



Changing a Safety Culture

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Over the past few years I have heard the statement said many times that we need to change the Safety Culture in our plants, we need to make the Safety programs at Roseburg Forest Products stronger and we need to become a leader in our industry. I have often thought how does a person or group of people go about changing a culture that has been going in the wrong direction and has not allowed or shown improvement. I know that changing a program or a culture in which we as employees operate is a difficult task.

We at Dillard Plywood were faced with this task in 1995. Our incident rate was 33.6 that counts for 289, 801's filed in one year and we were sinking fast something had to be done. Through the efforts of the employees at Dillard Plywood we have started to turn the safety culture corner. This is always an on going project where you take a couple of steps forward and slide back one but you have to continually work at making that culture change every day. You will run into Cave People along the way these are (Citizens Against Virtually Everything) and they will be against any kind of change even if it makes their work place a safer place for them to work.

Here are a few ideas that we have found that have helped us in making some of these changes. One thing that I have learned is that everyone likes to feel appreciated. People for the most part want to do a good job and they like to hear that confirmation from someone. I feel that sometimes we forget how to say thank you or I appreciate that you took the time to perform that job safely. We all too often look for the negative in our fellow employees and we are willing to bring that negative out so that everyone can hear it. We do not look for the positive when someone goes the extra step or makes the extra effort. You build a better team by finding the good in people and their intentions, instead of always looking for the bad. I know that if I receive a thank you from someone that I'm doing a project for, it makes me want to work harder for that person and this in turn creates a stronger team and more loyalty to that person and the team.

Another thing that I have found that works is the ability to empower people to do a job and trust that it will be taken care of all the way to completion. We all too often ask someone to do something and then we hover over them to make sure it is done just how we want it done or we try to take it back. When we do this we are cheating our fellow employees out of being successful and we are not showing any trust in their abilities. It is OK for someone other than ourselves to have great ideas and it is OK to

allow them to take the credit for those ideas, we do not need to have all of the credit all the time. I have found that other people have great ideas and I quite often learn from them. I have also learned that I don't always have all of the answers and I may have shut myself off to one of the greatest experience ever and that is learning something new.

I have learned that safety crosses all boundaries Safety and Safety rules apply to everyone not just a select few. Everyone should set an example for the person next to them. It has become increasingly more important that we look out for our fellow workers. There have been incidents when one of our fellow workers has been injured and after doing an investigation into the injury we discovered that a fellow employee that worked with them knew that a safety violation had been going on for a long time and nothing was said. We need to be willing to step in and say stop lets make sure we are performing this task safely without the fear of repercussions. When employees look out for employees this is called team work and there is No secrets when it comes to Safety. I know of no employees in our plants that have been disciplined for stopping and taking a second look when it comes to safety.

Communication, Communication, Communication is very important when trying to change a safety culture. Communication needs to flow both ways from management to the employee performing the job and from the employee to management. Employees performing the job on the floor know better then anyone else about the safety issues they face on a daily basis with the equipment that they run. When communication lines are opened and everyone has an equal opportunity for input into safety issues your safety program will start to grow. All safety issues need to be followed up or the loop needs to closed with the person that originated the issue. When this happens it will start to increase the communication and team work in your plant. The goal is for the ownership of the safety program to come from everyone. There is no, (I) in safety it is a team program. I will be the first to say that any success that we have had in our safety program at Dillard Plywood is due to the safety committee in our plants and that they believe in the team concept and our program is driven from the floor up.

A Safety Culture is a hard thing to change and it takes the whole team working towards one goal. We at Dillard Plywood have not reached our final goal but these are some of the methods that we are using to help us in our own culture change to move us towards that final goal of zero safety related incidents.