivated people to action and that action changed the current condition. Does your safety vision pass the test? If you are not sure, ask your employees.

Questions for STEP 1.3

(The visioning exercise questions are also found in Figures 1.4 and 1.5.)

1. What does excellence look like in 5 years?
2. What will it take to make this happen?



Figure 1.5 The vision of excellence.

3. What would you see people at all levels doing that would indicate that you have achieved excellence?
4. What will work against you?
5. What is the transformational focus?
6. Where are you right now?
7. What perceptions of safety should your vision create?
8. What kind of decisions about safety should people make if they follow the vision?
9. What kinds of stories should begin to circulate that will reinforce the perceptions created by the vision?
10. What behaviors will people feel appropriate doing if they are following the vision?
11. Will this vision and these perceptions, decisions, stories, and behaviors help create an excellent safety culture?

STEP 1.4 LONG- AND SHORT-TERM GOALS

Background Materials

As you begin the STEPS process, you will be constantly targeting certain improvements and working on them. For now, you should consider the big picture of what you are trying to accomplish. Of course you want to improve safety results, but what are the techniques and methods you will use to accomplish the improvement in results? What can you accomplish now and what can you accomplish over a longer period of time? Where would you like to be in 6 months or 5 years?

To reach a level of excellence in safety performance, it is desirable to set positive rather than negative goals: for example, a goal to get everyone to take a precaution versus getting everyone to avoid a danger. On the surface, these seem very similar, but the differences between them become more and more profound as

the organizational performance begins to improve. The overall difference is between trying to achieve success versus avoiding failure.

Positive goals can be reached by positive reinforcement, which is a powerful tool to build excellent performance as well as strong relationships. Negative goals often involve blame and punishment designed to stop risk taking. The tools to effectively stop human behavior often damage relationships and attitudes and create an environment more akin to a police state. We have never seen an organization blamed or punished into excellence. Excellence is a function of performance, and the best performance is a matter of building on strengths more than eliminating weaknesses. Strong cultures are built on strong relationships. A strategy that encourages using relationship-damaging tools is not a viable strategy.

Good short-term goals should match the overall strategy and be aimed at moving the workforce toward better safety performance. They might include:

- Making every employee aware of the new safety strategy and answering questions about it
- Creating a mindset of focusing on a single safety problem and solving it before moving on
- Creating and communicating metrics that show progress toward the single goals
- Enhancing safety communications to keep everyone focused on targeted improvements.

Long-term goals should help complete the aim of the overall strategy by creating culture and other structure that can sustain excellent performance. They might include:

- Developing better safety metrics to understand how efforts turn into results
- Improving employee interactions through training and models of communication
- Continuously increasing opportunities for employees to get actively involved in safety excellence activities
- Have employees think of managers and supervisors as safety coaches who can help them perform better and safer rather than safety cops who are strictly out to enforce the rules and catch the violators.

Remember that there will be many more specific goals set to improve safety as you progress with STEPS. These initial goals should be designed to help start your safety strategy to becoming the way everyone thinks and acts in safety. These initial goals should prepare everyone in the organization to begin the journey toward Safety Culture Excellence that will see many goals set and accomplished and celebrated. If the goals are overly broad or unrealistic, they will not accomplish their purpose. In fact, they can actually create the perception of a false start or even a failure of the process. If they are too simple, unchallenging, or not worthwhile, they might not light the spark needed to motivate progress.

Questions for STEP 1.4

1. What short-term goals will get quick wins and motivate our process?
2. What short-term goals will quickly build interest and participation in the process?
3. Which aspects of our vision and core values can be improved quickly?
4. Which short-term goals have obvious, automatic long-term goals?
5. What long-term goals will motivate short-term effort?
6. How much can we realistically work on at once?
7. Do we have enough goals to motivate and not too many to discourage?

STEP 1.5 OBJECTIVES

Background Materials

If you reach the goals, what will you accomplish and how will this further your safety strategy? This step is a reality check for the goals you have set. Analyze each of them and see if they are really worth accomplishing and are fully aligned with the direction you are developing for your safety strategy. Where does each goal fit into the framework of your strategy, and are there any elements of the strategy that have no goals to direct effort toward them? If you accomplish this goal, what will be the impact on the safety culture? Will it be more capable, better informed, and more focused? Asking such questions can help to redefine or sometimes eliminate goals before you waste time and effort working on the wrong, or poorly defined, items. Basically, the goal is what you are trying to do, and the objective is what you are trying to become.

Questions for STEP 1.5

For each goal, ask:

1. If we reach this goal, what objective will we have accomplished?
2. Is this truly our objective?
3. If we reach this goal, will our organization become more excellent in safety? (Do not forget that some goals are intermediate: they move you closer but not all the way to the ultimate goal.)
4. Will this goal accomplish something permanent, or will this issue need to be reviewed periodically to see if it needs further work?

