

THE RESOURCE

Labor & Industrial **INSIGHTS**
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magazine

"WHAT THE
NEW YEAR
BRINGS TO
YOU WILL
DEPEND A
GREAT DEAL
ON WHAT
YOU BRING
TO THE
NEW YEAR."

- Vern McLellan



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THE RESOURCE 2020 REFLECTIONS

Well, I must say that "Hindsight's 2020" takes on a whole new meaning, for sure! No different than any other crisis we've faced in the past - we acknowledge it, react to it, make a plan and execute it, making necessary modifications along the way. Our 2020 hindsight now tells us that we faced this pandemic head-on, with courage and faith, and we are stronger and better because of the changes we were forced to make. Now, we plan to finish 2020 strong and head into 2021 anticipating a great year!

This year has been a doozy, but with every major life event (even the "unparalleled", "unprecedented" ones), comes an opportunity to learn, and to reflect...

Here are some of the 2020 reflections of THE RESOURCE staff:

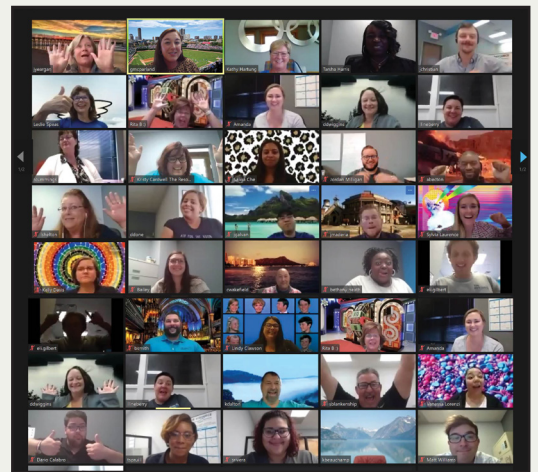
- "Exhilarating"
- "Taking nothing for granted"
- "Mentally Exhausting"
- "Adapting & accepting CHANGE"
- "#AdjustAndLive"
- "Grateful - for a job, good health, and a forced slowdown"
- "DIFFERENT"
- "Emotional Roller-Coaster"
- "Trust in God no matter what comes your way"
- "We're not in control of anything except how we respond"
- "Transition"
- "Growth, nurturing wisdom, persevere"
- "One person's courage can defeat the complacency of 1000s"
- "2020: When you feel like you're already tired tomorrow"
- "We'll either find a way, or we'll make one"
- "Unpredictable & Inordinate"

Like many others, our business was heavily impacted by COVID-19. Many of our customers had to cease operations for periods of time. We had to furlough some of our valued employees. We had to quickly adjust our operations to allow for safety precautions, and to go virtual! But through it all, we've been exceedingly blessed, with an internal staff willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done, and contract employees who worked diligently even in the midst of uncertainty; many of whom were considered "essential workers" in the manufacturing sector! 2020 also brought us recognition as a 'Best Place to Work' and a 'Fast 50 Growing Company'. All in all, we'll take what we've experienced this past year, and channel it towards growth, innovation, development, and culture in the year ahead!

Here's to 2021!

THE RESOURCE

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KEEPING PLANT WORKERS SAFE WITH TECHNOLOGY

BY BEN CHENG

For months, screens and newspapers have been covered with compelling images of frontline workers working hard to help everyone get through this pandemic: healthcare staff in full protective gear, working tirelessly in emergency departments; postal and delivery workers carrying important packages to homes and businesses; and grocery store employees stocking shelves to make sure shoppers get what they need. From the start of this pandemic, manufacturing employees have played just as important a role as other frontline workers. But they have less visibility and haven't made the headlines as much, because most consumers don't really think about how products get made and end up where they're needed.

Situated on the plant floor where raw materials go in and finished products come out, manufacturing workers are the people who power the heart of the supply chains. Every product that's in high demand and is considered essential (especially during this pandemic) wouldn't get into anyone's hands without the massive frontline factory workforce showing up to work every day. Doing their jobs, though, puts them at risk.

This situation begs the question: How are these workers being supported? They play such an important role during this time of crisis, but who is watching out for them? The headlines are filled with stories of plant closures and high infection rates among plant workers. They're putting their health at risk—in many cases with little protection or insufficient adherence to safety measures. Clearly these employees need to be better supported.

