



EHS strategy: Eight focus areas for success

Where environmental, health and safety (EHS) efforts are focused must create value for the organization. Additionally, what the EHS efforts concentrate on must generate a feeling of worth for the adaptation of those within the organization. There must be an EHS strategy that delivers this. Being strategic is about creating and delivering value. How correctly focused is your strategy?

As an advisor and coach to organizations pursuing EHS excellence, I consider eight areas when helping them improve the efficacy of their strategy. As you read each of these areas and view the supporting figure, give your organization a score of 1 (nonexistent or not considered) through 10 (sustainable excellence achieved).

- **Conditions:** Workplace conditions are managed effectively through a continuous effort to identify and mitigate hazards and risks.
- **Compliance:** Local, federal and company workplace EHS compliance requirements are regularly reviewed and adhered to.
- **Capital:** The process for how money is allocated allows the organization to strate-

gically and tactically invest in continuous improvement.

• **Culture:** There is cultural capacity to support and reinforce the EHS systems. The desired beliefs, behaviors and experiences exist, and there is a shared mindset that continuous improvement will always be possible. EHS is viewed as the way business objectives are met.

Complete person: The organization has systems to support the complete person, including mental health and psychological safety, and provides education on nutrition and healthy food options in company cafeterias or break rooms.

Confidence in system capacity: There is confidence in the capacity of the EHS system (hierarchy of controls) to prevent incidents and injuries. However, because human error occurs in complex environments, the system has recovery mechanisms to reduce the severity of unwanted events and bring individual(s) or operations back to the pre-event state. There is confidence in the system's capacity to prevent deviations from expectations, and recovery systems to recover when deviations occur.



Competency EHS technical acumen: All personnel in the organization maintain the necessary EHS technical acumen to understand regulatory requirements and the EHS expectations of the organization. Everyone has the knowledge and competencies to perform their tasks in a way that supports the work as planned and know what to do to contribute to an incident-free outcome.

Competency leadership acumen: All leaders understand their role in supporting the EHS strategy. These individuals work continuously to create a motivational envi-

ronment that yields discretionary effort with EHS activities. They know their people and how to get the best out of them. Organizations will not achieve excellence in these eight areas quickly or sustainably without a multi-year strategy operationalized within leadership. This EHS strategy must support, rather than conflict with, the overall business strategy. How would you prioritize these eight focus areas based on the scores you have given them? How do other leaders rate them? Use this model to collaborate with your stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of your EHS strategy.

Shawn M. Galloway is CEO of ProAct Safety and an author of several bestselling books. His latest book is COACH: A Safety Leadership Fable. As an award-winning consultant, trusted adviser, leadership coach and keynote speaker, he has helped hundreds of organizations within every primary industry to improve safety strategy, culture, leadership and engagement. He also hosts the highly acclaimed weekly podcast series Safety Culture Excellence®.

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

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