

## Improving SAFETY

I know every leader who is reading this newsletter has some form of business plan for 2011. It probably includes cost and quality initiatives and perhaps a number of human resource projects. But, does it include specific safety goals and plans?

A fundamental requirement of any leader is to ensure employees of the organization are safe on the job, yet, not many organizations have specific plans to improve their organizations safety performance.

### ***Why is safety relevant to lean manufacturing?***

The best lean organizations establish the company's foundation on the basis of sound human values. The leadership operates on the assumption that to be competitive in the marketplace they must find ways to tap into the vast pool of talent, brain power and creativity in the workforce. In other words, the goal is to get people involved in the business, particularly in those decisions that affect their own work places, and at the same time increasing work-related job satisfaction.

This lean approach is consistent with a safe work environment. They come from the same place. If top leadership considers safety to be the organization's overriding priority, and also expects that every accident can and must be prevented, then they most likely know the value of involving people in the improvement process and consider their workforce to be the ultimate competitive tool.

Leaders must be committed to providing a safe work environment for their employees.

A major company has become the safety leader in the automotive industry and has made remarkable progress in the last few years. Now, the rest of industry is now trying to catch up. The facts were documented in an August Bloomberg article about worker injuries. The organization reduced the Lost Work Day case rate from 4.5 per 100 workers to 0.26. - the industry leader and approaching all-time benchmark records!

The following six strategies form the foundation of the organizations success in improving safety:

1. Top company leadership must consider providing a safe work environment to be their top priority. Reductions in Lost Work Day (LWD) case rate and Recordable Injuries is how progress is measured. Leaders provide the vision, the resources, and the incentives for others to achieve results.
2. Safety initiatives and results should be tied to the company's business plan with measurements clearly defined and performance rewarded.
3. Recognize the positive changes in individual behavior. Personal recognition (as opposed to financial reward) based on values and principles is needed frequently to reinforce behaviors. It has the ability to change corporate culture permanently.
4. A systematic approach to safety is required. This includes such things as education and training, common safety elements and procedures that are standardized and inspected, early involvement of team members and the union, and a solid communication plan.

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

*"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."*

Ronald. E. Osborn

## LEAN & SAFETY

5. Get first-line supervisors actively involved - they are critical to the safety process. Their attention to detail and to their safety responsibilities will contribute greatly to ensuring a safe, productive environment for all employees.
6. **Establish specific elements in your safety plan. Here are some ideas to consider establishing in every plant.;**
  - a. Monthly Plant safety Review Board Joint Meetings
  - b. Leadership Safety Reviews - 2 times per week
  - c. Safety Action Database
  - d. Plant Staff Safety Audit Module Assignments
  - e. Weekly Structured First Line Supervisors tours
  - f. Daily Plant Staff Recordable and Lost Work Day Review
  - g. Monthly Safety Talks for Team Leaders
  - h. Weekly Departmental Safety Information
  - i. Departmental Safety Action Teams which meet weekly
  - j. Yearly Joint Safety Audit (use outside eyes to conduct an audit)
  - k. Yearly Safety Training Requirements Database (reviewed monthly with staff)
  - l. ISO 14001 Process
  - m. Ergonomic Team Data Base for all jobs
  - n. Annual "Take Shelter" and Evacuation Drills
  - o. Departmental Common Safety Boards
  - p. Performance Management Process Safety Metrics
  - q. Fork Truck Elimination Initiatives
  - r. Fork Truck/Pedestrian Safety Task Force
  - s. "I Care" Approach to Recordable Injuries
  - t. Corporate Safety Incident Voicemails.

### How to attack Casual Absenteeism in another manner

*As the economy rebounds, full-time employment opportunities will not increase at the same pace. Employers are leery of hiring full-time, hence contract positions will be the vogue. We already know of organizations where contract labor is in excess of 60%.*

*The impact of casual absenteeism by your trained full-time crew is going to have an even greater impact on your productivity. We always recommend a strong attendance program to any organization. But here is a slight twist you may want to consider ...*

*In many cases when an employee calls in sick, it is not themselves that are sick, but rather their requirement to tend to a ill family member. Instead of replacing the missing employee with a casual contract employee, hire a care giver to assist your employee's needs at home.*

*In this manner, you still can use your most valuable asset (your employee), while the employee is being supported at home through your support. You will be out-of-pocket the same amount of dollars, but without the pain of training a new contract employee and all of the other associated yuck.*

*What a great perk for your employees, from a caring organization. Ford has this program with great success.*