The Biggest Challenge Facing Today's Industrial Frontline Workers

Safety is hands-down the most immediate and critical issue that industrial companies are dealing with right now. Beyond safety adherence itself, there's also the challenge of scaling safety practices across an organization. In large enterprise companies, having new safety protocols rolled out one plant at a time (with each rollout taking months to implement) just isn't an option during this time when every day brings uncertainty. And with regulatory bodies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention frequently updating their recommendations, by the time an implementation at a site is complete, a new standard has usually already been announced. The deployment process needs to be reimaged.

It's difficult for frontline factory workers to follow social distancing guidelines when they have to move around throughout a plant, often in close proximity to one another. Social distancing is often impossible for certain production processes and the sheer number of people those processes require. Improving workplace safety during the pandemic requires a major overhaul of work standards (and sometimes an overhaul of the work itself), a process that involves not just operations but human resources and many other stakeholders.



Another challenge is simply keeping up with production—that is, maintaining the pace of production or implementing new processes as many manufacturers turn to making products outside of their typical arena (such as face masks, ventilators, and hand sanitizer). Rising demand requires faster work, and pivots in production processes require faster onboarding.

Connected Worker Technology

Ironically, factory workers are pushing out millions and millions of pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) while many of them are themselves inadequately protected. On the factory floor, keeping workers safe goes beyond having them wear PPE: it requires limiting the spread of the coronavirus. And that's where technology comes into play.

One option is connected worker technology, which essentially digitizes standard, paper-based operating procedures in order to improve safety, productivity, and quality across any operation touched by a human worker. One obvious way that digitizing procedures helps keep workers safer is by eliminating contact with surfaces such as paper and by eliminating the need to exchange documents with others on the plant floor. Digital sign-offs ensure that social distancing protocols are maintained yet still provide verification that necessary product quality and safety criteria are met.

This technology brings many other benefits. By incorporating safety measures directly into standard operating procedures, it can alert workers to meet safety guidelines (for example, through reminders to wash their hands, wear a mask, or take their

temperature).

Any newly introduced standards or updates can be quickly added to digital procedures, and every worker (regardless of which plant they're in) who follows those procedures immediately gets the latest version of them. Embedding proactive safety steps within the work itself benefits everyone on every plant floor, thus enabling safety at scale.

Connected worker technology also digitally captures operational and human activity data, which has undeniable value during a time when face-to-face contact must be limited. For example, shift handovers typically require one shift to pass on to the following shift information about topics such as changes in the production schedule, equipment problems, and jobs that were not completed. A digital, mobile-connected worker solution can track the real-time activity and progress level of tasks and procedures, thus decreasing and even eliminating the need for shift leaders and teams to talk face to face.

This technology can also help guide people to do their work effectively and accurately, which is critical to the many organizations that are rushing or pivoting their production to meet heightened demand for certain products. For example, it can help new workers get up to speed quickly in their initial onboarding. At the same time, having digital, multimedia work instructions and real-time collaboration through SMS text, video, photos, and more makes it easier to transfer knowledge to current workers tasked with new responsibilities.

Because it captures human activity data, connected worker technology also gives plant managers more access to what's happening on the plant floor. The technology can uncover roadblocks and reveal factors that may be causing them, for example. Having that level of insight can help managers better adjust and control overall workflows and keep production moving at the pace and quality level needed to meet quotas and customer expectations.

Final Thoughts

Technology can't and shouldn't be the only safety measure that companies implement for their employees. Plants need to have comprehensive, strict, and crystal-clear safety policies in place to ensure that they do not unwittingly put employees at risk in any way. This emphasis on safety really needs to start at the top and requires collaboration across all departments and functions, not just safety management or the environment, health, and safety team. Implementing connected worker technology is one critical step toward building a truly safety-first culture. ■

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The Importance of “Momboarding”

BY KARINA SCHULTHEIS

For most women, returning to work after maternity leave is, at the very least, complicated. No matter how much they love their jobs, their bosses, and their colleagues, and no matter how eager they are to return to the professional world, many new mothers feel conflicted about transitioning back to the workplace (and away from being with their new children constantly).

