

10 Common Mistakes That Kill Your Safety Culture And What To Do About Them

Safety should always be a top priority in any organization. Having a strong safety culture helps prevent accidents and promotes a healthy working environment. However, there are certain mistakes that many organizations unknowingly make, which can kill their safety culture. In this article, we will discuss the ten most common mistakes and provide actionable steps to rectify them.

1. Lack of Leadership Commitment

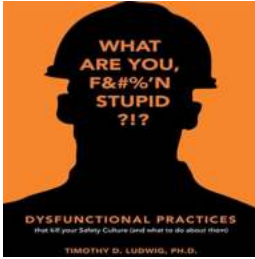
A safety culture starts at the top. If leaders are not committed to safety, it creates a ripple effect throughout the organization. Employees look up to their leaders for guidance and when leaders prioritize other aspects of the business over safety, it sends the wrong message. It is crucial for leaders to actively participate in safety initiatives and set an example for others to follow.

2. Insufficient Training and Education

Providing proper training and education is essential to promote a strong safety culture. Often, organizations neglect investing in comprehensive safety training programs. Employees need to be aware of potential hazards, understand safety protocols, and know how to use safety equipment correctly. Regular training sessions and refresher courses should be conducted to ensure everyone is up to date with the latest safety guidelines. Additionally, it's important to encourage employees to ask questions and seek clarifications regarding safety procedures.

Dysfunctional Practices: that kill your Safety Culture (and what to do about them)

by Harvard Business Review (Kindle Edition)



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Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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3. Inadequate Hazard Reporting and Incident Investigation

Proper reporting and investigation of hazards and incidents are crucial for identifying potential safety issues and preventing future accidents. Unfortunately, many organizations fail to create a transparent reporting system. Employees may fear reprisals or think that reporting hazards will have no impact. It is essential to establish a reporting system that guarantees anonymity and encourage employees to report any potential hazards or incidents promptly. Furthermore, conducting thorough investigations helps understand the root causes of incidents and implement measures to prevent their recurrence.

4. Lack of Safety Policies and Procedures

Without clearly defined safety policies and procedures, employees may not know what is expected of them in terms of safety. Organizations need to develop comprehensive safety guidelines that address various aspects of safety, including emergency plans, firefighting procedures, and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements. These policies should be easily accessible and regularly communicated to all employees.

5. Failure to Engage Employees

Engaging employees in safety initiatives is crucial for establishing a strong safety culture. However, many organizations fail to involve employees in decision-making processes related to safety. Employees often have valuable insights and suggestions that can improve safety measures. Regularly seeking input from employees and involving them in safety committees or discussions can enhance safety culture while making employees feel valued and heard.

6. Inadequate Safety Resources

Insufficient allocation of resources for safety can severely impact an organization's safety culture. Lack of safety equipment, ineffective safety tools, and inadequate staffing can contribute to higher risk levels. It is essential for organizations to invest in the necessary resources to maintain a safe working environment. Regular audits should be conducted to identify any resource gaps and address them promptly.

7. Failure to Recognize and Reward Safe Behavior

Recognizing and rewarding safe behavior is a powerful motivator for employees to prioritize safety. Unfortunately, many organizations focus solely on corrective actions for unsafe behavior and overlook the importance of positive reinforcement. Implementing a system to acknowledge and reward safe behavior can foster a sense of achievement and encourage others to follow suit.

8. Poor Communication Channels

Effective communication is vital for a robust safety culture. Organizations often make the mistake of assuming that employees are receiving the necessary safety information. Lack of clear communication channels can result in misunderstandings, misinformation, and non-compliance with safety protocols. It is crucial to establish regular communication channels, such as safety

newsletters, safety bulletins, and safety meetings, to keep everyone informed and engaged.

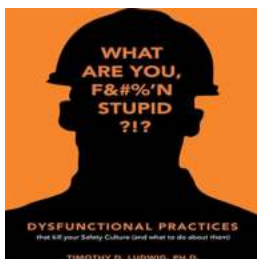
9. Inconsistent Safety Enforcement

Inconsistent enforcement of safety policies can undermine the effectiveness of a safety culture. When employees witness others getting away with unsafe practices without consequences, they may become complacent or ignore safety measures themselves. It is essential for organizations to enforce safety policies consistently and hold everyone accountable for their actions.

10. Lack of Continuous Improvement

A safety culture should be a constantly evolving process. Organizations that fail to continually improve their safety practices may find their safety culture stagnating. Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of safety measures, conducting audits, and seeking feedback from employees can help identify areas for improvement. It is important to embrace a culture of continuous improvement and adapt to changing circumstances and industry standards.

