



Five by five by '25

Which five beliefs and five behaviors, if they became common by the year 2025, would be game changing for your safety performance and culture?

The year 2020 provided many ideas around the important concept of focus. In my previous article, "2020: Clarity of vision" (December 2019, pg. 68), I wrote, "Vision, clarity, focus: Now is a great opportunity to leverage the new year and term '2020' as your opportunity to become focused and to keep the most important things the most important things."

When major, unanticipated disruptions occur to a plan or strategy, I'm reminded of the famous quote by Mike Tyson to a reporter about Evander Holyfield's fight plan: "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." COVID-19 punched many safety strategies in the mouth, but not all of them. Some with clear definitions of success maintained focus despite the distraction of the pandemic because they developed alignment and had a qualifier to measure their decisions against.

An approach I have used with several

clients throughout 2020 to develop their five-year safety strategy is to agree upon the end goal for their culture. It is critically important to align everyone within an occupational culture on what success looks like. Without this, many decisions will be made with good intent, but could easily affect the culture negatively. Everyone already has a safety culture (e.g., common beliefs, behaviors, stories). What does your desired culture look like?

Imagine you left your company and return after five years to walk the areas where work is performed, and drastic improvement has been made to safety performance. Your company is now winning all the awards in recognition of this accomplishment. What would you see and hear that would explain this change? To help you focus, put your defining success thoughts into two categories: beliefs and behaviors. Work to prioritize them into the top five. Many clients have adopted the phrase "five by five by '25." Our companies will be successful and know it in 2025, when these five beliefs and five behaviors become common

throughout our cultures.

Safety performance rates will be a part of how many companies define success, at least for the foreseeable future. However, these typical metrics do not describe why the performance has improved, which is quite important if you want to sustain the results — or describe with confidence why the performance did not improve. If you have great results but can't explain why, too much luck is involved. Work to manage the luck out of your safety performance. Additionally, one of the most effective motivators at work is visible progress toward a goal. Traditional safety indicators do not allow for this. Observing behavior change, however, does.

A successfully designed safety strategy creates qualifiers for future decisions to be measured against. Does this training, new policy, business decision, etc., get us closer to where we have agreed to go? Does this response to the pandemic support or hinder our ability to move toward what we define as success? Does it align with the agreed-upon strategic priorities? Does the

data support this decision? Most importantly, will it directly contribute to improving safety performance and culture?

Begin with the end in mind and determine, "What is our five by five by '25?" Once you have this clearly defined, use it going forward to align systems and behaviors, and to influence leadership and employee decisions within the organization. As a qualifier to decision making, continuously ask, "Will this move us closer or further away from these beliefs and behaviors becoming shared and demonstrated by all?"

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