Many companies, too, face challenges during this turbulent period, as they struggle to support and retain their people. A study by the U.S. Census Bureau found that “one in five women quit their job before or shortly after the birth of their child in 2006–2008.”¹ But it doesn’t have to be this challenging for women to balance motherhood and their careers.

There are clear ways that companies can support new moms as they return to work after maternity leave. “Accounting for nearly one-third (32 percent) of all employed women,” working mothers are a significant employee population.² Learning to support and retain them is good for them, good for their companies, good for business, and good for the economy.

Paid Maternity Leave: Crucial—But Insufficient

Among the 193 member countries of the United Nations, only eight do not mandate paid parental leave—and the USA is one of them.³ Fortunately, more and more private companies are recognizing the importance of paid family leave and stepping in where public policy fails. As of 2018, “more than one in three U.S. employers offers paid maternity leave beyond the amount required by law,” and many even extend time-off benefits to fathers, who’ve traditionally been neglected in the parental leave conversation.⁴

By offering paid parental leave, employers signal that they care. It’s

a coveted benefit that certainly helps both attract and retain talent. Still, twelve weeks is just a blip of time in an employee’s (hopefully) long tenure at their company. Their circumstances and needs as parents will change over time, and although offering a competitive parental leave package is important, companies can and should do more.

Enter “Momboarding”

“Onboarding matters” is the universal refrain these days. Everyone understands the importance of welcoming new hires, ensuring that their technology needs are met, and using plenty of communication and feedback to ease them into their responsibilities. It’s an established fact that a well-designed onboarding process contributes to long-term employee success, engagement, and satisfaction. The next step is for organizations to broaden their onboarding programs to include welcoming back new parents.

The need for such programs is clear. For example, in a survey of over 1,000 working mothers who had recently returned from maternity leave, about 90 percent of the mid-to-senior-level respondents said their organizations offered no “returner program, one to one coaching, or group coaching,” and about one third felt “unsupported and isolated or wanting to leave due to [their] experience.”⁵ (What’s especially shocking about this survey is that it was conducted in the UK with women who

received nearly an entire year of paid maternity leave!) Clearly, organizations that want to support and retain their employees need to offer more than just generous paid time off.

Fortunately, implementing “momboarding” processes results in a win for everyone involved. Such programs help mitigate the stress new parents face and simultaneously increase retention, engagement, and loyalty. Companies should consider incorporating the following simple (and no-cost) best practices into their current return-to-work and momboarding procedures.

Plan ahead

Great momboarding begins before offboarding. During the last few months leading up to planned parental leave, managers and employees should define who will be taking over which projects, put process documents in place to ensure seamless transitions, and discuss return-to-work plans (with the understanding that these plans may change once the baby arrives). As part of these conversations, managers should ask whether employees would like to be kept abreast of important organizational changes, and if so, what is their desired method of communication. This can help employees feel connected and remembered in their absence, without any pressure for them to check in (or to check e-mail).

Be welcoming

An actual party isn't necessary, but taking the time to welcome back returning employees can ease their transition. It's important not to overwhelm them on their first day back, but just as it's a best practice to give new hires time and space to meet their teammates, companies should give their returning employees casual, stress-free opportunities to catch up with their colleagues. Time for a returning employee and their manager to touch base with each other can set the stage for open communication about any new concerns or considerations related to the employee's new parent status (such as ensuring that a new mother has time to pump or evaluating potential scheduling changes).

Be flexible

If there's a silver lining to COVID-19, it's that companies now have more trust and willingness to let people work when and how they work best. Many managers and companies that had been firmly opposed to working from home have seen record productivity

with newly remote teams during the pandemic. The challenges of working strict 9-to-5 days without schools or daycare centers helped managers realize that just because work doesn't get done during typical hours, that doesn't mean it doesn't get done. Savvy business leaders are increasingly adopting the perspective described by Aron Ain, the CEO of UKG: "I trust [employees] to get their work done. I'm more concerned about what they do instead of where they do it or when they do it."⁶

As a nation, the USA seems to have finally learned that flexibility at work is both acceptable and desirable. One might argue that this sentiment is especially true when it comes to new mothers and momboarding. Babies get sick (a lot). Pumping is time-consuming, exhausting, and absolutely necessary for breastfeeding mothers (not to mention a legally protected right). There are medical appointments, school activities, daycare closing times, and many other parenting-related factors to consider. By staying flexible and working with

employees to help determine which (if any) expectations need to change, companies can foster mutual trust, strengthen the employee-employer relationship, and hedge against losing top talent.

