Changing Workplace Attitudes

Positive attitudes towards safety and health are essential for developing a strong safety culture. But what should you do if some workers have negative attitudes about safety and health?

DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS SOUND FAMILIAR?

Management gives lip service to safety, but all they *really* care about is production!

That is not my job. It is safety's job!

I do not need a machine guard to protect me; I have been doing things this way for years!

WORKERS LEARN THESE ATTITUDES OVER TIME THROUGH THEIR LIFE EXPERIENCES!

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Statements like these come from a worker's life experience.

Maybe they worked somewhere that did not value safety, or maybe they adopted these attitudes from where they work right now – YOUR workplace.

You <u>must</u> act and address poor attitudes concerning safety and health to build and maintain a strong safety culture. Leaders and supervisors play key, but differing, roles when tackling poor worker attitudes.

Bad safety attitudes do not develop overnight, and they are not going to change overnight. The table on the next page offers approaches, suggestions, and ideas on how you can change worker attitudes.

Be patient, be persistent, and move towards positive change. The attitudes you build are the foundation for a better safety culture!

A bad attitude is like a flat tire...

You can't go anywhere until you fix it!

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Quote – Author Unknown

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ELEMENT	TOP LEADERS	SUPERVISORS
HEART	Be clear on why you want change; workers find personal reasons more powerful than business reasons (e.g., mission, cost, production).	Embrace and communicate leadership's reasons for wanting change; assume nothing – if you are not sure, ask questions until you <u>are</u> sure.
VISION	Create a vision of the future safety culture. What will our workplace look like? How will workers act? How will things be better?	Support leadership's vision of the future safety culture and how things will be better; discuss it with everyone in your work group.
ACTION	Move forward from talking about it, to doing something about it! Focus on workers accomplishing things in a new way.	Do not delegate new processes to one or two workers – get the whole group involved.
PRIORITIZE	Determine organizational priorities and areas of emphasis; communicate these priorities and needs to the workforce.	You cannot change everything at once; take it one step at a time! **Too much + Too soon = Too hard**
RESOURCES	Make sure workers have the time, tools, procedures, and training needed to make desired changes	
PARTICIPATE	Set an example and be part of the change	
MONITOR	Keep track of change metrics. Are changes progressing as expected? Are workers participating as expected?	Monitor the group's progress when making changes. Are changes on track? Is the workload shared fairly?
FEEDBACK	Actively encourage worker contributions and act on their feedback – doing so encourages worker participation!	Watch your workers' progress, provide coaching (not criticism), listen to worker suggestions, and offer timely and constructive feedback to leadership.
APPRECIATE	Give workers credit when positive changes or outcomes occur and share successes showcasing improvements.	Say "thank you" when workers volunteer, try hard, do well, and offer suggestions to get for workers more involved. **No deed is too small to be appreciated**
APPLAUD	Honor the workers who make change milestones happen – this action will include ALL your workers when those negative attitudes change!	Celebrate changes involving workers. How? Consider group photos, a team "high-five," small trinkets, or time off.

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