STEP 1.6 MARKETING

Background Materials

The STEPS process involves a complete look at how you market safety to the whole organization. For now, you should think how you will begin to market the safety

strategy. Why do we use the term “market?” Because we believe that your employees are the customers of your safety strategy and that they must “buy in” if you are going to be ultimately successful in reaching excellence. Before you panic and declare yourself “not a salesperson,” consider that we are talking about marketing and not sales. We do not want to sell someone something that is not ultimately what they want and need. We also do not want to resort to force (command-and-control management) to make the strategy work, since force can damage our long-term goals and the relationships needed for true excellence. Marketing is getting the right message out to create interest in the product among the right people and to reinforce their decision to remain interested in the product. For now, we are not talking about how to get the message out. That is communication. We are talking about what the message should be.

As you consider how to get the buy-in you want for your new safety strategy, focus on these four important aspects of marketing in Figure 1.6 that can guide your plans. Remember that your marketing strategy is changeable and that you will be asked to revisit safety marketing as a STEP later in the process. You can expand your thinking and perfect your marketing later, but now you will need to market your strategy to get the ball rolling, so decide the best way to do so. These four important aspects are:

1. *Branding.* How will employees recognize your safety strategy and how will they picture or envision it? Products and services often have “brands” that include names and/or logos that label and identify them to customers and potential customers. Just the term “safety” has a certain brand identity, but it may not be the one you most want. Many safety programs and processes have branded themselves with names and logos designed to appeal to the targeted customers. If you want emotional involvement, you can use inspirational names and logos. If you want participation, you can use team names and logos.

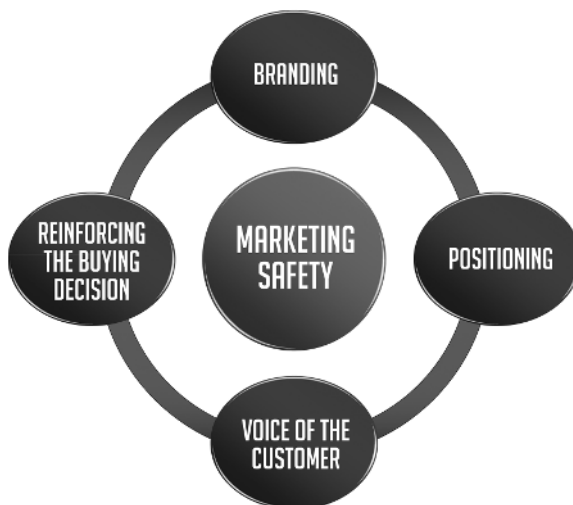


Figure 1.6 Four vital elements of Marketing Strategy™.

Sometimes the safety strategy will almost name itself from the wording of your goals and objectives. Sometimes it is best to let the employees name the process to elicit their involvement. Whether you utilize names and logos, mission of vision statements, or simply describe the importance of the effort, keep in mind how you would like everyone to think of and picture your safety strategy. What would you like them to associate it with and what kind of image would you like it to have?

2. *Positioning.* The term “positioning” is relatively new to marketing. It first appeared in 1969 in a book by the name *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*. The authors, Jack Ries and Jack Trout, defined positioning in their paperback edition on page 19 as “. . . an organized system for finding a window in the mind. It is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances.” So when is the right time to communicate safety, and what are the right circumstances? The answer to these questions almost necessarily includes explaining the rationale for wanting to improve safety. Where do leaders place safety in the minds of employees in relation to other values and priorities? How do they make the case for spending energy and resources on this effort? All these considerations will equal the positioning of the new safety strategy. If done properly, this aspect of the marketing plan will define when and under what circumstances the new safety strategy should be communicated and exactly what the message should contain.
3. *Voice of the customer (VOC).* Products and services can fail when they are designed without input from the people who are expected to be the customers. Almost all good marketing research includes asking people what they want, what they like and do not like, and getting a reality check on the product. A safety strategy can meet with the same fate if the customers (employees) have no voice in the design or features. Really excellent marketing research tests the VOC before, during, and after the design. A design workshop could begin with one or more focus group meetings in which employees are asked what they would like to see different in their safety programs. When the strategy starts to take shape, they could be asked for input. Then, when the first draft of the final safety strategy is ready, ask again. It is almost always easier to make modification early in the process than after new programs and processes are in place.
4. *Reinforcing the buying decision.* As you finalize the plan to market your new safety strategy, you should ask the question, “What will make our employees glad they bought into this new strategy?” A part of marketing is making sure buyers do not wish they had not bought just after the sale. What could make employees feel that they made a good decision to support the safety strategy? What if they were thanked publicly for their support? What if they get progress reports regularly on how the new strategy is rolling out? What if they see some quick wins and it looks like the new strategy is producing results? What else specifically in your organization could reinforce the buying decision?

Questions for STEP 1.6

1. What kind of name and/or logo would brand your safety efforts accurately and effectively?
2. What kind of name and/or logo would your people buy into and get excited about?
3. Where would you like to place safety in the minds of your people in relation to other priorities or values?
4. What associations would you like people to make when they think of your safety initiative?
5. How can you emphasize that safety is listening to and meeting the needs of its customers?
6. Can you answer the what's in it for me (WIIFM) question in your marketing message?
7. How can you make people proud of their decision to support safety?