Create a "while-you-were-gone" resource

The world of work moves fast, and an employee who returns to a "new normal" that everyone else is already accustomed to can feel overwhelmed. Therefore "momboarding" should include familiarizing returning employees with new workplace developments (such as the latest projects, technologies, or team structures). Managers should also prepare returning employees for any important company-wide communications or policy changes.

An Ongoing Process

Think about how much energy goes into welcoming and fully acclimating new hires. Building trust and complicity takes time, and even when managers have strong existing relationships with returning employees, the fact remains that those employees' lives have changed dramatically since they left. They are, in many ways, new people, with new needs. Even after the official "momboarding" phase ends, these employees' needs and interests as parents will continue to evolve—and organizations should continue to address them. ■

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Treating Employees

LESSONS FROM



The ABC network's respectful treatment of longtime Jeopardy! host Alex Trebek through his battle with cancer exemplifies compassion. Even as his health deteriorated, they supported his desire to continue working as long as possible, which he did until shortly before his death in November 2020. Their actions follow three key principles for treating with compassion an employee who is navigating a serious medical condition.

Don't make assumptions about an employee's desire or ability to continue working.

When learning that an employee has cancer, employers frequently make incorrect and harmful assumptions that can lead to inappropriate treatment of that person. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) explains:

Often, employees with cancer face discrimination because of their supervisors' and coworkers' misperceptions about their ability to work during and after cancer treatment. Even when the prognosis is excellent, some employers expect that a person diagnosed with cancer will take long absences from work or be unable to focus on job duties.¹

Generally, an employer may ask an employee about the employee's cancer or other disabling condition when the employer has a reasonable belief that the employee will be unable to safely perform the essential functions of his or her job. The EEOC details other instances in which an employer may inquire about an employee's condition to the extent the information is necessary:

To support the employee's request for a reasonable accommodation needed because of [their condition]; to verify the employee's use of sick leave related to [their condition] if the employer requires all employees to submit a doctor's note to justify their use of sick leave; or to enable the employee to participate in a voluntary wellness program.²

In all other circumstances, employers should refrain from making assumptions about an employee's desire or ability to continue working.

1. EEOC. 2013. "Cancer in the Workplace and the ADA." EEOC website, May 15, www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/cancer-workplace-and-ada.

2. Ibid.

Dealing with Compassion: M JEOPARDY!

BY MARILYN G. MORAN

Additionally, when managing employees with a cancer diagnosis or other serious health issue, it is important to separate assumptions and stereotypes about an employee's condition from the employer's performance expectations.

(Alex Trebek continued to deliver a stellar performance for the year and a half after receiving a diagnosis of stage four pancreatic cancer and filmed new episodes of Jeopardy! up until 10 days before his passing.)

Accommodate an employee's need for leave or other accommodation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to provide adjustments or modifications—called reasonable accommodations—to enable applicants and employees with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense (undue hardship). Not all employees with cancer or other disabilities will require an accommodation or require the same accommodations, so employers must evaluate the need for an accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

(Trebek was able to take leave in order to receive and recover from cancer treatment. His employer also made it possible for him to take breaks as needed during taping, which enabled him to continue working until the end of his life.)

If necessary, plan (respectfully) for an employee's transition out of the workplace.

As a general rule, employers need to engage in transition planning to keep an organization on track and make sure that its workforce can meet the demands of its business operations. It is crucial, however, to navigate this issue delicately, especially when a key employee has a terminal illness. Although employers should not expressly ask employees when they plan to leave the workforce, employers do have the right to know if an

employee intends to remain with the organization for a certain period of time. If the employee indicates that they do plan to continue working, their employer must not question them further or make any value judgments or suggestions about why the employer believes the employee should leave the workforce sooner.

