

6TH ANNUAL SAFETY & LOSS CONTROL CONFERENCE FEATURES PROMINENT GUEST SPEAKER!

This year's 6th Annual Safety & Loss Control Conference marks the first anniversary of [MnSAFE](#), Governor Dayton's statewide workplace safety initiative. With MnSAFE's goal, to reduce workplace injuries by 25%, efforts/activities to reduce the incidence of workplace injuries are occurring throughout state government. The early measurements show modest injury reductions.

The conference will be held October 2 - 3, 2012 at the Hennepin Technical College in Eden Prairie. It will once again offer exceptional networking opportunities and professional development in the areas of workers' compensation, safety, loss control, and risk management. This year's conference features special guest speaker, Terry Mathis, founder and CEO of [ProAct Safety](#). Terry will be speaking on organizational culture, behavioral safety, frequently injured employees, and turning supervisors into safety coaches.

The following article, written by Terry Mathis for the State of Minnesota, serves as a primer for this year's Safety and Loss Control Conference. Terry suggests that if we as organizations can help our various levels of leadership become true coaches, then we stand to do great things. These great things will help us achieve all of our operational goals including injury prevention and loss control. Please be sure to join us at the [Safety & Loss Control Conference](#) to learn more from Terry and others!

The Primary Tool of Organizational Excellence

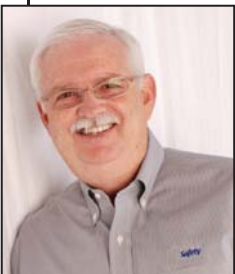
by Terry L. Mathis

Excellence can start with great leaders, but it is ultimately accomplished by great followers. Just as in sports, the coach can select the players and set the strategy, but the players ultimately win or lose the game. Coaching is the most effective way a leader can help a follower improve their performance. Without improved performance, excellence is just another item on the organizational wish list. The greatness of leaders and organizations begins when the leaders realize it is not about them, but about the people.

The first problem with getting leaders to coach is usually that they have no formal training in people skills. Most leaders are experts at managing money or machines or technology and have to learn late in the game the importance of the human element. However, in today's age of high tech and global markets, the people part of the formula is where there is the most room to move toward excellence. The second barrier to coaching is that many leaders have tried and failed. This is due to the fact that many models of performance coaching simply have the wrong starting point. If you walk out on the shop floor and start "evaluating" worker's performance, you are doomed from the start. Such efforts quickly become a matter of the leader's opinion of good performance vs. the worker's opinion of good performance. The most effective way to make coaching work is to start with an agreement on improvement targets. It is critical to not try to correct too much at once. Sometimes it is wise to start with only one issue. Once you agree to try to improve something, feedback and coaching conversations have a context in which they work very well. It is not my opinion vs. your opinion; it is, "Yes, you did it! Good work!" or, "I am concerned. Why did you not do it this time?"

Another key to success is the wording of that last part: "...why did you not do it this time?" It is critical to understand that people often do things for a reason and that, if you don't change the reason, you might not change the behavior. Sub-standard or at-risk behaviors are often influenced by organizational factors leaders don't discover until after poor performance or accidents occur. Good coaching can proactively discover these influences and help align the organizational factors that shape and impact human behavior to positively reinforce excellence.

Great leaders realize that their true greatness is not going to be in their own performance, but in the performance of their team. They quit trying to just be a great leader and start working on leading great people. In other words, they become coaches.



Terry L. Mathis, founder and CEO of ProAct Safety, was listed as one of 'The 50 People Who Most Influenced EHS' for the 2nd consecutive year by EHS Today. As an international expert and safety culture practitioner, he has worked with hundreds of organizations customizing innovative approaches to achieve and sustain safety culture excellence. He has spoken at numerous company and industry conferences, and is a regular presenter at NSC, ASSE PDC, and ASSE SeminarFest. He can be reached at 800-395-1347 or info@proactsafety.com.