STEP 1.7 INITIATIVES

Background Materials

Initiatives are projects, programs, and other efforts to help accomplish the goals and objectives. It is important to have clear goals and objectives to align initiatives to directly accomplish them. Too many initiatives are aimed at ambiguous targets such as “improving safety” or “increasing awareness” and not at specific, targeted goals. When you define clearly what you want to accomplish and the STEPS to get there, it is much easier to develop new initiatives or to choose existing ones to directly target results.

In addition to considering new safety-improvement initiatives, the organization should begin to analyze and align existing initiatives with the newly formulated safety strategy. Each program or initiative should be labeled as to what its unique contribution is to achieving the goals and aiding the methodologies of the strategy. Once they are aligned, they can also be prioritized by the impact they have had or potentially could have on achieving safety excellence. Resources can be allocated to each according to their needs and potential contribution.

Any safety programs or initiatives that have key performance indicators (KPIs) can also be evaluated to see if the process or initiative KPIs can contribute or become a part of the newly defined safety metrics. As the organization begins to move from strictly managing safety with lagging indicators toward a more robust and eventually balanced-scorecard approach, the process metrics can often be valuable to the overall strategy as well as to the individual initiative for which they were designed.

Any initiative that is not aligned with or contributing to the new strategy can be eliminated, reduced, or realigned. If you are going to replace an initiative with a new one to achieve your safety strategy or to better utilize STEPS, first consider if the existing initiative is functional and contributing to safety results. Functional and

integral initiatives should be continued and phased out as new replacements come up to speed rather than scrapped and replaced over time. The gap between stopping the old initiative and starting the new one can produce undesired results. It can also demoralize those participating in the old initiative and maximize the perception of change. The bigger the change is perceived to be, the more resistance it can create. Keeping the perception of change minimized is almost always a worthwhile goal as you progress toward Safety Culture Excellence.

Reviewing initiatives to align them with your new safety strategy can also be an opportunity to breathe new life into old initiatives. If you have a safety initiative that has been around for a long time and is growing stale or routine, consider bringing those involved together and challenging them to realign their program or initiative to become a contributing part of the new strategy. Offer some training and assistance, if needed, and allow the old horse to get in shape for a new race. One of the most common problems with safety initiatives as they mature is that the people involved become oriented to keeping the process alive and going through the motions, and they can lose sight of the original goal of improving safety. Reigniting the “results” orientation can replace the “process” orientation with a much more energized initiative with a very specific sense of purpose.

Questions for STEP 1.7

1. What existing safety programs, processes, or initiatives are still active in the organization?
2. How exactly do each of them contribute to the new safety strategy?
3. Do we have some initiatives that do not add value or contribute to the safety strategy?
4. Could the nonvalue programs be realigned to make them valuable?
5. What would be the potential negative impact of discontinuing these programs?
6. If we discontinue a program, how can we utilize the people involved and not demotivate them?
7. Are the contributing programs functioning well: results oriented versus process oriented?
8. Do we need other initiatives to help us accomplish our safety strategy?

STEP 1.8 SAFETY EXCELLENCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Background Materials

If your organization has job descriptions or other attempts to define personal responsibilities for safety, they will likely need to be reviewed and revised to meet the needs of the new safety strategy. You may decide that what you have is good enough

for now and visit it later as you continue through the remaining STEPS. However, if you do not have job descriptions (or if they do not include safety), you should consider at least getting started. We recommend a format we call safety roles, responsibilities, and results (SRRRs). This format defines the three most important elements of human performance in safety: what a person should be (the roles they perform), specifically what they should do to fulfill those roles (responsibilities), and the outcome expected if they perform their roles and fulfill their responsibilities (results). Defining specifically these three important aspects of performance avoids many of the common problems with job descriptions.

Job descriptions tend to be a simple list of tasks or responsibilities to be performed. While these are critically important, they tend to also define what people do not have to do and excuse them from producing results as long as they fulfill their tasks. SRRRs are a more holistic approach to describing what is expected and provides a more detailed way to determine accountability. The three “Rs” ensure that it is clear what everyone in every position should be, do, and produce.

Obviously, SRRRs will differ from one position to another. Contributions to accomplishing the goals using the safety strategy will be divided into different levels and types of contributions. While each player will have a different way in which to contribute, the sum of the contributions will constitute the whole job of success. Excellence in a team is not necessarily a team effort. It is all right to have superstars, and it is unrealistic to think that all contributions will be exactly equal. However, the magnitude of work is often offset by the need for specific work that some can do better than others. The importance is that the whole job of safety excellence gets done by the team and that everyone contributes in their own most effective and efficient way.