(To prepare for Trebek's transition away from Jeopardy! ABC hired perhaps the best-known contestant in the show's history, Ken Jennings, as a consulting producer and possible future host. Significantly, any discussions about who would follow Trebek as host were held discreetly and without any attempt to encourage Trebek to stop working or to force him out of his role before he was ready.)

Ultimately, everyone will transition out of the workforce for one reason or another. As an organization plans for its future, it must be respectful of its workers, refrain from making assumptions about them, and be careful not to encourage or suggest that employees who have a medical condition leave the workforce before they are ready to do so. ■

WHEN LEARNING THAT AN EMPLOYEE HAS CANCER, EMPLOYERS FREQUENTLY MAKE INCORRECT AND HARMFUL ASSUMPTIONS

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5 TRENDS IN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FOR 2021 OPEN ENROLLMENT

It's that time of year again: time for companies to examine their current employee benefits and consider their options for increasing value—preferably without increasing cost. This year, such decisions are further complicated (and made more challenging) by a global pandemic.

Unsurprisingly, many companies are focusing on tools to help employees stay mentally and emotionally healthy while they engage in social distancing to protect their physical health. More and more employers are expanding employee benefits for virtual healthcare (telehealth) and increasing access to programs that will help improve and maintain employees' mental health and well-being.

When weighing the options, an organization may want to know what

other companies are choosing as benefit priorities. Not every trend will fit that organization's needs, but this knowledge will help it remain competitive in its market for both retention and recruitment purposes. Here are some of the most common benefits trends that businesses across all industries are pursuing for 2021. (Note that each option can be customized and scaled to meet the needs of that particular organization and workforce.)

Telehealth and Virtual Health Care

Telehealth options have been expanding for years, with both healthcare providers and health insurance carriers offering consumers the option to seek nonemergency care for minor illnesses from the comfort of their own homes. Stay-at-home orders, mask mandates, and social distancing requirements

have had a profound impact on people seeking in-person medical treatment, and some telehealth platforms have seen significant jumps in their activity since the pandemic began. To address a clearly rising need, in 2021 “nearly all employers will offer telehealth services for minor, acute services, while 91 percent will also offer telemental health.”¹

Mental Health Programs

Since April 2020, the pandemic has led to heightened rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts among U.S. citizens. Many employers recognize the increased need to support their employees during this time and are looking for health plans that incorporate more mental health benefits. Open enrollment for 2021 is seeing a strong resurgence of interest in employee assistance programs (EAPs), especially those that include behavioral health counseling. More and more employers are providing their employees with access to online mental health resources, including apps, videos, and articles.

Paid Sick Leave and PTO

Before the pandemic, some state and local governments already had their own paid sick leave mandates in place. In the wake of the passage of Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) in March 2020, however, more state legislatures across the country are reevaluating their own proposals for paid sick leave. While some states do not require employers to provide paid sick leave, several bills on that topic have been introduced in previous years, and it is likely that there will be a resurgence in discussion about this in the near future.

Many employers are also examining their accrued paid time off (PTO) policies and rethinking caps, payouts, and separate sick days. For years, the trend has been to do away with separate sick days and vacation days and combine the hours into one PTO bank. The unintended result has been that many employees





"Many companies are focusing on tools to **help employees** stay mentally and emotionally healthy while they engage in social distancing to protect their physical health."

choose to report to work sick rather than “waste” a vacation day. Until now the biggest concern was that they’d spread the common cold and the flu in the workplace, but with COVID-19 putting worker safety at much greater risk, some employers have reverted to distinguishing sick days from PTO and encouraging employees to stay home when they are ill.

Some employers are also looking more closely at offering unlimited PTO to avoid caps and carryover and to eliminate payouts. At the same time, other companies are allowing employees to donate their excess PTO to fellow employees who need additional time off.

Childcare Assistance

The COVID-19 pandemic has been especially challenging for working parents. With many childcare centers closed and many public schools teaching their students virtually, working parents must make some difficult decisions about work and childcare. To help alleviate working parents’ stress at home, some employers

are upping the ante on childcare benefits so parents can be more focused and productive at work. Some organizations are providing onsite daycare in the workplace, and others are providing virtual activities to keep kids busy at home while their parents are working remotely. Another growing trend is for employers to provide tutoring sessions (either in-person and online) to help their employees’ kids study and finish homework.

