

Safety Management: Walk the Talk!

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Many Companies Talk the Talk!

- Top management says they have safety policies in place and workers know and abide by them
- The “Safety Professional/Department is responsible for establishing, disseminating, and training policies.”
- When accidents occur, they are the fault of the employee, not following the policies
- Meetings are held regularly among managers (some of them) and the safety professional to get updates
- The safety professional has created and will maintain a safety culture
- We do a great job! In fact, we’re having a dinner next month to celebrate a full year without a recordable incident

And what is the reality? How much time is spent annually in training in SMS?

- Very little time is spent in regular, refresher training.
- At most, companies spend 2 hours at the mid-management level
- CEOs will get reviews of data, typically quarterly, but little input on SMS per se
- Front-line workers are taught reporting responsibilities and little else. They are sometimes encouraged not to report
- Once initial training is done, the assumption seems to be that employees need no refreshing

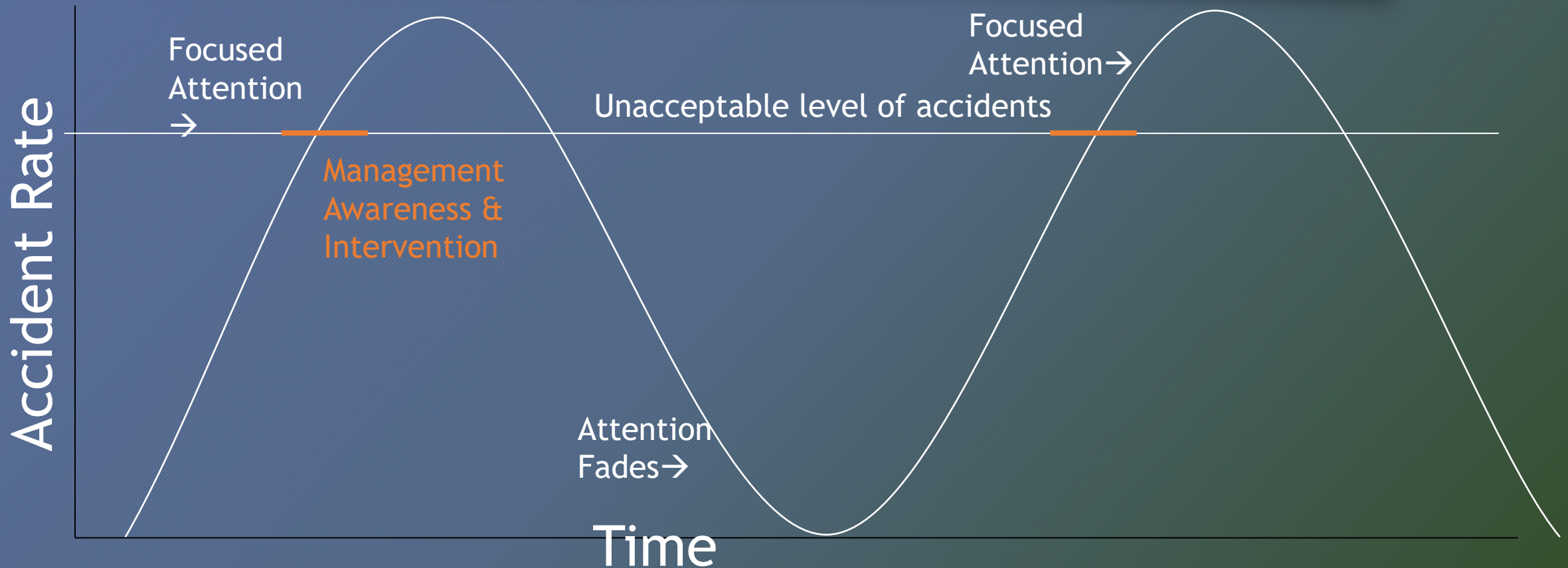
What resources are tied to the SMS?

- Organizations are often unable to pinpoint how resources were tied to SMS
- Typically, no specific allocations or percentages are noted
- Those with adequate resources state that SMS is supported at the top and integrated into the overall organizational mission, goals, objectives, and positions/jobs
- Costs sometimes outweigh expectations and planned budgets
- Resources tend to diminish over time as SMS becomes part of normal routine

Over the long haul...

