

CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOR-BASED SAFETY



CUSTOM SOLUTIONS FOR
SAFETY EXCELLENCE

Welcome to Safety Culture Excellence. Today's topic: Critical Questions to Improve Behavior-Based Safety. My name is Shawn Galloway, and I am proud to be your host.



Shawn Galloway
President & COO

Well, hello everyone, from the beautiful Normandy region of France. This week I'll be asking four critical questions that I hope will get you thinking in the right direction to improving an existing Behavior-Based Safety process. Now, if you do not have a process already in place, hopefully understanding what would be looking at will help you in your creation. Now, these certainly are not the only questions that you should ask, but they are, indeed, important ones.

In this week's podcast, I ask, "Who knows the risks the best in safety? What triggers an observation? What is the average goal, and yet the true goal, in Behavior-Based Safety? But, most importantly, who determines the value in the process? All of these questions are important to help you find further opportunities for improvement in safety. I hope you enjoy.

"What they talk about there is take the problem into gemba, and involve the people that know the issues. All that we're trying to say here is that, usually at a site, the people that know the risks the best are the people that are exposed to the risks every day. Take the problem solving to the workstations. Talk to the people. Try to understand what those issues are. And you can't do that even just mapping it out on a table in a conference room. You have to physically go out there, maybe go with some of the observers, and watch how they do this. What do they do? How do they turn that stuff in? What – where are the barriers? Where are the bottlenecks in the process?

"Go out there, and go with some of the observers, and figure out, 'What are the challenges? What's the push back that you get from any level in the organization? What triggers an observation? Are you doing more observations every month because somebody says you have a goal of just a number?' Now, a goal will help you get there. One of the things Demming also said is that, 'The numbers are critical, but they're relatively unimportant.' What he's talking about is that the numbers are relatively important, but there's certainly not the goal there.

"The goal isn't just numbers of observations. The goal is to help people be safe out there. Now, we need the observations to help us accomplish that goal, but don't define the goal as the number of observations. And that's a trap that just about every site falls into at some point when there doing Behavior-Based Safety or an approach like this long enough. You're going to fall into something like that.

"So, you have to have other types of indicators to measure against. But make sure that you ask the question, 'Who determines value in the process that we have?' Is it just the steering committee? That's what I meant by earlier, that to continue to listen to the culture. What would they perceive as valuable? That old 'What's in it for me?' question is going to be continuously asked out there, and we have to continue to look for new answers for it, because the question's gonna be a little bit different.

"So, we have to find out who determines value in this process from the management level, from the supervisory level, from the worker level, and, of course, from the other observers. Communicate back to the observers what would be valuable for them to know."

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Until next time, remember: "In safety, prevention trumps reaction." For more information on Safety Culture Excellence or if you have a topic to suggest, please e-mail us at podcast@proactsafety.com.