

Characterizing Safety Leadership Based on the Seven Skills of Effective People Model

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Abstract

A preventive approach in the field of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) can be successful if it is strongly supported by the safety leadership that is asserted to positively influence safety compliance amongst employees. Studies of safety leadership have focused on the style or behaviour (often transactional or transformational) of the leader rather than on the activities and practices that constitute leadership. Development of safety leadership could not be limited to training programs but rather to coaching and mentoring activities. Started from these considerations, the article proposes an approach based on “The seven habits of highly effective people” of Stephen R. Covey (1989) which have been created the research framework for: (1) assessing the actual profile of managers (using the Seven Habits® Profile Self-Scoring) and (2) to structure focus group debates for providing concrete actions, responsibilities and competences associated to each habit in the case of safety leaders. Covey’s seven habits framework have been used in a complex study with a sample group of 419 managers from different companies and the results have identified behaviour patterns for highly effective safety leaders.

Keywords: Stephen Covey, seven habits, Occupational Health and Safety, safety, leadership