

Chapter Two
SAFETY MOTIVATION AND CULTURE IN ORGANIZATIONS

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. What messages should a company's safety policy convey?

A safety policy should convey at least the following messages:

- The company and its top managers are committed to health and safety.
- Employees are expected to perform their duties in a safe and healthy manner.
- The company's commitment extends beyond the walls of its plant to include customers and the community.

2. Explain why promoting safety by example is so important.

Management's credibility with employees will be determined by the example it sets, from supervisors through executives. It is critical that managers follow the company safety policy in both letter and spirit. Managers who set a poor example undermine all of the company's efforts to promote safety.

3. Why is employee participation and involvement so critical in the promotion of safety?

They usually know better than anyone where hazards exist. In addition, they are the ones who must follow safety rules. A fundamental rule of management is: *If you want employees to make a commitment, involve them from the start.*

4. List three benefits that companies gain from asking employees to sign a declaration of safety.

- a. By their signature, employees make a personal commitment.
- b. By their signature, employees promise to positively interact with fellow workers when they see them ignoring safety precautions.
- c. By their signature, employees give fellow workers permission to correct them when they ignore safety rules.

5. What are the steps for ensuring that incentives actually promote safety?

- a. Define objectives.
- b. Develop specific criteria.
- c. Make records meaningful.
- d. Recognize that only employees who will participate in an incentive program know what incentives will motivate them.
- e. Keep communications clear.
- f. Reward teams.

6. What problems can be caused by poorly designed incentives?

- Employee taxes
- Injury hiding
- Unfair programs
- Insufficient budget

7. Define the concept of the safety-first corporate culture.

A safety-first corporate culture exists when the tacit assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, and behaviors that are widely shared and accepted in an organization support the establishment and maintenance of a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel at all levels.

8. Why is the term safety culture a misnomer?

In that it implies that safety is a stand-alone, nonintegrated concept that can occur in a vacuum, that it is not part of a larger corporate culture.

9. List at least five ways (evidence) to tell if an organization has a safety-first corporate culture.

- a. Its priorities
- b. How people in the organization succeed
- c. How decisions are made in the organization
- d. Expectations management has of employees
- e. Expectations employees have of management
- f. Effects of internal peer pressure on safety
- g. Unwritten rules that are widely accepted
- h. How conflict about safety is handled

10. Why is it important for organizations to have a safety-first corporate culture?

Along with meeting the moral and legal obligations, the importance for the organization comes down to one word – culture.

11. Describe how corporate cultures are established.

Corporate cultures in organizations are established based on what is expected, modeled, passed on during orientation, taught by mentors, included in training, monitored and evaluated, and reinforced through recognition and rewards.

12. What does a safety-first corporate culture look like?

It has the following characteristics:

- Widely shared agreement among key decision makers that providing a safe and healthy work environment is an essential competitive strategy
- Emphasis on the importance of human resources to the organization and the corresponding need to protect them from hazards
- Ceremonies to celebrate safety and health-related successes
- Widely shared agreement that the work environment that is most conducive to peak performance and continual improvement is a safe and healthy work environment
- Recognition and rewards given to high-performing workers and teams include safety and health-related performance on the job
- Strong customer focus that includes product safety as a critical concern
- Insistence on safety and health as part of supplier relations

- Effective internal network for communicating safety and health information and expectation
- Informal rules of behavior that promote safe and healthy work practices
- Strong pro-safety corporate value system as set forth in the strategic plan
- High expectations and standards for performance relating to safety and health
- Employee behavior that promotes safe and healthy work practices

13. List each of the ten steps for establishing a safety-first corporate culture.

- a. Understand the need for a safety-first corporate culture
- b. Assess the current corporate culture as it relates to safety
- c. Plan for a safety-first corporate culture
- d. Expect appropriate safety-related behaviors and attitudes
- e. Model the desired safety-related behaviors and attitudes
- f. Orient personnel to the desired safety-first corporate culture
- g. Mentor personnel in the desired safety-related behaviors and attitudes
- h. Train personnel in the desired safety-related behaviors and attitudes
- i. Monitor safety-related behaviors and attitudes at all levels
- j. Reinforce and maintain the desired safety-first corporate culture