ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 7 - number 263 Wednesday 18 october 2023

The importance of a safety culture in the company

What is meant by safety culture and what are the steps to make it an integral part of the company organizational culture?

According to the results of the CO&SI (Costs and Safety) Project conducted by INAIL (The Italian Institute for Insurance against Industrial Injuries), **the global costs of unsafety in the workplace amount to 3.5% of the Italian GDP, or approximately 45 billion euros**.

From this perspective, promoting a culture of safety within companies is the only possible way to create a safe working environment in which each worker becomes an **active part of the system for protecting their own health and safety**. On the other hand, only by promoting a positive attitude towards safety will employees be incentivized to follow the rules that keep them safe.

In this article, we will therefore discover what is meant by safety culture and what are the steps to make it an integral part of the company organizational culture.

What is workplace safety culture?

Safety culture can be defined as the set of values, perceptions and attitudes that employees share in relation to their safety within the company.

A workplace with a strong safety culture has procedures to prevent accidents and ensure that workers feel comfortable reporting safety concerns.

In this sense, promoting a culture of safety offers numerous advantages to companies.

1. **Prevents injuries and accident:** it helps create an environment where employees feel comfortable reporting problems at work, leading to preventative actions and timely solutions.

2. **Improves overall productivity:** consistent safety standards and procedures provide guidance for getting work done, allowing employees to work more efficiently.

3. **Increase employee engagement:** spreading an effective safety culture makes employees more aware of their role and helps to increase their commitment to preventing safety risks.

4. **Increase employee satisfaction:** employees who feel safe and listened to are generally more satisfied, resulting in improved performance.

5. **Improves the company's reputation:** workplaces that promote a culture of safety often have a better reputation because they show care and respect for their employees.

5 characteristics of a company that promotes a culture of safety

1. **Safety is the top priority**

When safety is the top priority in the workplace, management demonstrates that they **value employee health and lives more than productivity**. While deadlines and productivity are necessary for a business to function, a positive safety culture places safe ways of working at its heart, encouraging employees to work efficiently but cautiously, rather than rushing to take shortcuts to meet deadlines.

2. **The procedures are shared**

In a positive safety culture, all employees are responsible for maintaining standards and procedures and can contribute to the drafting of safety documents. After all, who knows tools and equipment more than employees and can better identify the risks of their business? Asking workers to **contribute to the creation of procedures and standards** therefore makes these documents more complete and effective.

3. **Procedures are up to date**

A company that gives top priority to safety must continually review and update standards and procedures and encourage the collection of reports from employees. **Frequent and clear communication** allows employees to discuss and report critical issues that management may not be aware of.

4. **Training is continuous**

Regular safety training is the only possible approach to maintaining a safe working environment. From this perspective, training cannot and must not be considered a mere regulatory obligation. A company with a strong safety culture schedules **training and information sessions** with specific insights into the risks of its business.

Read also: " **Safety at work: how to best alternate training and work**".

5. **Everyone works to reduce risks**

A positive workplace safety culture encourages employees to identify and address hazards as early as possible to avoid potential risks and rewards employees who stop work that may be unsafe, even if it means losing materials or missing a deadline .

How to create a safety culture in your company?

Creating a culture of safety at work is an activity This is anything but simple, requiring constant commitment on multiple levels. Let's find out what the main steps of this process are.

1. Make sure everyone is involved and engaged

First, **get leadership support and employee buy-in**, and remember that creating a culture of safety starts from the bottom. It is important that employees at all levels are included in the planning and implementation phase of any new safety initiative. Only with the commitment of all the actors involved will you be able to truly manage, evaluate and improve company security programs.

2. Encourage communication

Companies with a strong safety culture invest in creating **open lines of communication** within their organization. Employees who feel comfortable discussing safety issues in the workplace are more likely to perform better, learn from their mistakes, and resolve problems before they cause harm.

3. Assess risks and identify prevention measures

Another fundamental step in promoting an effective security culture is **evaluating the various types of threats** your organization could face. Analyze its severity and frequency and identify the relevant prevention measures.

4. Develop safety training programs

Once you know what the security practices are for your company, it's time to train everyone on the procedures. **Implement ongoing training programs** and create hands-on learning sessions where your employees can test themselves.

Read also " **Improving workplace safety training with simulations**".

5. Establish reporting and communication methods

Be sure to log all safety incidents, even so-called "near misses" that didn't cause problems, and build proactive communication paths to keep employees informed of updated procedures.