The development and wording of SRRRs may be ongoing in many organizations. Needs change and opportunities arise that may mandate the modification of SRRRs over time. However, there are two critical elements to making them do their best jobs:

1. They must be incorporated into performance appraisals or evaluations quickly. It is not enough to have clear expectations; these expectations must be reinforced. It is also important to establish that safety excellence is an organizational priority and an integral part of everyone’s job. This cannot happen if there are no consequences for either meeting or failing to meet expectations. Accountability means that an accounting must be made of performance against expectations. However, remember that we want hearts and minds involved also and that punitive systems are not usually effective ways to accomplish this. Good performance should be praised, and poor or unacceptable performance should be corrected or rechanneled. This can be done as a matter of setting expectations without the need for artificial punishment for minor offenders.
2. They must be evaluated to make sure that someone is assigned to each important element of the safety strategy. Someone or some group in the organization must have a part of his, her, or their roles, responsibilities, and results (RRRs) to compare the group of RRRs with the safety strategy and to determine that

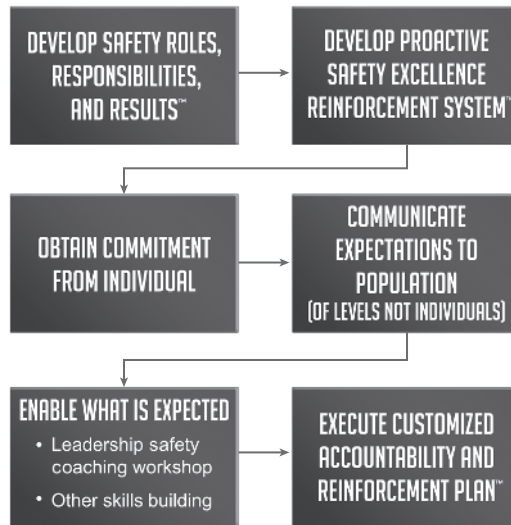


Figure 1.7 Safety Excellence Accountability System.

no important RRR is not assigned to someone. As the process progresses, it sometimes becomes evident that not enough people are assigned to some tasks, or there are too many assigned to others. If this is discovered, changes can be made to individual or positional RRRs to compensate. Many organizations assign the oversight of SRRRs to their Safety Excellence Team (SET) (which will be discussed in the section on clarity).

The process of implementing SRRRs within the organization can best be accomplished by following the process in Figure 1.7. Simply developing SRRRs and handing them to individuals will result in a very slow startup if not a total failure. The way in which you implement SRRRs will be as important as how well and thoroughly you write them. The implementation should proceed as follows:

1. *Develop the SRRRs.* The first step of this methodology is to collaboratively outline the top five RRRs expected of someone in safety. Collaboration is important for ownership. It is more difficult to hold others accountable for what you feel are important responsibilities. Typically, this begins with involvement of the different levels to outline what excellence would look like in the behaviors of individuals of the many major levels in an organization. What would you see them doing or saying that lets you know they are a great leader, very supportive of safety, and their performance certainly will impact results with their reports or peers.
2. *Develop a Proactive Safety Excellence Reinforcement System™.* Like this book outlines, wishing and asking for results are not effective approaches. There must be a strategy and methodological approach to holding someone accountable for key responsibilities. Like safety, there are two sides to accountability: proactive and reactive. Also like safety, there needs to be a balance of

consequences for desirable performance and undesirable performance. This balance of consequences has a role in both the proactive and the reactive sides of accountability. What is in place to recognize what someone is doing or to address what they are not doing, before checking if the results were impacted? The authors believe that this is the true purpose of accountability. However, most organizations better manage the reactive side of accountability, and they focus more on what someone did not do and try to hold them accountable. This typically leads to a poor perception of the approaches and even terminology of accountability. What is your plan? Who will carry it out? How will they reinforce and react? How often will they meet (generally one-on-one monthly) to reinforce the performance necessary and to provide feedback postresults?

3. *Obtain commitment from the individual.* While it is important to first develop your accountability reinforcement system, consider not deploying it until the people involved have provided you their individual, private commitment to focusing on the items necessary. This is where many sites have taken the list created in a previous step in this model and jointly (direct supervisor and direct report) chosen the top three to five items to focus on and master. A long list of responsibilities is very difficult to focus on, and we would argue more than five is not a clear focus for performance accountability. Once the top three to five RRRs are mutually chosen, it is important that written commitment is obtained to focus on and improve in those areas.
4. *Communicate expectations to the population.* To help increase the effectiveness of your approach, positive peer and group pressure can be leveraged to strengthen the sense of self-accountability. While we rarely communicate to a group the individuals' roles and responsibilities, we do encourage the communication of what others should experience (results) if the individuals are being the type of leaders needed to experience transformation. This is also important because one of the mechanisms to determine improvement or consistency of the key responsibilities is the feedback of those that should be experiencing the behaviors of the individual being coached. Are they having more, less, or the same types of experiences when working with these individuals?
5. *Enable what is expected.* Identifying what someone needs to do to contribute to desirable results will only have an impact if the individual has the capabilities to perform in the newly discovered desirable ways. If one key responsibility is that the individual needs to lead better, more participative safety meetings or talks, can they do so? Do they have the necessary speaking platform skills? Do they know where to get topics or how to develop materials? If you expect your leaders to become better performance coaches and evolve from being a compliance police, do they know how to coach for performance? Do they have the necessary skills to deeply understand what motivates performance and how to influence it?
6. *Execute the Customized Accountability and Reinforcement Plan™.* It is vital that a plan first be developed, RRR's customized commitment obtained and

