

Changing Workplace Attitudes

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

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 guard to protect me; I have been doing things this way for years!



WORKERS LEARN THESE ATTITUDES OVER TIME THROUGH THEIR LIFE EXPERIENCES!

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

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

You must take action to change poor attitudes towards safety and health to build and maintain a strong safety culture. Leaders and supervisors play key, but somewhat different, roles in helping to change poor attitudes.

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

Be patient, be persistent, and follow these change elements to move towards positive change. The attitudes you build will be the foundation for a better safety culture!

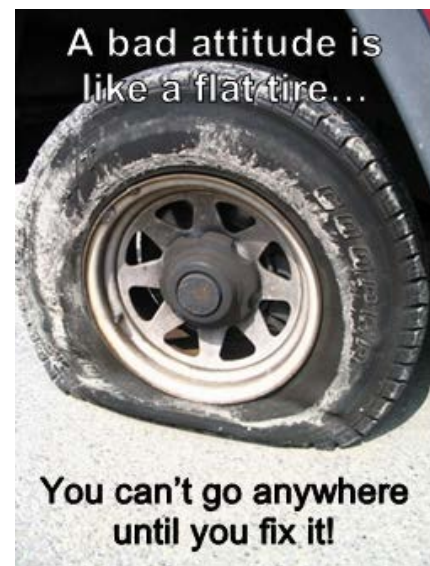


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Quote – Author Unknown

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 are 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	Change flows from talking about it to doing something about it! Focus on changes that get workers doing things in a new way	Do not delegate new processes to one or two workers – get the whole work group involved
PRIORITIZE	Know 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?	Stay aware of the group's progress in making changes – are changes on track? is the workload shared fairly?
FEEDBACK	Actively encourage worker input and act on their input – acting on today's idea encourages workers to give another idea	Watch what workers are doing, seek improvement as needed, provide coaching (not criticism), listen to worker suggestions, and offer leadership constructive feedback
APPRECIATE	Give workers credit when something positive happens and share successes that show you are improving	Say "thank you" when workers volunteer, try hard, do well, and offer suggestions, No deed is too small to be appreciated
APPLAUD	Honor the workers who make change milestones happen – if you are doing this right, it should be everyone!	Celebrate changes involving employees. How? Consider group photos, a team "high-five," or a little time off

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