Financial Health

The pandemic has people worried about their financial well-being. Concern about risks to their employment status, threats to their income and long-term savings plans, mounting debt, stock market volatility, and the pandemic’s impacts on 401(k) retirement plans is raising everyone’s stress levels. Many employers are providing optional benefits, such as additional life or disability insurance, as well as offering resources and education to help employees reduce their stress and enhance their financial well-being. Some programs include educational sessions on

general topics such as reducing debt, and others include complimentary meetings with financial advisors. A few companies have opted to solve their PTO conundrum and financial stress in one fell swoop by allowing employees to directly apply a PTO payout to student loan debt.

What’s Next?

The effects of the coronavirus pandemic are likely to persist for some time, and their final outcome remains unknown. One thing is certain, though: employers who take a proactive approach to helping employees through this time will be in a better position to move forward. By building a better benefits package and investing in its employees’ future, a company will have a workforce that is not only more loyal but also healthy and ready for work.

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How to Help Struggling Managers Be More Effective

BY BAILI BIGHAM



An effective manager takes a human-centric coaching approach to management rather than simply focusing on pushing business needs forward. Effective managers don't just motivate their direct reports to perform but increase their teams' capabilities by helping individuals hone and leverage their unique strengths, creating consistent feedback loops, and challenging their reports to reach their full potential. Great managers boost all areas that drive an organization's success, including employee engagement, growth and development, productivity, and attrition. Unfortunately, most managers lack the right tools, structure, and practices they need to be effective.

Managers have always had a tough job, and the events of the past year have made their work even harder. Most managers are struggling to perform, and their direct reports are feeling the effects of those difficulties. As leaders strategize new ways to uplift their managers, they must first understand what managers truly need to become more effective.

TODAY'S TOP ISSUES

Managers aren't just working through their own issues during this difficult time. They are also coaching employees through their issues. As a result of this additional (and significant) responsibility, managers feel less prepared and more challenged than ever before. In fact, in one recent survey, 65 percent of managers (and 76 percent of senior-level managers) reported that "they're finding it more difficult than usual to perform their job effectively during the pandemic."¹

Personal issues, financial difficulties, and health problems are just a few of the many reasons why managers are struggling today. The survey highlighted two main areas of concern:

- ✚ **The added stress of the pandemic:** "Most people are balancing more than ever before—both at work and at home. Managers have the daunting task of tending to their people's emotional needs just as much as their work needs, and they don't have the right practices in place to do it properly."
- ✚ **Too many responsibilities:** "The majority [70 percent] of managers have five or more direct reports, making it more difficult to provide the psychological and job-related support employees need."

Thanks to the increased stress and lack of time, managers are struggling to make the most of each meeting. Leaders can help free up time for managers and give them the tools to support their employees by encouraging regular, structured one-on-one meetings.

BENEFITS OF ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

Unsurprisingly, many managers find their one-on-ones very or extremely helpful in supporting their direct reports. But for those direct reports to get the positive results they need from them, one-on-ones must be held frequently and consistently. The benefits of these interactions are clear: “82 percent of independent contributors with at least weekly one-on-ones say they’re getting the support they need during the pandemic from their managers, compared to 66 percent of independent contributors with less frequent one-on-ones.”

Whether conducted in person or via video chat, these meetings help build trust, drive accountability, and support development. They also actively reduce turnover: employees who have one-on-ones only monthly (or less frequently) are 1.4 times “more likely to say they are currently looking for a new job” compared to those who have weekly (or more frequent) meetings.

Employees with frequent one-on-ones:

- “Express more trust in senior leaders at their organization”
- “Feel more comfortable bringing up problems and tough issues with their managers”
- “Are more frequently motivated to go above and beyond their role”
- “Are more inspired by the work they do”
- “Better understand their contributions and how they help drive the company’s overall goals”

Through quality, frequent one-on-ones that give leaders uninterrupted time with their employees, managers can learn important information about their people, such as their goals, challenges, and unique strengths. By using this information to create opportunities for employees, managers can increase their own overall effectiveness. ■

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1. 15Five. 2020. “15Five’s 2020 Workplace Report: Achieving Organizational Success through Effective Managers.” www.15five.com/data-study/2020-workplace-report/. All figures and quoted material in this article are also from this source.