competencies developed and plans to reinforce what is expected, before we can begin to expect improvement in performance. Organizations need not make this a complicated approach; in practice, it has been surprisingly simple to develop and deploy. The biggest challenge is staying the course. If we, as the leaders of this culture improvement, desire for executives to hold managers accountable, managers/supervisors, and supervisors/employees, what is your plan to manage all of this, and what is your sphere of influence? Most organizations effective with this approach begin at the highest levels and cascade downward as each level demonstrates improvement, ultimately pushing down to first-line supervisors or employees. If executives are not demonstrating the ability to focus and coach managers, we cannot expect that supervisors or employees will improve. The old adage is always true; people pay attention to what their immediate boss pays attention to.

Questions for STEP 1.8

1. Do we have adequate job descriptions or roles and responsibilities for safety accountability?
2. How clear are our expectations for safety?
3. How well do our people know what is expected of them in safety?
4. How would we rate our current performance in safety accountability?
5. Do we need to address this issue in our strategy or can we revisit it later?
6. If we decide to revisit it, when will we do that and how will we remind ourselves?
7. If we need to address it now, should we go for a finished product or just a starting place?
8. If we need to address it now, who should be on the team to accomplish the task?
9. Should we begin by asking everyone to submit what they think SRRRs should be for their positions?

STEP 1.9 IDENTIFY AND ENABLE CHANGE AGENTS

Background Materials

Meaningful change seldom happens in an organization unless specific people are selected, designated, and enabled to be agents of the change. The selection of the right kind of people is critical. Some people have influence over others and some do not. The kind of influence they have is also important. If the influence simply comes from position or rank, the change will tend to be dictated rather than engaging. The main principle of cultural change is that the change should ideally come from within rather than from without the culture. This means that “champions” or “mavens” should be carefully selected from within areas of the culture or from the

major subcultures to represent the change from within. Ideally, these will be respected and influential members of their respective groups within the culture.

Once selected, these change agents need to be designated as such. Everyone in the group should know who their group's change agent is and consider that person to be the "go-to" person when there are questions or suggestions regarding the change. Change should not be covert. No one should feel they are being manipulated or secretly observed. The real goal of change agents is to make everyone else an informal change agent also. The designated change agent's job is to recruit, enlist, and convert but not to entrap or fool. Never forget that you are trying to change a culture and that everyone within the organization is a member of that culture. The overlying goal of the change is to enlist willing cooperation, not grudging compliance.

When selected and designated, the change agents should be empowered to fulfill their assignment. This means that they should know clearly not only the roadmap of the change that is planned but also the rationale of each step and milestone along the way. These people will be channels of communication and information, but they should view themselves more as sales or marketing people. Their job of informing is a necessary part of getting the buy-in necessary to make the change possible and sustainable. The change agents are asking all their fellow employees to join a new team that is going to win the Safety Culture Excellence title. Winning teams do not just have players who know the plays; they have a team spirit centered on the strategy (or game plan), and their hearts are in the game.

When you begin the formal STEPS process, you will be encouraged to form a SET to steer the process. These team members will be the primary change agents, but that does not mean that you cannot enlist others at the workgroup or department level. As you formulate your safety strategy, consider how your organization is structured and envision what kind of change mechanism will best help you to succeed. How many people, at what levels, doing which tasks, and conveying which information, will make the change happen effectively and efficiently?

Many organizations want to designate full-time positions to function as change agents to get the dedication and effort necessary to be successful. While this idea can have some merit, do not forget that the overall goal is to change the culture and that, in some organizations, as soon as a person gets another assignment, they are no longer considered a part of the original work group. If the change is truly to come from within and if it is to become a common practice (the way we do things around here), that may be best accomplished by part-time volunteers who continue to do their regular jobs and to remain a part of their workgroups. Remember the example of Wikipedia, the strictly unpaid, volunteer group who wrote an online encyclopedia that virtually put the old encyclopedia companies out of business. Those old companies had a full-time, paid staff of professional writers and experts and an existing business and clientele, but they were outperformed by a group of volunteers who formed a new culture in which everyone contributed and benefited. What if you can do the same thing with your safety culture?

Exercise: When you consider making an organizational change or improvement, you will encounter different responses from various persons. In our experience, the people in an organization can be grouped by their response to change.

