Safety Leadership: An Introduction

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About The Keil Centre…

• Based in the UK & Australia
• 20 staff & associates
• International client base

Applying psychology to promote organisational success since 1983
Overview

• **Why** safety leadership?

• **What** is safety leadership?

• **How** can this be developed?
Direct & Indirect Influence

Leader Behaviour → Safety Culture → Safety Outcomes
Higher-level Leaders (macro)

Positive safety climate → Safety benefits

Safety compliance and safety participation
Reduced number of violations
Lower reported levels of risk-taking
Self-report injuries
Enhanced implementation of safety initiatives
Engagement in safety activities
Higher levels of employee willingness to raise safety issues

Perceived probability of success
Middle-level Leaders (micro)

Positive safety climate

Safety consciousness

Safety benefits

Positive perceptions of workplace safety
Enhanced employee accountability
Improved safety practices and behaviours
Reduced levels of engagement in risky behaviours
Perceived risk of injury and injury incidence (self-report)
Lower levels of accident under-reporting
Safety participation and safety citizenship behaviours
Safety Leadership

Leadership
Process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal

Safety Leadership
Process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to effectively manage risk
5. Safety Leadership Characteristics

According to T.R. Krause (2005), there are seven key safety leadership characteristics and associated behaviours that can influence Safety Culture:

- **Credibility** – what leaders say is consistent with what they do.
- **Action orientation** – leaders act to address unsafe conditions.
- **Vision** – leaders paint a picture for safety excellence within the organisation.
- **Accountability** – leaders ensure employees take accountability for safety-critical activities.
- **Communication** – the way leaders communicate about safety creates and maintains the Safety Culture of the organisation.
- **Collaboration** – leaders who encourage active employee participation in resolving safety issues promote employee ownership of those issues.
- **Feedback and recognition** – recognition that is **soon, certain** and **positive** encourages safe behaviour.
SL @ Different Levels

**Macro-level factors**
- Attitudes
- Management commitment
- Beliefs that accidents can be prevented (low levels of fatalism)
- High levels of risk awareness

**Interpersonal factors:**
- Trust

**Practices/Behaviours:**
- Implementation of corporate safety policies
- Openness and support for safety

**Leadership styles:**
- Transformational
- Transactional

**Micro-level factors**
- Attitudes:
- Safety as a priority

**Interpersonal factors:**
- Trust / Distrust
- Supportive/coaching-oriented supervisors
- Concern for welfare of team

**Practices:**
- Supervisory involvement in safety activities
- Enforcement of safety practices/policies
- Leading by example
- Two-way safety communications

**Leadership styles:**
- Transformational and Transactional
- Positive leader-member exchanges
In practice...

**Attitudes**
- Commitment to safety
- Valuing employees and their contribution
- High risk awareness
- Belief that accidents can be prevented

**Behaviours**
- Articulates safety vision, goals & standards
- Is visible in the workplace
- Communicates effectively across the organisation
- Is involved in safety initiatives
- Demonstrates role model beh.
- Shows concern for staff welfare & safety
- Motivates others
Leading vs Managing

Leading Safety

Managing Risk
Who does it?

- Senior Managers
- Supervisors
- Individuals
Story so far…

Safety leadership…

*Has direct & indirect influence on safety outcomes*

*Is a mixture of what/ how you think (attitudes) and what you do (behaviour)*

*Exists at all levels of the organisation and looks (slightly) different at different levels of the organisation*
In practice this means…
Selecting for SL

In practice…

- Recruitment effort
- Psychometrics, interviews

Advantages

- Seems intuitive!
- Assesses attitudes, values, commitment

Potential Questions…

- Articulating the ‘ask’
- Fake-ability?
- Develop-ability?
Developing SL

In practice…

• Leadership Programme
• Coaching – mentoring
• In-work assessment

Advantages

• More realistic?
• Builds on in-house talent – knowledge

Potential Questions …

• Articulating the ‘ask’
• Assess ?
• Generic vs. Specific
• Targeted vs. systemic
SL: Articulating the ‘Ask’

- Evidence-based Principles
- Org-specific Structures
- Org-specific Context
Example: The ‘Ask’

**Competency Frameworks**

Articulates behaviour & attitudes required for specific positions/roles

Emphasises on role-specific requirements

**TKC Behaviour Standard**

Articulates behaviour required of everyone, supervisors & senior managers

Emphasises links btw behaviours
Example: Assessment

Leadership 360
Assess against behaviours or competencies

Culture – Climate Survey
Assess against behaviours, ‘excellence statements’ or other
Example: Content

Generic Content

• Motivational
• Human Factors: PSFs, human error etc.
• Safety Culture
• Communications

Org-Specific

• Link to role-specific responsibilities
• Link to specific safety initiatives
• ‘Fit’ with org strategy
• Engagement with HR & talent mgt
Example: Systemic

Just Culture

Leadership Behaviours
‘Risks’ of SL

- Complacency
- Lack of Learning
- Competency concerns
- Poor Change Management
- Inadequate procedures
Overview

• **Why** safety leadership?
  – *Direct & Indirect influence on safety outcomes*

• **What** is safety leadership?
  – *Mix behaviours & attitudes*
  – *Exists differently at different levels*

• **How** can this be developed?
  – *Selection & Development*
  – *Through people & structures*
Thank You

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