

2019–ASSP Utah Chapter Meeting–Staker Parson Safety Leadership Team Process Overview



SLT - The Power of “Those Closest to the Risk”



Introduction

Doesn't it make sense that the people closest to the risk have the most to say about reducing it? I hope you answered YES! This process challenges companies to look differently at traditional (top down driven) safety and examine their current level of *engagement* with the front-line workers – “those closest to the risk”.

Process History

The process was developed by Liberty Mutual Insurance Risk Control Services in 2000 and originally called Performance Leadership. The main objectives include assisting customers in assessing risk in work activities, involving employees more directly in meaningful safety work, identifying best-practices in safety and enhancing operational effectiveness.

Cross Functional Teams

That engagement starts with bringing a group of front line workers & supervision together as a Cross Functional Team (CFT), and asking them to work on a *project* aimed at reducing workplace risk and enhancing operational effectiveness. This process asks much more of team members than a traditional safety committee. They become a panel of experts regarding the critical work activity chosen for their project.

The Process

The risk reduction projects taken on by the CFT start with solid management support, commitment, and leadership – coupled with front line worker involvement & ownership – they are the core-drivers of the process.

Once a project is selected, the CFT follows a structured approach which takes them through: Identification of the risk (Risk Assessment); Understanding system factors which support that risk (System Analysis); Solutions aimed at reducing the risk in a sustainable fashion (Integrated Solutions); Measures which can demonstrate why the project was important, and how well it has worked (Performance Measurement).

What You Get

In the short run, and at the local level (on the job site), you get a team of front-line workers who *partnered* on a project that reduced risk and really *mattered* – they made a positive difference. Multiply CFTs and projects over a longer period, and at a variety of locations or job sites, and you get cultural change. You also get the reputation of a company who “does safety” *for* the workers, rather than *to* them. Furthermore, our experience has been that projects aimed at risk almost always help in other ways – quality, efficiency, operational improvement, customer satisfaction – what company doesn't need all of that?

2019–ASSP Utah Chapter Meeting–Staker Parson Safety Leadership Team Process Overview

Can This Work in All Industries?

It has proven to work well in the construction industry that deals with a transient workforce, multiple layers of contractors on site, a wide variety of owner types, and an ever-changing environment – all difficult challenges. It has also worked in a variety of other industries such as transportation, linen, drilling, mining, manufacturing, offices, amusement parks, etc. Once the power of *listening* to those closest to the risk is realized, companies in all industries can will find ways to overcome challenges and make the process work. Companies in all industries can benefit from the front-line worker involvement highlighted in the process.

Some benefits commonly realized from this process include:

Significant Risk Reduction - Through risk identification, scoring, and development of systems focused solutions, (engineering, training, and behavioral), team members learn and gain experience and expertise in risk assessments and risk reduction.

Systems Analysis & Critical Thinking – Team members enhance hazard ID skills and learn how to use Systems & Critical Thinking to develop long-term sustainable solutions.

Safety Leadership – Team members are representatives of their associates. They learn how to effectively share risk assessment and systems thinking insights with associates. They most often model safe behaviors and high levels of involvement. This often leads to advancement opportunities within the company. Low risk-tolerance is a recognized characteristic.

Communication Skills & Job Briefings – Team members enhance their capability to communicate effectively with associates. The conversations center around reducing individual risk tolerance and the need for all employees to be involved in risk reduction.

Summary

The traditional top down approach to safety has had limited success over the years. SLT provides a different and more effective way to approach safety. It's a continuous improvement journey that begins with a risk assessment project and continues with other projects and improved risk reduction understanding and efforts. It is driven by committed leadership coupled with front-line engagement, working in a structured approach aimed at identifying, understanding, and reducing risk in a sustainable way. The challenge to all companies is to seek out more opportunities to tap in to “Those Closest to the Risk”.