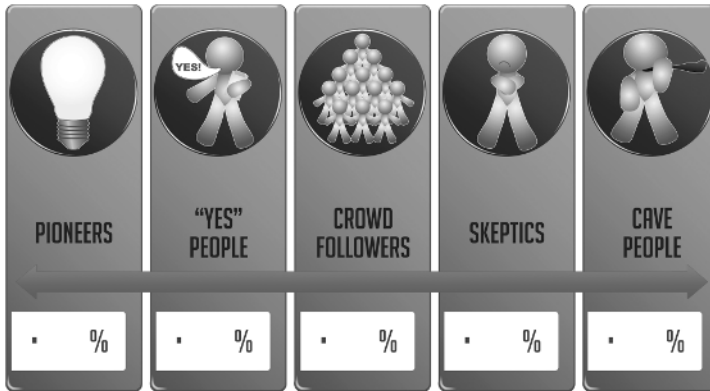


Figure 1.8 The five types of people in Organizational Change™.

Every organization is different and unique, but all tend to have five groups of people who react to change in predictable ways (see Figure 1.8). Look at this figure and estimate what percent of your organization’s population falls into these groups, or use this exercise in a group discussion as you develop and roll out your strategies for Safety Culture Excellence.

- *Pioneers*. These are people who like and embrace new things. If you announce a new initiative, they will probably be the first to volunteer or to ask for more information. They, like the pioneers of old, get a thrill out of being the first ones to get to the frontiers.
- *“Yes” people*. These are people who “do as they are told.” If the boss or the company asks them to do something, they feel obligated to do it. They seldom volunteer, but they almost never refuse.
- *Crowd followers*. These are people who want to be on the winning side and are not sure which side that is until they see one side clearly winning. When they see trends toward something new taking root and happening, they want to be part of it. Until they are sure it will work, they want to wait and see.
- *Skeptics*. Skeptics can be convinced only by their own careful, thorough (and usually slow) analysis of the new initiative. No amount of hype, marketing, momentum, or popularity will convince them. But, once convinced, they can become staunch advocates and valuable allies to the cause. Also, most good skeptics have a secret following or public following of people who admire their analytical skills and value their conclusions. Winning over a skeptic often means winning over their followers also.
- *CAVE people*. CAVE is an acronym for citizens against virtually everything. These are the people who will help you with your new initiative when hell freezes over and pigs fly. Not really! Even if you could arrange those two happenings you could not count on these folks. They do not join, do not help, and do not care if you succeed. They just want to get their check and go home.

The reason we suggest that you think about your people in these categories is to help you realize and carry out the most effective change strategy. Many people think, “If we could only get the CAVE people won over the rest would be a piece of cake.” That is true except for the fact that you *cannot* get the CAVE people won over because they are CAVE people! If you fall for that approach, what usually happens is that the organization sees a little group of change agents doing mortal battle with a little group of CAVE people, and they either decide that this is meaningless or take sides. Either way is disastrous for your initiative.

Effective change follows an intelligent strategy that starts at the right place, gets quick wins, and builds momentum toward the goals. The way to do this is to start with the pioneers who want to help anyway. The ideal first wave of change agents is ALL pioneers and NO CAVE people! When you run out of pioneers, go to the “yes” people and ask for help. They will say (did you guess it?) YES! When you have enlisted this group, you will find that the crowd followers are beginning to see the trend and will start to be willing to join and help. Somewhere in this time frame also the skeptics will begin to complete their painful analysis and decide that your initiative makes sense and deserves their help. As they begin to join, their followers will follow.

Now, it is EVERYONE against the CAVE people. Is it time for an all-out attack? NO! You do not win over CAVE people, and you do not do battle with those who have nothing to lose. Almost no initiative wins over 100% of the organizational population. The vast majority is enough for success, and you will begin to realize that even CAVE people are influenced by excellence. Not in the same way as everyone else, but indirectly, they will realize that they cannot be a part of an excellent organization unless their own performance becomes more excellent (or less visible). We have seen groups of CAVE people have their own secret safety meetings in which they say they do not want to join STEPS but realize that it would sure look bad if they were the only group getting injured.

Questions for STEP 1.9

1. Do we already have a group of change agents we can utilize: existing safety team or committee, safety champions or union safety reps, behavior-based safety (BBS) steering team and observers, or others?
2. Do they fit our needs or do we need to modify this group or form a subgroup?
3. If we have no suitable group of change agents, how should we best get one: read ahead and form our SET for STEPS, form a temporary team, assign a person from each work group, or other?
4. What training will our change agents need in addition to a thorough understanding of our safety strategy?
5. Do we need to develop SRRRs for them or can we define their roles more informally?
6. What publicity do we need to make sure that everyone knows who they are and what their function is?

