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S A F E T Y

Supervisor Performance Evaluation Including Safety

Research by the Construction Industry Institute (CII) found that when the safety performance of construction supervisors is regularly evaluated with results communicated to those supervisors safety performance is significantly improved. Safety performance evaluations are listed as number 3 of the top 24 safety techniques found by CII to be in use when a performance of zero recordable injury was found.

Even with this very direct information there are many companies that do not capitalize on this finding. A common response found by the Zero Injury Institute (ZII) when individuals were asked if their employer has evaluated their safety performance in the past 12 months was; "I must be doing okay because I have not been criticized lately. You see my boss is quick to tell me when I do something wrong, so I must be doing fine."

Looking at "the nature" of "human nature" will help here. A number of studies over the past 60 years have found the same results on what is tops on the list of what employees want from their jobs. All these studies found that "being appreciated" was near the top if not the top item. Even money or wage often ranked lower in the list. <http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Dunn110.html>

The point?

"Praise" then is a powerful employee motivational tool. In light of this finding the question then is; "Do we praise our employees nearly enough?"

Given an average workforce, it is easy to believe were employee evaluations conducted at least 90 percent of the performance evaluations held would result in employee praise. What could be more powerful to improve operations?

Recognize, if you begin employee performance evaluations that "safety" is but one performance area that will benefit from formal evaluations. Every employer has perhaps six to ten performance criteria that are being used unconsciously as leaders decide who is best in performance. Safety performance is only one but a crucial one; leadership skill is another and, for creating a zero-injury safety culture, both are extremely important. Other important performance criteria can be included as well.

Some readers will allow their imagination to build this evaluation effort into a giant battery of work that seems far too daunting to achieve. To ease this concept, these evaluations do not need to be so extensive that they become a dreaded event for the leaders to undertake. They can be as brief as one page, perhaps even less; but to not do any evaluations is missing an opportunity to tell each of your employees they are

doing a fine job for you, that the company sees their performance and appreciates the individual's contribution to a zero-injury work site. This is called PRAISE! CII research shows safety improves when praise is given!

When looking at an employee population easily 90 percent of your employees will be receiving praise, with just 10 percent or less receiving coaching on how they can improve. Performance evaluations reflect a "caring" attitude about your personnel. To not evaluate performance and especially safety performance is to indicate to employees by lack of emphasis, that safety is not that important despite what you think you are saying otherwise.

Construction is accomplished in a manner that uses represented or non-represented craft employees for relatively short periods of time. Evaluations for craft employees can be especially important in these short bursts of activity. With evaluations, you can have a significant, positive impact on the culture in any given union hall or open-shop region. Over time, these employees come to appreciate your safety emphasis and the subject of zero-injury becomes a topic of discussion in a positive vein even when your company has departed the area. And your firm becomes an employer of choice when you do return.

ZII experience around the USA in interviewing represented and non-represented craft workers have also found these workers very appreciative of an employer who pushes safety as a value. Through this evidence, ZII concludes when a truly caring employer attitude for the health and well-being of the worker is present critical worker safety buy-in occurs. A frequent remark heard is, "I have never worked for a company so safety conscious."

For a company engaged in the construction industry, including Owners, Construction Managing Companies (CMs) and Contractors wishing to perform at world class safety levels, all employees benefit from at least an annual performance evaluation with an emphasis on safety. Many owner companies do have performance evaluation systems in place, and those that set a high emphasis on safety will typically experience world class safety performance as does, for example, du Pont de Nemours. With this example it is logical to assume CMs would benefit as well. From experience ZII sees only a very few construction companies giving performance evaluations to staff with feedback and even fewer to craft workers.

The technique of evaluating safety performance regularly with employees is perhaps the hardest of all safety leader concepts to implement with consistency. The typical trap leaders fall into with the evaluation technique is getting so far behind schedule that they give up on ever catching up, so the system fails. The answer is to keep them brief perhaps a check-off list only for hourly waged employees will suffice. It is the "praise event" that matters not the extent of the record kept.

Performance evaluations, well done, provide improved resource management. Including safety as a portion of the performance evaluation promotes a positive personal improvement by each employee in working as a team member to ultimately achieve your safety objective: zero-injury.

If your company wishes to become truly world class in safety, then including safety in performance evaluations is one of the research proven criteria you will want to embrace.

Emmitt J. Nelson, ME, PE, NAC, ZIC; Chair, National Academy of Construction Safety Committee

Info available from: www.construction-institute.com or www.naocon.org or simply do an internet search for the two words “zero+injury” to find other sources of information and or assistance.

NAC Safety White Papers

Through the Position White Papers on Safety, the National Academy of Construction is recommending that American businesses investigate the research of the Construction Industry Institute (CII) into how increasing numbers of employers are able to achieve a million work hours and more without an OSHA Recordable injury. The nine research-based CII Zero Injury safety leadership categories are: 1. Demonstrated management safety commitment; 2. Staffing for Safety; 3. Safe Work Planning, pre-project and pre-task; 4. Safety Education; orientation and specialized training; 5. Employee Involvement, behavior safety and safety perception surveys; 6. Evaluation and Recognition of Safety Performance; 7. Contractor Selection and Management; 8. Accident/Incident Investigation Including Near Misses; 9. Drug and Alcohol Testing.

See the NAC web site www.naocon.org for previous Safety White Papers.

The ROI of Zero Injury Safety Performance

The Construction Industry Institute research has proved that the cost of successfully implementing the nine CII zero injury categories is returned at a rate of 400 to 500% per annum when compared to the costs of OSHA/BLS injury rate average performance (4.7 TRIR in 2008) for the entire construction industry in the United States of America.

Information and details on the increasingly popular “Zero Injury Safety Leadership Concept” is available from the following:

Construction Industry Institute, 3925 W. Braker Lane (R4500), Austin, TX 78759-5316
Ph (512) 232-3004

www.construction-institute.org

See the NAC website at www.naocon.org for copies of the NAC Safety Whitepaper series.

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