Building a strong safety culture requires commitment, effort, and continuous improvement. By avoiding the common mistakes discussed above and taking proactive steps to rectify them, organizations can create a robust safety culture that protects employees and promotes a healthy work environment. Safety should always be a shared priority, and when everyone is actively engaged in safety initiatives, accidents can be minimized, and workplace safety can be achieved.



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A MAN FINDS HIMSELF on the top step of a step ladder; a woman removes the guard to her machine; a worker is not wearing her safety glasses in the plant; a roustabout uses the wrong sized clamp instead of retrieving the right tool from the supply truck; a supervisor teaches a new worker to take short cuts; a mechanic climbs on top of the active machine to find the oil leak. Why do these folks do these things? Is it because they are stupid?

One tendency is to blame workers for safety errors and label their personal failings as the cause of the error. Labeling does not solve problems that cause error and, frankly, it may all be an illusion of human perception leading us to false s. Our human tendencies result in interactions that hurt the safety of our workers and the effectiveness of the systems we put in place to protect them.

These tendencies build dysfunctional management practices that create fear associated with your safety programs. I want to teach you a better way to analyze the behaviors of your employees to understand why they were put in a position to take the risk in the first place. Your system may be perfectly designed to promote risks and create safety traps. By analyzing the context of behavior we can discover ways to change your system to optimize safe behavior and reduce injury. This book presents new ideas and methods using stories we can all relate to.

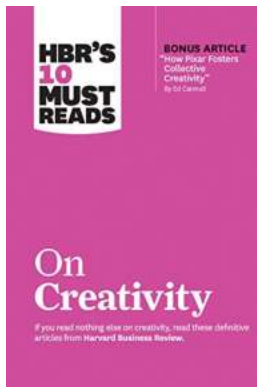
Human behavior is at the crux of your safety program. Physics and chemistry create hazards ready to be released when things go wrong. Human behavior happens right before that release. Therefore, we look at the behavior associated with the resulting injury and blame the person as the root cause. We label the person “stupid” and feel we have solved the problem. We haven’t. Instead, a dysfunctional practice creeps into our safety management system blinding us from finding the true root causes of at-risk behavior. If our goal is to create a safety culture in which workers are engaged with situational awareness, peer coaching, and reporting, we will fail. Our offensive labeling will create avoidance of the very engagement we desperately need from our workers.

We can’t fix people, let’s not be that pompous. But we can change behavior... we know how; there is a science behind it. We want to define behaviors in a way that are as open to unbiased analysis as the elements of physics and chemistry. Behavior is not a static variable of study. It’s not a geologic formation changing over the epoch of time. Behavior is a dynamic variable, reacting with each passing moment along predictable paths, like water in a river, but always ready and able to jump its banks and forge new paths.

We will discover that behavior is neutral, not good or bad, right or wrong. We will learn that for every safe behavior you want from your workers, there are a plethora of competing alternative behaviors that can put them at-risk. What determines this decision is predominantly the work context and your management systems.

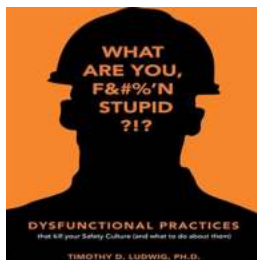
With this perspective we can better ask what put the worker in a position to take the risk. We will build an alternative to labeling with dispassionate, actionable and effective analyses to help build the system that helps workers discriminate the best behaviors for the situation.

This book is for managers who seek to shape their safety culture to drive out fear and engage their workforce as they drive out risk. I want to help leaders at the top break through their biases and look at safety through a different, more effective lens. Similarly, this book is for the noble safety professional who must build safety management systems to avoid biases and other human tendencies; systems that focus on the controls, PPE, senior leadership involvement, and adequate safety resources that shape and maintain safe behaviors.



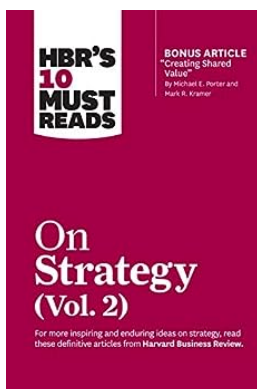
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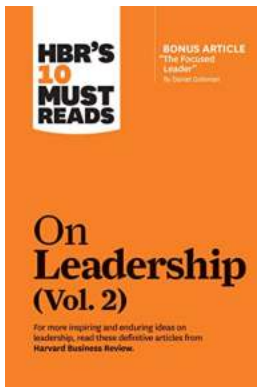
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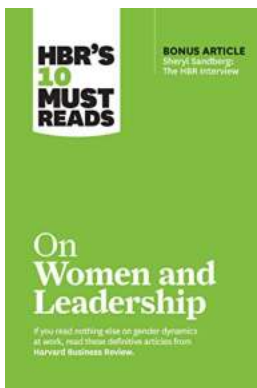
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