7. What do managers and supervisors need to do to make sure that they are enabled to fulfill their roles?

STEP 1.10 MEASURE/ADJUST

Background Materials

Even the best of strategies are just plans and projections of what can and should happen in the future. The future is unpredictable and can possibly keep those strategies from working perfectly. Good strategies are precise, but flexible. They also include ways to measure their own progress and to adjust if the metrics suggest that they need change. In safety, we have a history of simply measuring results and trying to manage our efforts with lagging indicators. In achieving sustainable Safety Culture Excellence, we need to move beyond that view of measurement and learn to measure effort, progress and process, as well as results. The results are certainly what we want to impact, but the other metrics are useful in helping us to accomplish that goal. Think of the speedometer in a car and the tachometer. The speed is what we want, but if the engine is not turning the right RPMs and the transmission is not doing its job, we would not accomplish our goal.

Think of your safety strategy in three parts:

1. Are you working your plan?
 2. Is your plan working?
 3. Is working your plan producing the desired results?
1. *Are you working your plan?* Your safety strategy will call for actions. They may include training, communication, forming new organizational structures, recruiting people to help, developing plans, holding meetings, and so on. A simple metric for these types of actions is simply calculating a percent complete. Make a list of assignments: who is going to do what and by when? You can divide it into sections or types of activities if that helps, such as the categories mentioned previously. Some of the activities may be ongoing, monthly, weekly, quarterly, and annually. Make a list and a grid and tick off items as they are completed. Ask for regular reports from those assigned and calculate what percent of what you targeted to get done actually is completed.

If possible, develop evaluations of the quality as well as the quantity of activities. These can be evaluations and do not have to be precise or discrete metrics. Remember the adage that “an imprecise measure of the right thing can be better than a precise measurement of the wrong thing.” Always try to measure what is important, not just what is easy to measure. If you are asking individuals to make a personal value judgment of the quality of an activity, be sensitive to how people can influence each other. Let the evaluations be completed privately and discretely and not in group settings. You can report and share the evaluations in the group, but do not let the group influence the individual evaluations.

If your metrics indicate that any part or parts of your plan are not happening, adjust. These adjustments to your plan can be changes to the plan itself or simply changes in how you carry out the activities. You can change who is assigned, assign more people to help, or change the timeline for carrying out the activity. If the activity is completed, but evaluated to be of poor quality, you can assign a new person or team to take it to the next level or modify it. When you adjust your planned activities, be cautious not to create an atmosphere of blame or rating personal performance. Each person involved is likely a volunteer (and definitely a member of the culture you wish to improve), and their performance should be appreciated, not punished. Evaluations should be of strategic progress and not just personal contribution. Adjustments should aim at accomplishing the, as yet, unaccomplished strategy, and everyone should remain united, cooperative, and appreciative of all contributions toward success.

2. *Is your plan working?* There is a set of metrics called key performance indicators (KPIs). These are measurements of the impact of your activities. If you have an activity to communicate, your KPI might be to measure how many people can remember or recite the information communicated. If you have formed a group and asked them to hold meetings, how many meetings have they held and what was the percentage of attendance? If you have held training, what percent of your target number of people have been through the training and what percent of them can demonstrate competence in what they were trained to do? If you are trying to change perceptions, have you administered perception surveys or held focus group meetings and, if so, how much have perceptions changed since the last measurement? If you have asked workers to focus on certain precautions, are they doing so more regularly? In short, are the activities in 1 (“Are you working your plan?”) producing the desired changes?

If your KPIs indicate that your plan is not working or not working well, adjust! If your training is not achieving the desired capabilities in your workers, you can either adjust the training itself or change the persons delivering the training. If communication is not working or working well, you can change the message, the media, or the messengers. Adjustments in your plan may entail adjustments in how and who is working your plan. The overall decision is whether or not your plan is producing the desired changes or not; but do not overlook ways in which the plan could be made more effective or efficient even if it is working.

Remember also that even though there are many performance indicators, only a few of them are truly “key” indicators. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that a result that is upstream from your ultimate desired result is automatically a performance indicator. Performance is activity, and result is consequence. The KPIs are the activities most directly related to the desired results by cause-and-effect relationships. Small changes in true KPIs will produce visible changes in results as quickly as statistically significant results data are available. If you can change a process and not visibly or significantly impact the result, this indicator is not “key.”

Case Study: We worked with an organization a few years ago that noticed that a high percentage of their accident reports pointed to inadequate training as a causal factor. They decided to try an experiment in which they increased the amount of training delivered to a targeted group of employees while keeping the training the same for another group as a control for the experiment. They found that the employees with increased training had an almost identical rate of accidents to the group that had no increase in training, and yet training was still cited as a causal factor on many of the accident reports. What they discovered was that the “quantity” of training made no significant difference in performance or in the results. Their next experiment attempted to increase the quality of the training. The better trained group virtually eliminated their accidents while the control group remained about the same. The organization determined that the quality of training (as measured by training evaluations) was a much better KPI than the quantity of training.

3. *Is working your plan producing the desired results?* The third part of measuring may already be accomplished in whole or in part. Your goal may be to impact your lagging metrics that you are already measuring. If so, make sure that you understand statistics and accurately interpret the impact and trends of your data. Misinterpreting data can lead to false conclusions about whether or not the plan is truly producing results. If the team or group looking at this data has no formal training or knowledge of statistics, consider adding an ad hoc member to the team who does know statistics and can help the team better understand and interpret their data.

