



Leveraging commander's intent for safety success

How clearly have you communicated your intentions for safety? Does your team know why safety is important to not only the business, but also to you personally? Knowing the only constant in business is change, do they know what to do to reach or accomplish the safety objective when conditions or plans do not work out as conceived?

Commander's intent (CI) is a military method that explains what must be accomplished and why. It also clearly defines what success of the mission looks like. Military experience teaches that no plan of battle survives initial or sustained contact with the enemy. CI understands there are many variables not yet known, making the full details of how to accomplish the goal either obsolete or impossible to completely develop until execution begins.

CI recognizes the differences in theory and practice and works to empower subordinate leaders to show initiative, ingenuity and improvisation as the battlefield environment changes without the need to constantly communicate or seek approval. The vision should be clear and shared by

all, and it is up to the entrenched leaders to determine how to make the vision a reality with their people.

The following are five areas to focus on to leverage CI in your efforts to achieve excellence in safety performance and culture in the workplace:

- **Clarity of success.** Everyone desires zero workplace injuries. Too many employees are unclear of what it takes to sustainably achieve this, who is responsible for it and what the new reality will look like once the objective is met. Thus, there is a need for success clarity. While it is important for the desired results to be clear, it is even more important that the new consistent behaviors observed are understood. You cannot repeat desired results without desired performance. Focus on what performance will yield those results.

- **Clarity of intent.** Humans are naturally curious and tend to react emotionally to change before reacting logically. If we do not understand "the why" behind the change or how it benefits us individually, unnecessary resistance is created. Ensure you

explain not only the benefit to the company, but more importantly, answer the question "What's in it for me?" for individuals.

- **Safety roles, responsibilities and results (RRRs).** People must see themselves as actors in the plan. They must know their roles (how they are perceived), responsibilities (how they must behave to fulfill the roles) and results (what the outcomes are).

- **Recognition of initiative and ingenuity.** Things will invariably change regardless of great planning. Enable the necessary competencies for your leaders and employees to fulfill and meet their RRRs. To combat the multiple influences individuals face daily to take shortcuts, employers must recognize and reinforce employees' creative actions to accomplish objectives, while also not compromising the intent of other priorities.

- **Indicators of progress.** If success is clear and also defined by what is new that would be commonly observed, individuals can recognize, by meeting their RRRs, the desired reality is becoming clos-

er. Visible progress toward a goal is one of the strongest motivators in a work setting. Individuals need to be able to see where they are in relation to the objective and have confidence that what they are doing is contributing to successful results.

If you want to get everyone on the same page, it is time to create the page. Ensure your CI is clearly defined and understood, and that everyone knows what part they play, knows what to do when things do not go as planned, feels supported when they adapt to overcome and feels progress when proximity to the objective becomes closer.

Shawn M. Galloway is the president of ProAct Safety and co-author of several bestselling books. As an award-winning consultant, adviser, leadership coach and keynote speaker, he has helped hundreds of organizations within every major industry to improve safety strategy, culture, leadership and engagement. He is also the host of the highly acclaimed weekly podcast series Safety Culture Excellence®.

For more information, call (936) 273-8700 or email info@ProActSafety.com.

**APEX
DOMES**

NEW CONSTRUCTION ▲ RETROFITS ▲ CUSTOMIZED DESIGNS

APEXDOMES.COM ▲ +1.620.423.3010

BUTTERWORTH

Worldwide Tank Cleaning Solutions
The first and always the best

Leasing Options Available

16737 West Hardy Road
Houston, Texas 77060
USA

Toll Free: 866.920.3233
Phone: 281.821.7300
Fax: 281.821.5550

info@butterworth.com | www.butterworth.com