SAFETY CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

Managing Cultural Diversity in the Workplace
CULTURE: WHAT IS IT?

“The shared values, norms, customs, art, history, folklore, and traditions of a group of people that are unified by race ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion”
COMPANY CULTURE

- A shared pattern of beliefs, assumptions and expectations held by the company members; the employees;

- Often called an company’s personality;

- Informs us of what to believe, how to act and make decisions;

- Guides employees in how to perceive the environment, norms, roles, values and physical signs;

- The strategy, leadership style and ways of accomplishing tasks reflect the company culture
WHAT DROVE THE INTEREST IN SAFETY CULTURE

The concept of Safety Culture emerged in the 1980’s, when certain major events, explosion of space shuttle Challenger just after lift-off, nuclear accident at Chernobyl, and oil platform ‘Piper Alpha’, could no longer be explained by individual behaviors alone.

“A set of practices (ways of doing) and a mindset (ways of thinking) that is widely shared by the members of an organization when it comes to controlling the most significant risks associated with its activities”
SAFETY CULTURE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Cultural diversity refers to “the mix of employees from various cultural backgrounds in the workplace”.

In the UAE, and greater GCC region, the proportion of migrant workers in the labor market is reaching as high as 90%.

Understanding of cultural differences helps when trying to improve the company’s safety culture.

Challenges:
• General knowledge of safety;
• Values about work;
• Safety Communication;
• Risk perception
CULTURE AND RISK PERCEPTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Can you relate to these workplaces? When the answer is yes, you probably have a road ahead of you to create a right attitude toward risk perception and understanding of risk amongst your employees or contractors.
CULTURE AND RISK PERCEPTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Risk perception is often determined by:

- Trust versus lack of trust;
- Imposed versus voluntary;
- Natural versus human-made;
- Catastrophic versus chronic;
- Hard to understand;
- Awareness;
- Risk versus benefit; and
- Control versus no control.
FACTORS THAT PROMOTE A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE

• Management commitment to Safety and Health;
  Get them on board, visibly changing their behavior towards safety and health, supporting safety and health initiatives in a constant way on a daily basis.

• Engaged and empowered employees will choose to work safely;
  Everyone in the organization must be involved in a meaningful way and on a daily basis to support injury and occupational illness prevention.

• Provide employees with adequate training;
  Training is an essential part of an effective safety and health system and will provide employees with the knowledge and skills to perform their tasks safely.

• Making Working Safely a condition of employment.
  Employees shall be empowered to stop any work or process if they believe it is unsafe or unhealthy.
FACTORS THAT PROMOTE A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE

Positive Reinforcement.

Reward. Just a simple thank you for the correct behavior not only makes it more likely the employee will continue in that behavior, it will also influence the behavior of others and creates a further foundation for a culture of safety.

• Praise positive safety behavior in public; make it timely and specific;
• Recognition in (safety) meetings;
• Reward by providing breakfast or lunch or a relevant gift.
Developing a safety culture and expecting immediate results is no different than planting a tree and planning to eat the fruits the next day. It takes time, effort, and patience.
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TO YOU THIS EVENING