The goal of multiple metrics is not simply to have more data. The goal is to develop a deeper understanding of what effort and which strategies produce the desired results. The real challenge of excellence is not just to reach it but also to understand and do the things that will duplicate the excellent results year after year. By measuring the accomplishment of the strategies or plans and the effort going into them, it becomes more and more clear how to impact the results in a positive way. This deep understanding is what W. Edwards Deming would have called “profound knowledge” of your culture and processes that comprise your safety strategy.

When excellent results are being achieved, it is easy to simply think that you are working your plan and that your plan is working. Further analysis can and often does reveal that some efforts are driving the results and others are not. It is important to constantly analyze and remove unnecessary or “nonvalue-added” steps. The late business guru, Peter Drucker, often reminded us, “Nothing is less productive than to make more efficient what should not be done at all.” It is not enough to be successful at any cost. The goal should be to achieve success with an efficiency of effort and resources.

Questions for STEP 1.10

1. Are we working our plan?
 - (a) Are following the right path?
 - (b) Do we have the right people involved?

- (c) Are our people doing what they need to do?
 - (d) Are there barriers to working the plan?
2. Is our plan working?
 - (a) Are we hitting our KPIs?
 - (b) Do people know what we are doing?
 - (c) Are we changing the way we do things?
 3. Is working our plan producing the desired results?
 - (a) Have we improved the lagging indicators?
 - (b) Have we improved the culture?

STEP 1.11 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Background Materials

True excellence is a fragile state. Unfortunately, it is not a fortress you can reach and rest safely inside. It is not a title you can attain and hold it forever without further effort. Excellence is a state of constant vigilance and continuous effort. The goal of the ongoing efforts should not be to maintain the status quo or to simply keep from backsliding. The goal needs to be continuously improving. When you reach your best, you must conceive a better goal and strive to achieve it. It is only by such efforts that excellence can continue to exist. Anything less than continuous improvement is less than excellent.

For this reason, the safety culture and the organization should continuously stretch the goals, expand the capabilities, and enlarge the amount of participation in safety. Every aspect of Safety Culture Excellence should be visited, addressed, and periodically revisited to explore ways to make it better. This is the journey you will begin as you complete your safety strategy and move on to the STEPS methodology. As you do so, remember not only to always improve but also to always take the improvement one step at a time. Trying to do everything or too much at once is a major cause of failure in safety-improvement efforts.

One of the famous generals of World War II was George Patton. He was often quoted telling his officers that he never wanted to hear anyone say that they were holding their ground. He believed that moving constantly ahead was the best and possibly the only way to win the war. He was a controversial figure, but he also accomplished some incredible victories and set some records that have never been equaled. In your battle to overcome accidental injuries, form a culture that is always advancing and never simply trying to hold their ground. Doing so is the direct path to excellence.

In the sections to follow, we will share models of what a good safety culture looks like and what it can do. We will tell of strategies that have worked for other organizations and some that did not. We will tell you some stories of these experiences and how we discovered some of the concepts and methodologies that make up STEPS. Please do not take this book as an absolute and only formula for success. You will discover other capabilities that can help make your safety culture more

excellent and other methods to acquire or expand those capabilities. Excellence is a journey! Welcome fellow traveler!

Case Study: We led a major safety-improvement initiative for a petrochemical site. They called us because they were the worst safety-performing site in their division, and the management was being pressured to improve. They were not bad at safety. They benchmarked quite high in their industry, just not in their division of their company. They had recently increased the size of their safety department to try to address the issue and that had had some impact on improving results. The initiative we implemented increased involvement of the workforce and focused on some strategies that had not been tried. In less than a year, the site had passed the best performing site in the division in safety and had won the company award for best safety program and best safety improvement. The site manager called us into his office and thanked us for what we had done and announced that he had one parting question, “Why do I need any safety professionals, much less an expanded department to maintain what you have started? After all, it is mostly employee involvement!” What do you think would have happened if we had advised this manager to dismantle his safety department and try to hold his ground?

Questions for STEP 1.11

1. What is the trend in our safety lagging indicators: improving, staying the same, or getting worse?
2. What parts of our strategy most directly impact our lagging indicators?
3. How could we further improve one or two of those strategies?
4. How can we track this effort and see if it is having an impact on our lagging indicators?

Milestone 1 Application: When your leaders have finished these two workshops, they will have sets of information and insight from which they can formulate a safety strategy. The strategy will include the 11 elements in this workshop. In addition to a strategy, your leaders should have a much better grasp of what organizational safety is and what it takes to improve it. But the journey is not finished, and it is not time yet to roll out the new strategy. The assessment that is the next milestone on the journey will provide additional information that will impact how the strategy is applied. Again, it is important that the safety strategy be where the organization wants to go in safety and not just a set of Band-Aids to cover the wounds found in the assessment.