

“Do You Have Time for Safety?”
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Recently I was conducting a Supervisor Safety Management class for a client. I was finishing the training when one of the supervisors asked me how I expected him to get the time to do all the things I had covered in the class. He quickly followed up with the fact that they were very busy and he did not have extra time in his schedule. He stated that all the items I covered in the class were nice on paper but they would never happen in reality.

This wasn't the first time, nor will this be the last time, I get this type of response. I understand that supervisors do not have a lot of extra time on their hands. Clearly, supervisors have a very demanding job and it isn't easy. The demand to keep up with production can be very challenging.

I also know that employees are the most valuable asset a company has. It is through loyal, motivated, experienced, and dedicated employees that the critical work gets done to help a company be successful, grow, and make a profit. Without these employees, the whole process will grind to a stop.

With that in mind, I asked the class to answer the following:

- ✓ Of the 10 most critical things your company does to be successful, where does your employee safety rank on that list?

I explained the reason why I was hired: there were too many injuries and the company had recently been removed from their Workers' Compensation Group Rating Program. The cost impact was going to be around \$30,000 per year. I asked the supervisors if they knew this and understood the financial impact this would have on the company. This was new to them as they don't get involved with workers' compensation.

I then went on to explain that a \$30,000 increase would come directly out of the company's profits. In order to generate the lost profit it would require at least a \$300,000 increase in sales. I asked the class how long it would take to generate that much in sales. One of the supervisors then mentioned they do close to \$3,000,000 in sales each year. The sales dollar impact was going to be 10% of the total sales. This would take the company approximately 5 weeks of full production to generate this lost profit.

At this point, I could see that I was beginning to get the attention of each of the supervisors. Five full weeks of each of their time had been lost completely due to the cost impact. This amounted to over 200 hours of work for each supervisor. I then asked them how many hours a month it would take to do all the things I was asking. The answer was, at most, 3 hours a month. That would only require a maximum of 36 hours a year for each supervisor. The difference was 164 wasted hours each of their time.

With that, I then asked them: Do you have time for safety? I explained that if they didn't have time for safety, the reason the company wasn't in the Group Rating Program would never be corrected. Good safety programs contribute to a company's ability to be profitable; poor safety programs cost the company a lot more than the time and effort required to keep an employee safe.

I ended the meeting by asking each supervisor, "Do you have time for safety?" At this point, I think they got the message.

If you have any safety concerns or need any help with your safety programs, please give me a call at the office at 330.854.4577 or on my cell at 330.495.3437.