Critical Role
Supervisors Play in Safety

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Today’s Focus

- What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?
- You, the Supervisor, are the Organization
- Setting the Example
- Holding Employees Accountable
What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?

- Production
- Quality
- Inventory control
- Human resources
- Safety

- Enforce rules
- Delegate work
- Organize the work
- Solve routine problems
- Train employees
What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?

What are they responsible for specifically and solely in safety?

- Perform daily inspections
- Report/correct unsafe conditions
- Assist in accident investigations
- Train employees on hazards
- Develop safe work procedures/JHA’s
- Equipment is maintained
- Enforce safety regulations/policies
- Ensure personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided
- Prevent accidents
What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?

- Who generally gets promoted to Supervisor?
  - The best worker
    - But are they going to make a good/great/amazing supervisor?
What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?

- Now we know how they’re chosen
- Now we know ALL that they’re responsible for
- Now we know everything they have to manage for safety
- So, what?
- Big deal!
What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?

- What’s significant in this simplified chart?
- Who interfaces with the employees?
- More specifically, who from the Organization interacts with the employees?
- SUPERVISOR!
What are Supervisors’ Responsibilities?

- Safety 101 we learn the supervisor is the key.

- “The supervisor bears the greatest responsibility and accountability for implementing the safety and health program because it is he or she who works most directly with the employee.”

  - *Occupational Safety and Health Management*, Thomas J. Anton
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- Which leads us to the next topic listed above.
- Is that accurate?
- Do you believe it?

- That’s ok, I’ll show you that my opinion is true.
- Just stick with me.
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- The corporate office has a message to give to the employees - who delivers it?
- There’s a new policy developed and everyone needs trained on it - who does it?

- An employee has a problem with implementation of a work procedure - who do they discuss it with?
- An employee is injured, has a machine not working properly, has a problem with a co-worker, is mad at their spouse - who do they turn to?
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

Let’s take this to another level:

- Employees view you as “Management”
- Courts may view you as “Employer”
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

The Organization’s dirty little secret:

- Liability
- Responsible for your employees leaving work without any injuries and without dying
- Implement all of our directives
- When there’s an employee issue YOU are the first person we’re going to turn to for answers
- When there’s ANY issue on the floor/the field/the office we’re turning to YOU for an explanation first
You, the Supervisor, **Are** the Organization

- **My point:**
  - YOU, THE SUPERVISOR, HAVE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF RESPONSIBILITY
  - YOU, THE SUPERVISOR, HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization


- A company trained their employees and supervisors on how to conduct observations and asked them to conduct two observations a month at many locations.

- Participation was measured.
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization
You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- Now that you know I’m right and what’s listed above IS how it is...
- It’s time for me to come clean...
- I’ve been setting you up for the two most important topics today
Given, that you ARE the organization, everything you say and do will be seen by employees as the organization’s words and actions.

- Holy crap...that’s heavy
Setting The Example

How does this apply, specifically, to safety?

- Employees watch your actions to determine your attitude toward safety
- Employees believe that whatever your attitude toward safety is IS that of the organization
Setting The Example

- Employees will watch your actions to determine your attitude toward safety.

- What that means for Supervisors is that you’re always on stage.

- They watch how you handle different situations.
Setting The Example

If you see it and you do nothing – YOU ARE CONDONING IT

And here's what could result
Setting The Example

• What happens when unsafe behavior is condoned?
  ▶ People are more willing to take risks
  ▶ People will take short cuts because they’ll assume that’s expected
  ▶ People don’t bother to wear their PPE
  ▶ People will assume you don’t care about their safety
  ▶ People will become resentful
  ▶ People will know that the “safety program” is a sham and is all for OSHA
  ▶ Safety degrades
Setting The Example

• Since we don’t want safety to degrade what can we do?

• Quite simply, address safety concerns when you see or hear or are told them.
  ▶ Get the item fixed
  ▶ Provide coaching to the employee
  ▶ Wear all of your PPE
  ▶ Ensure everyone’s following proper procedures
  ▶ Stop the task/work when there’s a safety issue
  ▶ Hold employees accountable (must do this yourself first)
Holding Employees Accountable

- **Worthy of discussion**
  - Nobody likes to do it
  - Nobody’s trained on how to do it
  - It’s easier to look the other way
  - People are simply uncomfortable addressing issues that are deemed “bad” with other people (that’s why there’s so much bickering behind others’ backs)
Holding Employees Accountable

• Some common issues with holding people accountable:
  ▶ We don’t hold the “good producers” accountable for safety because we don’t want to impact their production (same is true for the opposite)
  ▶ We only hold people accountable for safety issues when it impacts production or machinery is broke or someone is injured
  ▶ We don’t hold people accountable for safety but we do hold them accountable for production issues
  ▶ We only hold the employee accountable but NOT the supervisor

• It only works if done consistently and fairly
Holding Employees Accountable

• One other note:
  - OSHA comes onto your sight and sees an employee not wearing the appropriate PPE.
  - Your response to OSHA is “All employees are required to wear PPE”.
  - Does OSHA says “OK, that’s good enough”?
  - OSHA will want to see records of where the organization enforced their policy of wearing the appropriate PPE.
  - If you have no documentation OSHA will then know that the PPE policy is NOT REAL.
Holding Employees Accountable

• Let’s discuss how we could be handling employee accountability
  ▶ Usually employees are held accountable with some type of disciplinary system
  ▶ Usually progressive
    ▶ Verbal (this is documented)
    ▶ Written
    ▶ Days Off without Pay
    ▶ Termination
Holding Employees Accountable

- Vanessa’s advice:
  - Know your discipline policy
  - Keep an open mind when approaching someone not following policy
  - Use your discipline policy fairly and consistently
  - Use your Human Resources and Safety Managers for support/advice
  - DOCUMENT
  - DOCUMENT
  - DOCUMENT
Summary

• Supervisors have a unique and challenging role within organizations
• Safety is one of the many areas supervisors are charged to manage
• It is critical that supervisors understand the example they are for all employees
• If a supervisor does not hold their employees accountable for safety there is no safety
• Support your supervisors - they have too much on their plate to do it alone
Summary

• **Management**
  ▶ Provide training your Supervisors
  ▶ Give them the tools to do the job
  ▶ Support their decisions
  ▶ Hold them accountable for safety

• **Safety**
  ▶ Provide support to your Supervisors
  ▶ Provide education to your Supervisors
Questions

There are no stupid questions, only questions that show your stupidity.

If there are no stupid questions, then what kind of questions do stupid people ask? Do they get smart just in time to ask questions?

(Scott Adams)