- As companies become more familiar with the SMS and it is increasingly routine, the emphasis appears to fade, and active engagement decreases
- Routine and active monitoring isn't happening at either the leadership or employee levels to ensure ongoing efforts take place
- We often see the Roller Coaster Cycle...

Typical Talking the Talk: Accident Intervention Cycle*



*Adapted from presentation by Dr. Thomas Krause

And...

- Organizations clearly lack direction on how to measure effectiveness of SMS and where to intervene. They don't seem to be sure of what to measure to improve the safety management system
- Most SMS measures tend to be reactive. Little direction is provided into how to proactively respond to the system
- SMS is often located in a single silo. Few attempt to apply SMS principles across the organization

Management Must Walk the Talk!

- Top management must own, take full responsibility for, and promote SMS
- Safety policies must be written to carefully align with SMS and the organizational mission
- Specific personnel must be given SMS assignments at various levels throughout the organization

Management Must Walk the Talk!

- SMS must be scaled to size and complexity of the organization
- SMS must be clearly defined and documented
- It must be team and work-oriented
- SMS must be endorsed and communicated throughout the organization—clearly tracked by the accountable executive and throughout
- The SMS organization must have accountability
- SMS must be periodically reviewed for relevance
- SMS senior management must actively demonstrate commitment
- SMS education and training at all levels must be ongoing

Management Must Walk the Talk!

- Safety must be embedded in processes and systems
- All organizational functions must be viewed as interdependent
- Formal processes must be put in place to ID hazards in both proactive and reactive modes
- Risks must be assessed according to the severity and acted upon accordingly
- Performance of SMS will be based on how well risk is managed!

Management Must Walk the Talk!

- There must be prompt communication of critical information. Change is key, and changes with potential risks must be evaluated for the level of risk. Mitigations are implemented before the change occurs
- Authority to make safety-critical decisions must be maintained at every level

The SMS Must Be Tied to Organizational Mission

- Top management owns it, takes full responsibility for it, and promotes it
- Safety policies are written and carefully aligned with the organizational mission
- Specific personnel are given safety assignments at various levels throughout
- Safety IS integrated into positions throughout the organization

General Characteristics

- There must be well-developed system for quality assurance and improvement
- Safety must be embedded in processes and systems
- All organizational functions must be viewed as interdependent
- There must be formal process to ID hazards in both proactive and reactive modes
- Risks must be assessed according to consequences and acted upon accordingly
- Ultimately, the performance of SMS is based on how well risk is managed

General Characteristics...

- There must be accountability for safety and zero tolerance for unsafe acts
- Contractual language must bind all contractors to safety policy
- Safety culture **must be** team-oriented
- Must be a well-developed measuring system
- All organization functions are interdependent and integrated
- Must be continuous effort to reduce variations in routine operations

General Characteristics (continued)

- There must be prompt communications of critical information
- Authority to make safety-critical decisions is maintained at every level
- Surveys and knowledge testing can be indicators of success
- Metrics for success measurement are typically related to failure and measure accidents and post-event results. Over time, move toward a proactive approach

Component 1: Safety Policy & Objectives

- Have you established clear policies and objectives?
 - **Objectives** are high-level, generic, non-quantifiable statements regarding safety achievements to be accomplished by the organization
 - Developed & reviewed through participation at all levels
 - Input from the bottom up is critical
 - Each **objective** has *performance indicators* measuring outputs & outcomes. These are quantifiable
 - Safety performance *targets* are goals established that based on indicators
 - Objectives and goals are agreed upon at the top levels and divided step-by-step throughout the organization
 - Targets are either met or changed or performance is adjusted

Who is the accountable person for SMS?

- It is usually the Chief Operating Officer, but occasionally, the Chief Executive Officer
- The person with primary responsibilities for SMS is typically the person in charge of safety within the organization
- Sometimes one person is designated for SMS and other safety personnel are in slots throughout the organization
- Typically the SMS person reports directly to the COO or a lower position, but does have direct access to the CEO through committee or advisory roles.
- Reports are provided to top management at least on a quarterly basis with more than just lip service from the “accountable person”

Component 2: Safety Risk Management

- Are we finding critical problems and *fixing* them?
- Information is the lifeblood of the system; prompt and complete communication is essential
- Authority to make critical decisions must be maintained at every level
- Strong safety records and experience may be poor indicators of safety culture
- Infrastructure is strong indicator of safety culture—measured through audits and employee surveys
- Hazards and related risks are identified prior to change

Component 3: Safety Assurance

- Safety performance must be monitored and measured
- Change is managed. New changes on the horizon are identified and communicated up/down/and across
- Continuous Improvement is critical. We are moving risks to ALARP / ALARA levels
 - ALARP- “As low as reasonably practicable”
 - ALARA- “As low as reasonably achievable”

Tracking the Progress

In the beginning most organizations use trailing indicators—usually failure metrics:

- Accident reports
- Loss Reports
- Cost Reports
- Statistical trends

As the organization fails less, direction becomes increasingly difficult. We need to track as we move forward!

