



GOOD SAFETY STRATEGIES TARGET SPECIFIC AND LIMITED IMPROVEMENTS AND FOCUS THE WHOLE ORGANIZATION ON ACHIEVING THEM.

20/20 VISION

Don't fall into these common traps when planning this year's safety initiatives.

The year 2020 is here! What is your vision for this year? What will you do to move the needle of your safety results? What will you do to make the next improvement in your safety culture? How will you strategically win this year's battle against accidental injuries?

There are three common traps into which organizations fall when planning the next year's safety initiatives:

1. Doing nothing and hoping for better results is a bad option.
2. Just trying harder to do the things you are already doing the same way you are doing them is another bad option.

3. Trying to do too much at once is possibly the worst option since it seldom succeeds and often causes collateral damage as it fails.

Einstein reminded us that doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results is the definition of insanity. Overestimating the ability of the organization to improve is equally unrealistic. Projects that exceed the bandwidth of the organization are doomed to failure even before they begin. When they create overload and the impossibility of success, they frustrate and demotivate the very people whose efforts are necessary to carry out the initiative. The old adage about how to eat an elephant should guide your 2020 plans: Make your improvements a bite at a time. Below are some suggestions for bites you can take out of your safety elephant.

STRATEGY

This is an area where all three traps are often found. Most organizations don't have a safety strategy. They think they do until they question the element of strategy and find that they really just have a series of programs and activities to prevent accidents that are not combined into an overarching strategic plan. Many of the programs don't really fit with the others and often compete with each other and with the organization's operational strategy.

Some think that setting goals for improving lagging indicators is a strategy. It is not! Even the "Zero Injuries" or "Zero Harm" crowds have only a goal with no particular strategy to achieve it. Some tell me that they are setting a zero-tolerance mindset in the workforce and that is the strategy. But strategy is not just a wish to win the war but a



plan to make that win a reality.

Even those who do have a strategy often have it overloaded or unrealistically timed. Thinking you can become perfect next year at too many things is a formula for failure for all the reasons mentioned above. Good safety strategies target specific and limited improvements and focus the whole organization on achieving them.

LEADERSHIP

It is the job of leadership to create strategy and to maintain focus on the strategic goals. This focus should divide safety issues into which ones should be the responsibility of leaders and which should involve the workers. Safety improvement goals involving design or conditional issues should be the purview of management but should include worker input to provide a reality check on how they will impact work practices.

All worker involvement should be defined in behaviorally-specific terms. This often involves having leaders from the boardroom to first-line supervisors coach the focused behaviors while performing their own duties in safety. Many leaders have little or no specific training in performance coaching and providing it to them should be a priority. This training should have specific follow-up to ensure it is implemented and continuously improved.

CULTURE

Specific improvement targets should be identified for the safety culture, then prioritized to be