

June 2015 – why are events in your organisation not reported?



Are all hazards, near misses and even more serious events reported in your organisation? The honest answer in the vast majority of organisations will be 'No'.

Have various initiatives been tried to encourage more reporting and / or to improve the quality of the reports (eg prize draw, incentive scheme, targets linked to performance reviews, etc)? Have any of these initiatives made a difference?

Are these symptoms of some wider issues that need to be addressed?

To change, the organisation needs to create the environment where people feel comfortable to discuss areas for improvement, raise concerns and speak-up when things don't go according to plan. This culture is driven from the top of the organisation and requires courage and determination from those in senior leadership positions to challenge normal health and safety convention.

What does this culture look and feel like?

Whether real or perceived, is health and safety viewed in the organisation as 'competing' with production (and other business) targets? If this is the case, this needs to change so that health and safety is viewed as an enabler to a profitable and efficient organisation, working alongside and in tandem with other key performance indicators. Unless this shift in mind-set is achieved the same level of performance and results will continue to be delivered.

Whilst there are no 'quick-wins', there are a number of things that can be implemented:

- Set a strategy for safety excellence:
 - Lead by example
 - Be uncompromising
- Understand the obstacles preventing excellence in business and safety performance
- Inject passion into discussions
- Look for continual improvement
- Make sure the impact of health and safety excellence on business performance and client retention is discussed and the value understood

With these embedded into the culture of the organisation, trust will be built across the organisation such that everyone feels empowered to offer discretionary effort. The importance of reporting events and learning from them will be one noticeable change that will be delivered.

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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