What more information is needed?

- Accident/incident *trends*
- Repeated failures or lack thereof
- Thresholds and intervention triggers
- Tracking of contributing factors
- Frequent reviews (weekly or less) of reports
- Frequent meetings and reports to top management
 - Even with this, variables are typically NOT weighted. Little apparent effort to ID risk

Move toward Leading Indicators

- Leadership and visible commitment to safety
 - Percentage of official communications featuring safety topics
 - Reinforcement of safety in appraisals and interactions
 - Attendance at safety meetings and training sessions
 - Contributions to safety strategy development
 - Numbers of safety training/coaching sessions
 - Numbers of employee feedbacks
 - Numbers of specific behaviors addressed
 - Employee perceptions of supervisor practices
 - Safe versus unsafe conditions/practices in the workplace
 - Percentage of unsafe conditions actually resolved
 - Active management participation and compliance

Where do we get this information?

- Measures of safe and unsafe acts
- *Incident* investigation reports
- Safety audit results
- Employee feedback & reports in a closed-loop system

- In any case, all indicators must be tied to goals and objectives of safety program
- Let's move more toward LEADING INDICATORS...

Other effective measures include employee surveys or audits

- Assessment of Influence of SMS on the working environment and work practices
- Surveys administered to those expected to be impacted by SMS efforts—both employees and other stakeholders to measure satisfaction rates, competency completion rates, outcomes of complaints and appeals processes, outcomes of management processes, and opportunities for improvement
- Audits to independently evaluate overall system implementation

A baseline must be established and used as a point of comparison for programs

And where does this lead?

- Discovery of new or previously undetected risks
- Onboarding practices to include selection, screening, training, and mentoring of new employees with SMS considerations
- Knowledge/skill-building activities to include coaching and training

Don't forget: Information is the LIFEblood of the system—always close the loop on it and reward it in terms of comments, reports, feedback, etc.

Indicators of SMS effectiveness from employee perspectives include

- Training quality
- Work readiness
- Training conditions
- Learner engagement
- Satisfaction rates
- Opportunities for improvement

- Perception surveys are strong indicators

Indicators from employer perspectives include

- Training quality
- Work readiness
- Training conditions

Component 4: Promotion

- Employees must have complete awareness and knowledge of the system, its operations, and their personal responsibilities through **training** in terms of:
 - Familiarity with job safety requirements and constraints
 - Appropriate responses to safety deviations
 - Awareness of available resources
 - Knowledge of responsibilities and accountabilities

Component 4: Promotion (continued)

- Through **active safety engagement** in terms of:
 - Participation in risk identification and hazard control
 - Involvement in the safety improvement processes
 - Access to the system to provide input when necessary
 - Receipt of feedback through a closed-loop system without fail
 - Access to all needed safety devices

Where to now? (continued)

- Actions must be taken to respond to findings of all indicators.
- Risk is key. Priority is given to the higher risk items to move risk to ALARA or ALARP
- Risk = Probability x Severity
- Educated input is necessary

Where to now? (continued)

- Start with a survey to measure employee perceptions of the SMS process within the organization
- Give employees the opportunity to provide input regarding:
 - Training
 - Participation
 - Employer representation of SMS
 - Feedback on SMS inputs
 - SMS within the organization

And...

- GAP analysis:
 - 1. Take a look at SMS and what is expected
 - 2. Inventory your present safety system
 - 3. Compare the 1 & 2
 - 4. ID what must be done to correct the present system
 - 5. Prioritize and systematically implement the corrections
- Involve your management and employees as part of the team
- Systematically implement the component parts

Remember...

- “The Business of Business is Business!” -- Milton Friedman
- “The Business of Safety is Business!”—Mark Friend

Questions?

