

# Winning hearts, minds is crucial to safety behavior

**CHANGING THE BEHAVIOR** of employees to embrace a safety culture means being able to instill a “nobody gets hurt” culture in the hearts and minds of every employee.

On a drilling rig, it is a given that the rig crew must value it and then action it, or accidents will occur.

Good leadership is the key to an effective safety culture beginning with the very top, and that not only means top management should endorse a safety culture but fully embrace it through sincerity and genuine actions.

There are three segments critical to sustaining the safety culture: knowledge, skills and beliefs and values.

“At the team level in the drilling industry people first need to know and understand the jobs that they are expected to do,” said **John Morris**, Senior Partner of **Enterprise Development Network (EDN)**, who is also responsible for leadership development.

“There is an entire set of information about job knowledge that is developed through information and good communication.”

Secondly, they need to know, understand and be able to use the safety tools that are central to the company’s push to create a safety culture.

Third are the employees’ beliefs and values. “What we have found is that people can know their jobs and understand the tools, but the extent to which they are committed to using them is directly related to the beliefs and values that they have,” Mr Morris said, “particularly the extent to which they believe the company they work for and the people that actually lead them are generally committed to the ‘nobody gets hurt’ culture.”

A good part of the time is used to get people to believe they work for a company with managers, supervisors and leaders that really care about them and what happens to them in the workplace.

Consequently, the company’s leadership must demonstrate a high level of commitment that they are authentic and genuine about safety.

Changing behavior with regards to safety culture must be done from the bottom up and the top down.

“If you take the bottom up approach without the top down approach also,” Mr Morris said, “then you are not going to create the sustainment.

leaders, so we focus on rig supervisors and engineers onshore and then begin to build teams.”

Through leadership development efforts the organization can sustain the safety culture that they want. There must be a clear vision and direction of where the organization is headed and what it stands for. In the first instance, the company shares what is known from company research about what makes a difference in terms of effective leaders.

That information is taken in the context of the drilling industry and particularly from a safety perspective. What EDN found, particularly in the drilling industry, is that people are looking for ‘how-to’s.

The level of technical expertise is generally very high at several levels (drillers, toolpushers and rig supervisors) so the need is to work with this level of people on the same level of expertise in leading and managing people.

The second part of leadership is an action learning model. “I think this is the real reason we have had success changing behavior at both the leadership level, and then how they go about influencing the team level,” Mr Morris explained.

Part of the equation is that people, particularly adults, need a reason to learn and to want to engage in training, according to Mr Morris. The second part of the equation is program learning.

Employees go through a leadership development center that is programmed learning in the sense of bringing leaders together.

They go through a series of common experiences as well as being provided tools that result in the belief of the safety culture.

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## FOLLOW UP

The third step, after providing the tools and techniques to establish a safety cul-



The safety culture program continues with structured visits with the individual supervisors and teams at the workplace. EDN staff sit in safety meetings, job safety analysis meetings and talk with toolpushers, drillers and rig superintendents about the progress of developing a company safety culture, and whether additional tools are required.

“Don’t go to your workforce with a safety behavior program if you haven’t first gone to the top and won the hearts and minds of the leaders,” he continued.

“If you don’t believe in the safety culture, then when you try to sell it to other people it is going to become clear that there isn’t a high level of commitment.”

Mr Morris also noted that there is a significant difference in believing in something and actually doing something about it, and he increasingly finds that even when people believe and value something, they don’t necessarily practice and implement it.

## LEADERSHIP LEVEL

“In a smart organization, leadership goes through the process first because that is the type of modeling they want,” Mr Morris said.

“In smaller companies there are fewer