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Safety Training – How To Make it Stick

Does your company spend a lot of time and money training workers on safety only to have some of them break the rules and cause an accident? Do you ever wonder why your training “takes” with some employees and not with others? Would you be willing to add a simple step to your job recruiting process that would dramatically improve your training results?

The secret to reducing workplace accidents is to focus more on the “who” (worker) than the “what” (training). It’s all about job fit, which begins during the hiring process.

Stephen Covey and thousands of other successful business and community leaders tell us if we want to improve what we *do*, we must begin by improving who we *are*. He calls it “sharpening the saw.” You can be a more successful company by hiring better quality workers – those whose “safety saw,” so to speak, is already sharpened.

You want to hire and retain workers who don’t have to be trained to be cautious and follow rules. You want people who are already there – who are careful and safety conscious by nature.

If you hire workers whose nature is to be impatient and hot headed; who get a rush by taking risks and breaking rules, you can train them till the cows come home, but they’re likely to cause an accident eventually. That’s because we’re all driven more by our own inner voice than the voice of a trainer or manager telling us what to do. This is especially true when we’re under stress.

On the other hand, if you hire people who’d rather crawl in a hole and die than break a rule or make a mistake, then you’re well on the road to reducing accidents even if you do no training at all.

Doesn’t common sense tell you this is true? Better still, research and experience prove it to be true.

But how do you know – for sure – that you’re getting a naturally cautious employee instead of one with a short fuse that can blow up on the job? There’s only one way that I know of and it doesn’t happen in the interview. It takes place when they’re filling out your job application.

The University of Michigan did a study which concluded that “the job interview is (only) 14% accurate.” That’s your job applicants wear a “mask” during the interview. They tell you what you want to hear, which may or may not be true. As Stanley J. Randall said, “The closest to perfection a person comes is when he fills out a job application.”

The only way to know if you’re getting a potentially safe or unsafe employee is to assess your applicant’s behavioral style and personal values. Research shows that people with a particular natural behavioral pattern and certain values are the best – and only – workers you should trust one an assembly line, a construction job, or behind the wheel of your vehicles.

The assessments will also show you which workers you should advise, “Don’t call us, we’ll call you,” (and then don’t).

Successful companies have learned that assessing job applicants is the best way to hire the right person for the job. And as Jim Collins writes in his book *Good to Great*, “People are not your most important asset. The *right* people are.”

Hire the right workers and you’ll drive profits up and accidents down. You’ll also get a bigger return on your training investment.

Business management performance software identifies behavior, attitude, and personality type, which you can use to improve employee recruiting, increase employee retention, and reduce employee turnover. Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, Trainer, and Behavioral Safety Consultant. Safety and HR directors and recruiters are encouraged to get and use her eBook, *Safety RULES! How To Build a Team that Will Drive Profits Up and Accidents Down* at <http://www.hiresafeworkers.com/safetyrules.htm>

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