ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Safety leadership: what it is and how to promote it in companies

How to stimulate people to acquire a way of working that puts safety at the centre of their choices? The answer lies in safety leadership

Creating a **safe working environment** helps protect people, the company and its reputation. But, to really increase the level of safety in the company, it is crucial to change everyday ways of thinking and acting. With this in mind, safety leadership - the ability to lead and influence safety in the workplace - is crucial.

In this article, we will try to understand what exactly is meant by safety leadership and how to promote it within companies.

What is safety leadership

Safety leadership is the ability to empower and inspire people to acquire a way of acting and thinking that puts safety at the centre of their choices. It is an ongoing commitment by company leaders to create a **safety culture** that promotes safe behaviour among employees.

Safety leadership therefore involves setting a positive example to employees, actively promoting safe working practices and creating a culture in which safety is valued and integrated into all aspects of work. In other words, safety leadership is a bottom-up approach in which all employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety and work together to create a safe workplace.

Why safety leadership is important

First and foremost, companies that promote safety at work demonstrate a real commitment to **employee well-being**. This attitude spreads throughout the organisation, inspiring workers to be more aware of their actions and to follow best practices in terms of safety. A well-established safety culture **reduces the risk of accidents and injuries**, helping to safeguard employees' health and avoid costly downtime.

Another reason why safety leadership is essential is **regulatory compliance**. Workplace safety laws and regulations are constantly evolving, and companies must comply with them to avoid penalties and fines. Safety leadership ensures that the company stays up-to-date with current regulations and is able to implement the necessary changes in work processes to ensure compliance.

In addition, safety leadership can result in significant economic benefits for companies. Reduced occupational injuries and accidents lead to lower absence and insurance costs, as well as increased productivity and business continuity.

Finally, a safe working environment enhances a **company's reputation**, increasing its attractiveness to talent and customers.

How to promote safety leadership in the company

To promote safety leadership within the company, it is necessary to act on several fronts:

- maintain constant **communication on safety**
- incentivising **safe behaviour** through recognition and rewards
- encourage **active employee involvement** in the promotion of safety
- evaluating the **effectiveness of safety initiatives** and making improvements

However, all this alone is not enough if it is not supported by the presence of so-called safety leaders, as nothing influences employee behaviour more than the behaviour of other colleagues.

The role of the safety leader

The **safety leader** is a key figure in occupational safety, and his or her role is of fundamental importance in ensuring the promotion of a safety culture within the company.

Ideally, a company has safety leaders in all teams and departments. But how to identify these individuals? First of all, bear in mind that the safety leader does not necessarily have to be a manager or supervisor. It can be anyone who has a positive social influence on their colleagues and is interested in improving safety within the organisation.

Therefore, we recommend that you start by identifying 'natural' leaders, i.e. those employees who are naturally inclined to safety leadership. But what makes a safety leader truly effective?

First of all, he or she must be a **safe role model**. This means that he or she must lead by example, strictly following safety procedures and actively promoting safe behaviour among colleagues.

In addition, a good safety leader must be an **effective communicator**: he or she must be able to clearly convey the importance of safety, explain the risks and consequences of workplace accidents and encourage the reporting of dangerous situations. The ability to communicate openly and directly is crucial to engage employees and make them feel heard and understood.

Safety leadership also requires a sound **knowledge of the laws and regulations** relating to safety at work: a good safety leader must therefore be constantly up-to-date with the regulations.

Another key characteristic for a safety leader is **empathy**: he or she must demonstrate a genuine concern for the well-being of employees and their safety. This empathetic attitude will help build positive relationships within the organisation and motivate employees to actively participate in promoting safety.