



Question No. 1 to develop your safety excellence strategy

Who is the primary customer of your safety strategy this year? According to “Inside Strategy: Value Creation from Within Your Organization,” written by myself and Terry Mathis, “Ask any two people what strategy is and you’re likely to get two different answers. Ask those same two people how strategic thinking generates value at all levels from within

an organization and you’ll probably be met with blank stares. Ever since strategy gained currency as an organizational concept in the 1960s, there’s been confusion about how to define it. Strategy isn’t a detailed plan of action. Nor is it a corporate vision or an objective or a mission statement. Strategy is not what to think. It’s how to think.”

Organizations need but often lack a clear safety excellence strategy focused on creating value for the organization and people within. Strategy is about choices, small bets and tradeoffs an organization makes to create and deliver sustainable value. This article and the ones to follow will outline questions to help you better determine goals, priorities and initiatives that support them, as well as a balanced scorecard to strategically lead your organization toward excellence in performance and culture.

Creation of an effective strategy begins with first identifying who the customer is. Customers are the people (e.g., contractors, new employees, hourly employees, supervisors, managers, executives, etc.) who are impacted by or involved in your safety improvement efforts. In some situations, they are the people whose behavior you need to control, and in other situations, they are the people whose behaviors you need to influence. Theoretically, while everyone is the customer in safety, in practice no one has the unlimited budget, resources or bandwidth to do everything for everyone. Choices must be made. What can you do really well and for whom?

Who are the customers you need to win with right now? Your primary customer will often be determined by your circumstances, maturity levels and, of course, data. Sometimes it is executive leaders whose thinking needs to be matured. For others, it is supervisors who have never been trained, coached and held accountable to be the change-agent leaders needed. Occasionally, it is the leadership level above the front-line leader that should be the initial customer focus, as the supervisors’ behavior is the result of their boss’s behavior. Sometimes injury data indicates the vast majority of events happen to people with less than one year on the job, while in other environments events mostly occur to the five- to

seven-year tenure group, who might be too comfortable with their knowledge and practices. If you were able to most effectively serve, who would make the biggest difference in your performance and cultural improvement efforts?

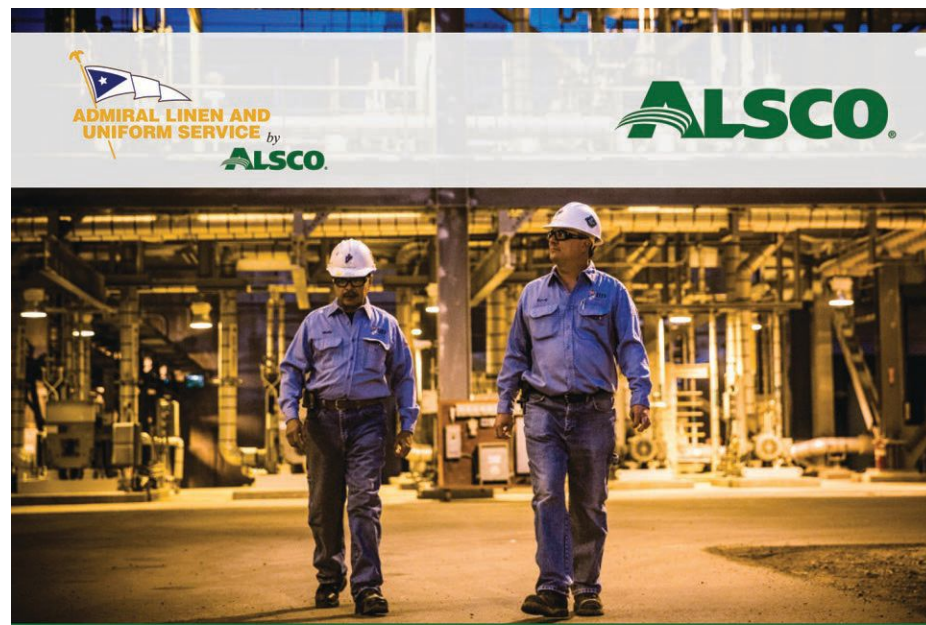
The following additional questions will help you identify your primary customers: Who are our different customers? What do we know about the different customers? What data indicates what matters to them? What data indicates which customer we should focus on first? What value can we provide? Which customers are we inadvertently ignoring? How will what customers value be different in the future?

In business, strategy is deployed to increase market share and market capitalization. In safety strategy, the market share is the attention share of the customers affected by safety efforts. Are you capturing their attention? Do they perceive value in safety efforts and receive value for their participation? Who is the primary customer you need to serve with your safety strategy this year? Upcoming articles will focus on additional questions that must be asked and answered to create your safety excellence strategy.

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Galloway is a member of BIC Media Solutions’ speakers bureau. For more information about BIC Media Solutions’ speakers bureau, contact Earl Heard at earlheard@bicalliance.com or call (800) 460-4242.

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