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STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING EMPLOYEE SAFETY

BY KEVIN BURNS



Once upon a time, in order to get employees to follow a company's safety rules and procedures all management had to do was threaten them. The employees didn't like it, but they would obey for fear of losing their jobs. Blind compliance was achieved—but the way to get it made for a terrible place to work.

Then employers “evolved” to holding safety meetings replete with gory photos of dismembered limbs and injury survivors telling their 30-year-old “don't do what I did” stories. In short, bad and ineffective management resorted to scare tactics (which some workplaces still use today) to coerce their employees into following safety policies. There is a certainly irony in terrorizing workers into being safe.

COVID-19 AND A NEW APPROACH TO SAFETY

Then COVID-19 came along and essentially shut down in-person safety meetings. No longer can injury survivors regale everyone with their unfortunate stories. Instead, everyone must consider hypothetical scenarios about the threat of hospitalization and intensive care units for not only themselves but for their grandparents or an immunocompromised children. These scenarios are forcing employees to pay attention to safety procedures.

For years, safety personnel have been trying to figure out how to get employees to take safety home. Well, this is the messaging that works: “If you don't follow the protocols, your loved ones could be harmed.”

Just as carelessness in safety protocols at work can affect someone's family, carelessness in safety protocols at home can end up affecting their fellow employees. With the coronavirus, there are no more boundaries between work safety and home safety.

SAFETY AS A TEAM ISSUE

Good teams don't threaten their members but instead protect them as they would protect their own families. Safety isn't a program of punitive measures and rules enforcement. It's the result when people care about the work they are doing, the people they are doing it with, and how they are doing that work. Safety requires the participation of all members of the team, which in turn requires great coaching, leadership, and inspiration. Supervisors and safety personnel have to get their people to reach down deep inside and find the internal motivation to protect themselves, their coworkers, and their coworkers' families too. Because a single careless moment today can affect the lives of many others days (or longer) down the road, everyone must all be safety-focused and care-aware.

HOW TO BECOME MORE CARE-AWARE

Implementing four key strategies can inspire excellent safety performance from any team:

>> Personalize safety for each individual.

People have their own contexts, their own ways of seeing the world, and their own values that drive their decision making. A lecture delivered from the front of the room doesn't land the same way in every listener's brain. Not everyone learns in the same way. For example, some don't read well, some learn best by auditory methods, and some learn best when they see and touch something. Take a page from the practices of professional sports teams: good coaches work one on one with individual players to improve their skill and performance.

>> **Emphasize communication.** Without a coherent communications strategy, no safety program can be effective. A supervisor or safety expert might know what is in the safety manual and why it is there, and the organization may even have its own safety

certifications and designations. But unless someone has the necessary communication skills to connect with and engage employees, those workers will not achieve excellent safety performance. If managers and safety experts find that they have to repeat themselves because the same issues keep coming up, they—not the employees—are the problem. Learning about safety and getting certified is the easy part of safety management. Creating an excellent communications program about it is the hard part.

>> **Sincerity is essential.** Everyone has the same radar that lets them know when someone truly cares and when someone is faking it. Supervisors, managers, and safety experts are in a position where caring matters. If someone gets hurt, they had better take it personally. Leaders who care don't allow excuses to get in the way of keeping their people safe. People will care about their own safety when they know how much their leaders care about it.

>> **Keep working to get better.** If managers and supervisors don't improve, their people won't either. People improve in proportion to the quality of the instruction, training, managing, and coaching they receive. Therefore the people who do the instructing, training, managing, and coaching need to keep improving themselves, too. Business gets better when the people in the business get better. Safety gets better when everyone involved in safety gets better.

To inspire better participation in the safety program, leaders must make safety inspiring. People don't just arbitrarily change their minds about safety; rather, they make new decisions based on new information they receive. When peddling the same ideas in the same manner fails to be effective, it's time to try a different approach. ■

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