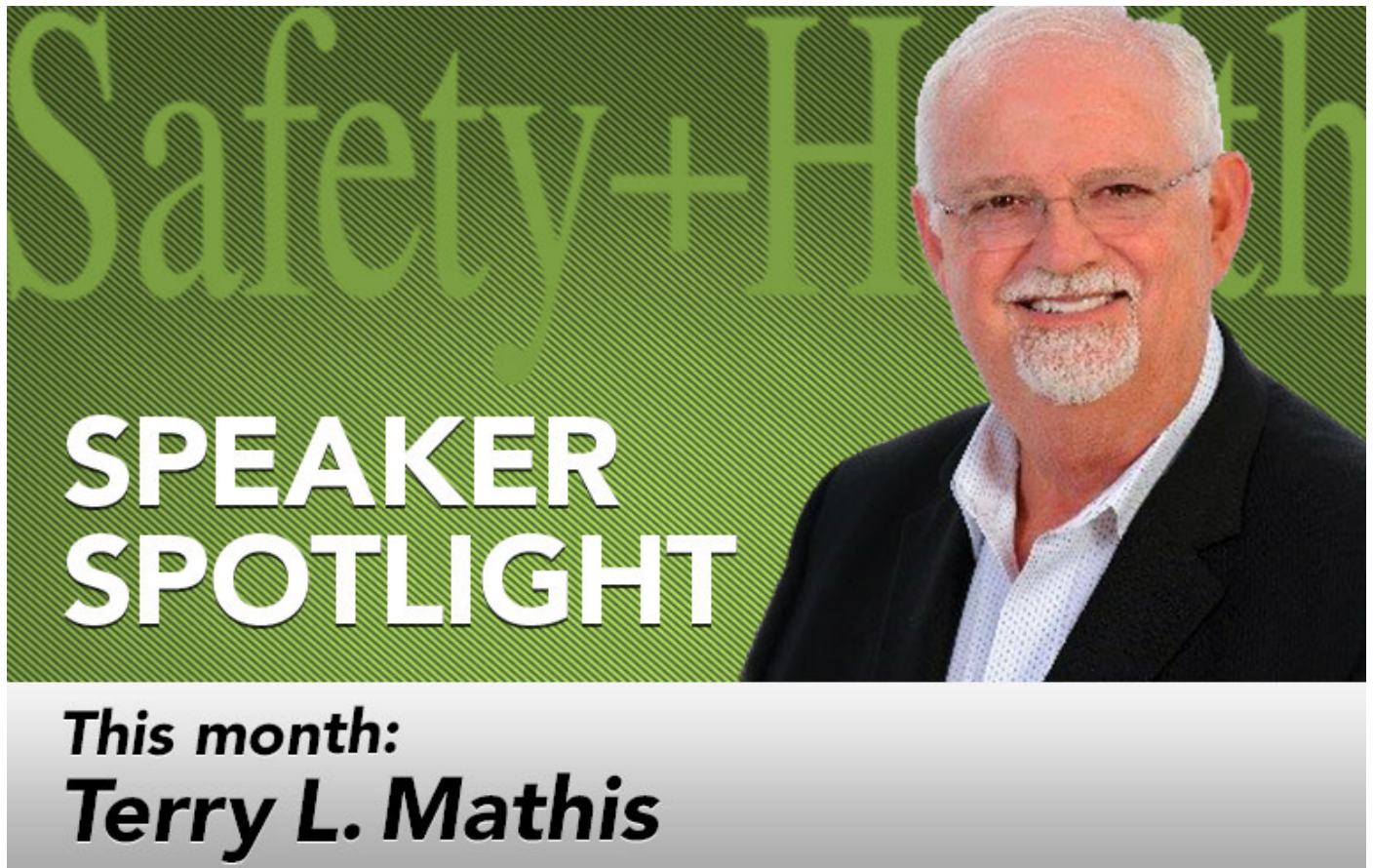




Safety+Health

The Official Magazine of the NSC Congress & Expo

www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/18443-speaker-spotlight-measuring-safety-excellence-a-culture-maturity-model

A graphic for a speaker spotlight. It features a green background with the words "Safety+Health" in a large, light green font. On the right side, there is a portrait of Terry L. Mathis, an older man with white hair and a goatee, wearing glasses, a white shirt, and a dark suit jacket. On the left side, the words "SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT" are written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the portrait, the text "This month: Terry L. Mathis" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Speaker Spotlight: Measuring safety excellence – a culture maturity model

[Terry Mathis](#)

May 26, 2019

EDITOR'S NOTE: Every year, the National Safety Council Congress & Expo features some of the top thought-leaders and motivators in the occupational safety and health community. Safety+Health has invited the most highly rated presenters to contribute to this monthly column. For more on this year's event, visit congress.nsc.org.

It's been my honor to present at the National Safety Council Congress & Expo for many years now. Last year, as I considered what my clients requested most often, I chose to speak about safety culture.

It seemed a lot of folks were getting clearer pictures of what their culture was and what they wanted it to be, but none of them had a strategic plan for how to make the transition. Although they knew the general direction they wanted to go, they had no road map to guide them.

Many referred to the DuPont Bradley Curve, as though seeing the three-step transition would somehow magically make it happen. Although this model was extracted by many to form generic steps, I've found that strategies always need to be customized to each organization. The goal is to provide a guideline for what must be addressed in the organization to impact the desired culture transition. Although each plan should be individualized, this model is a checklist to ensure you formulate a complete approach.

Each element of safety excellence impacts and influences the safety culture. This means that if the influencers don't change, neither will the culture. Each element must evolve through the stages from left to right. If any of the elements don't progress at a similar rate as the others, the process will stall, or at least be suboptimized. If strategy, leadership and engagement don't evolve, neither will culture. If metrics aren't developed to measure the progression, it'll be impossible to manage the change.

Once an organization has the big picture of what culture improvement entails, then the implementation of the steps can be planned and executed. Failure to fully appreciate and address these necessary steps usually results in wishful thinking rather than meaningful progress. Having a visual representation of the necessary steps also facilitates leaders to grasp what's necessary and mentally map it toward completion.

Begin at the left of the model (below) and trace each element in the first column from left to right. This is what must happen to achieve safety excellence while shaping a safety culture that will sustain the improvements.

ELEMENT	PHASE 1 CONTROL	PHASE 2 COMPLIANCE	PHASE 3 COMPETENCE	PHASE 4 EXCELLENCE
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify risks Establish controls Develop leadership Align workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tighten control Develop supervision Establish accountability Train workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loosen control Leadership coaching Clarify direction Build teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect silos Form partnerships Develop scorecard Teach problem-solving
Leadership	Directive	Enforcing	Coaching	Empowering
Safety manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk analysis Establish controls Design training 	Grunt	Guardian	Guru
Engagement	Belonging	Buying in	Participating	Owning
Culture	Forming	Dependent	Independent	Interdependent
Competence	Safety students	Safety amateurs	Safety pros	Safety team players
Metrics	Lagging indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagging indicators Compliance indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagging indicators Leading indicators Participation metrics (digital dashboard) 	Balanced scorecard for safety

SAFETY EXCELLENCE MATURITY MODELSM

This article represents the views of the author and should not be construed as a National Safety Council endorsement.



Terry L. Mathis, founder and CEO of [ProAct Safety](#), has served as a consultant and advisor for top organizations worldwide. A respected strategist and thought-leader in the industry, Mathis has authored five books, numerous articles and blogs, and is known for his dynamic and engaging presentations.