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**CULTURE OF LABOR SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT & RISK PREVENTION**

People are still dying while they perform their job: million death cases every year worldwide. There is still some critical work to do in terms of occupational safety.

Zero risk does not exist. This is why Safety Culture is essential in an organisation to implement safety measures and to try and achieve the “big zero”. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has highlighted in one of their surveys that investing 1 euro in prevention and safety awareness generates a net profit of more than 13 euros for companies.

Company leaders working in close cooperation with the Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) department can rely on a major ally: digital technology. The effectiveness of implementing digital technology will be discussed with concrete examples related to risk management and assessment, actions monitoring, safety conversations and their importance and issuing work permits.

Every company dreams and works hard to achieve “zero accidents”. Getting there is no easy task. Having a Safety Culture implemented in the company’s culture and documented is not enough. Guaranteeing safety is an important process that must involve all stakeholders starting from the top management down. This process is achieved thanks to great leadership and particularly a safety leader. Therefore, one must ask themselves, what is true leadership before embarking on the safety journey in their company.

Safety Culture must not be static in a company. It evolves and must be adapted to all the new situations and new targets of the company. And above all, it is about keeping all the staff involved in driving the change and implementing the best practices in terms of safety. Far too often, the company’s culture including the safety culture comes down to a document, that is communicated within the company, which embodies its vision and values and how safety culture is embedded within. Talking and reading about it is not sufficient enough. Actions must be taken and put in place. It is important that a safety culture is well-understood and adopted by all employees this will affect the image of the company and its attractiveness.

Safety conversations can also be a major key element for a successful risk management plan. Gathering all the data, walking the walk, understanding the employees' needs, and listening to them will help the safety leader in reviewing the safety procedures and eliminate unnecessary procedures that are no longer effective.

Human error is not the main cause of workplace incidents. Leadership has an important role to play in avoiding incidents and paving the way for the best safety behaviour. In addition, the key role of the safety leader is to motivate and involve all stakeholders to achieve the objectives and goals of the organisation. The leader must get into action and be directly involved in all these processes to set an example and gain everyone's trust, especially when it comes to adopting new technologies, new processes, and new strategies.

Every day, companies make considerable efforts to comply with regulations, ensure safe operations, protect the health and safety of employees and respect the environment. Among all the implemented control and prevention measures, a work permitis a key tool for managing safety at work.

Permit to Work (PTW) systems are an integral part of a safe work system and can help manage a wide range of work activities. Process-related hazards that could cost lives, cause injuries, and time-consuming facility damages not only affect companies' production performance but also their finances. To prevent such major industrial incidents, many countries around the world have implemented Process Safety Management (PSM).

What is the role of the work permit in the management of site safety? How has it evolved with digitalisation?

Permit to Work is a systematic technical measurement process used to authorise controlled work such as maintenance, inspection, modification, and non-routine high-risk activities in potentially hazardous conditions to prevent a major accident.

In other words, the PTW ensures that non-routine dangerous work takes place safely. It describes the work that has to be done, the identified hazards, the measures to be taken, and the personal protective equipment that must be used. The permit might contain details of all the isolation equipment that needs to be in place depending on the nature of the work and the site. The permit approval process starts from the moment a work order is issued, the permit is prepared, approved, closed off, and recorded at the end of the work. The people responsible for the work have to capture the relevant information (Photos, measures, remarque…) and sign. The term Permit to Work might slightly vary from one industry to another (for the mining industry, it is called permit to work, while in the Oil and Gas industry, it is Work Clearance), however, the principle is usually the same.

Risk prevention and safety is everyone’s business, yes and no! Every employee can contribute at their level to keep the work environment safe and thanks to safety training intervene whenever necessary to keep everyone safe. However, risk management and prevention plans in a company are not be improvised and they demand rigorous study and versatility from the HSE department. Risk assessment, training, supervising, regulatory monitoring, reporting, communication, etc. The HSE head must be rigorous in their job, be able to adapt to difficult and different situations and quickly improvise when necessary. Above all that, the HSE leader must have excellent communication skills and carefully listen to all the employees to guarantee their safety. In this working framework, operations on the field and administrative tasks in the office, digital technology proved to be the perfect ally to successfully achieve these various objectives.

Here are 3 key takeaways:

1) Today, digital technology is a formidable ally to safety culture in a company and to the prevention plan (digital boards on-site or smartphones/tablet apps, etc.). All the safety information must be easily accessible to everyone.

2) Manuel update of your HSE documents (Permit-to-work, prevention plan, etc.) is no longer necessary. A digital tool can greatly help you in this task.

3) Reporting of HSE activities can be automated and easily shared with management and stakeholders.

There you have it, HSE functions can rely on digital technology to simplify their daily tasks and make quick decisions at all levels of the company’s hierarchy.

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