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Welcome, to Safety Culture Excellence. Today's topic: Reinforcing the Supports of Change. My name is Shawn Galloway, and I'm proud to be your host.

Well, hello from Herndon, Virginia. A couple of weeks ago, I was working with some internal consultants in the Cleveland, Ohio area. On one of the nights, one of the guys was able to secure us all tickets to the Cleveland Indians versus Seattle Mariners baseball game. I travel a lot and spend a lot of evenings in hotel rooms writing these weekly podcasts. So it was nice to take a break and enjoy some time watching people passionately supporting their team.

It was a great time and always nice to visit another city's sporting event, especially when the hometown team wins. That is, of course, unless they're playing your hometown team. Kidding aside, this event reminded me of a principle I started suggesting several years back that I'd like to encourage you to adopt.

There's a principle in marketing called 'reinforcing the mind decision'. For example, don't you feel smart, or aren't you glad that you purchase a ticket to a game, when your team or your favorite athlete wins? In a talk I gave several years ago, I translated this principle to reinforcing the supporters of change.

Marketers are taught that once a customer has purchased from you, it's imperative that you positively reinforce their decision to buy. In doing this, it will ultimately improve the business and grow your customer base. So they're taught in this school of thought that spending time making people feel smarter about their purchase will greatly increase the relationship between the buyer and the seller; thus, greatly increasing the chance for return sales.

Many luxury car companies do this very well. Have you ever received a call after a sale or service just to say thank you or to see how they can improve their products long-term? If any of you have ever flown Continental Airlines and the plane's large enough with the drop-down video player, you very likely heard the CEO of the airlines deliver a 'reinforcing the buying decision' message.

I contemplated recording this message, as I hear it almost weekly. However, this would be against FAA rules. So, it wouldn't set a good example. So, I searched around on YouTube and found where someone else had broken the rules. Again, this isn't a good idea and I don't encourage it; but hey, for the sake of learning, I believe this to be a good example. Now be prepared to possibly adjust your volume because the recording is a little fuzzy as it was obviously also recording background noise as well. So here it goes.

"I'm Larry Kellner, Continental's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. On behalf of my more than 40,000 co-workers, we're the most professional men and women in the business. Thanks for choosing to fly with us today. We're committed to clean, safe, and reliable air transportation and the highest-quality customer service. We have one of the youngest fleet in the industry serving hundreds of destinations around the world and are constantly improving our products and services, both in the air and on the ground. In the future, we'll work hard to maintain our current high-ranking in customer satisfaction. As we know, we have to earn business every day. So wherever you're going, I'd like you to sit back, relax, and enjoy your trip. We appreciate your business and look forward to serving you on this and future flights. Welcome aboard."

If you think about it, reinforcing a buying decision and reinforcing the supporters of a new change is one

and the same. Too often, we ask people to get involved in something like safety, and then we beat them up when they do. In addition, many times we don't realize our definition of our involvement is different than someone else's. Many companies have employee suggestion systems in place and most companies have the capability for employees to initiate, or at least suggest, to a supervisor a safety work order.

Unfortunately, more often than not, these employees are not provided status of the fix, the reason why it was rejected or delayed, or any response whatsoever. And more often than not, these people will then look at employee suggestion systems and submitting a safety work order, as being involved. When they feel like nothing was done or no response happened, the internal question, or sometimes it's asked out loud, is, "Why do more? Why support more change?" This provides great difficulty when one wants to change something or gather involvement from people to support that change. If people feel they've already invested their time and energy into an initiative and nothing has happened, it's hard to get them to invest more.

Think about the typical behavior-based safety initiative. We've audited and improved all of the major methodologies worldwide. The most frequent concerning issue we find is that people aren't using their own data to further improve. Or, they're not sharing their findings with the stakeholders: whether they be the employees, managers and supervisors when appropriate, or worse, the observers who are gathering it. That last one is epidemic.

The average resource-intensive behavior-based safety initiative that we see, no one shares the data or scores with the observers to let them know how they're doing; where to focus more effort, where to gather deeper insight, and where to close the communication loop.

Back to the baseball game I attended. Imagine this: it's like being a fan in the stand and watching two teams play. Now, if all I see are balls being thrown around the field, people running the bases, and batters changing - if I can't see or hear the score - or worse, if the ones in charge of the score do not share it with me, I'd get frustrated and no longer be interested in what they're trying to accomplish.

Now, think about this in relation to what you're trying to achieve: are you sharing your scores with your people? And, as I've talked about in a couple of previous podcasts, avoiding failure scores are not the same as achieving success scores. So, I ask you to put this in perspective of change efforts. As we've provided in past podcasts, our feeling is that people do not resist change. They do resist forced change.

Good change methodology encourages you to identify certain people to help you with your efforts, rather than forcing your initiative. If you've ever read Malcolm Gladwell's book, *Tipping Point*, he called these type of people 'mavens': the intense gatherers of information and impressions. And so are often the first to pick up on emerging trends. They're also called pioneers; the ones who go before as into the wilderness preparing a way for others to follow. Lastly and most commonly, they're referred to as change agents; those who intentionally or indirectly cause or accelerate change.

Culture change really does work and happen best from within, rather being pushed from the outside or pushed from above. If you take away anything from this podcast today, I encourage you to consider the following: as you get these people involved and gather their support for new change, and as they become your spokesperson, what are you planning to do to make sure that they feel smart about their involvement

and support decision? What scores are you planning to share with them?

Whether it's one-on-one communication, group posting of scores, wins and successes, results, status updates, missed opportunities; whatever it might be, if you really think about it, it all comes down to helping them to help you. But most importantly, making people feel good about doing the right thing.

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.