Why Culture is #1
*How Culture Influences
Safety and Everything Else*

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How Culture Influences Safety and Everything Else

OPTIMUM
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

A Change Was Needed, But Where Do We Start the Change?

Introduction

The way we were preventing injuries was not working. We needed a new way, but where should we start the change?

I was working at a mining company leading the operations of a large, multi-craft maintenance crew when I realized:

- Employees were following all the rules and still getting hurt.

- Employees were told, "you're not to think, just do."

- Most employees only did what they were told to do.

- And Management was not trusted.

When I looked around and saw employees getting injured, work teams disengaged with their projects and fearful relationships with management, I knew a change was needed.

Maybe you're in a similar situation. For our organization to engage employees, become high-performing and highly-competitive, and grow profits, a change was needed.

What I realized over my career, in 5 different companies, is the largest hurdle preventing change is the existing culture.

The good news is: **Culture Can Change.**

Recorded here are the best practices that are proven to strengthen culture, reduce injuries and retain profitability.

Bill Holder, Chief Operating Officer

Optimum Safety Management

When Strategy Collides with Culture, Culture Always Wins.

What Is Culture?

Let's start with an understanding of what *culture* really is.

Here's the technical definition:

Culture: noun;

"The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization."*

Now here's the laymen's definition:

The way we do things around here.

Culture is what leads an employee to disregard Personal Protective Equipment even though you've told them otherwise multiple times.

Culture is *also* what could lead an employee to eliminate a hazard in their coworker's way without being asked.

Culture is either your organization's biggest asset or your greatest enemy.

One of our most frequent statements around Optimum Safety Management is: **"when strategy collides with culture, culture always wins."**

Strategy is needed, but the strategy must include culture. If there is not a plan to change culture, then the execution of the strategy will fail.

Injury rates will not decrease in your organization by putting together a great strategy. Injury rates decrease by changing the culture and empowering employees to make great decisions.

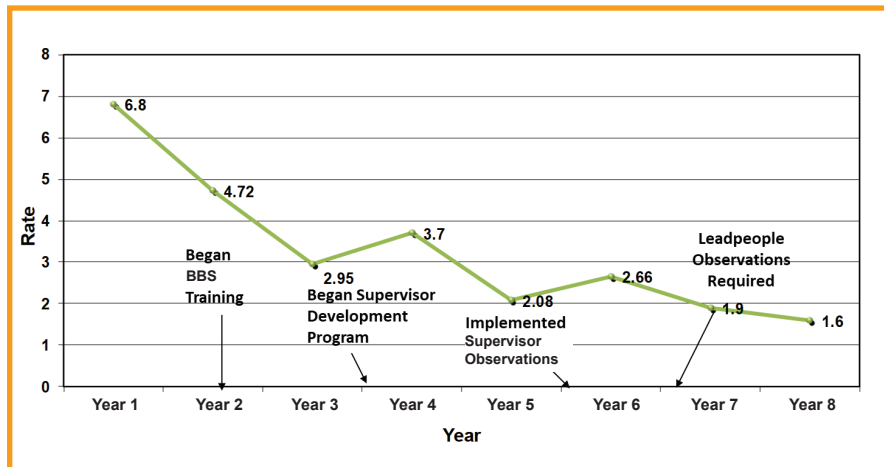*As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary

What Happens When We Strengthen Culture

Results Happen

Here's some hard truth: Changing or strengthening the culture of an organization can be a long and hard process...

but with a commitment to change, the process and continuous improvement, here's what can happen:

Over an eight year span, we implemented four different processes all leading to a **total 76% reduction in injury rates.**

In those 8 years, **the culture became collaborative between hourly workers and the management.**

As a result, not only did safety performance improve, **multiple production records were set and broken.** The maturity of the culture was such that the crews working were self-directed work teams, eliminating the salaried supervisors.

But here's the number one barrier that prevented improvement: CHANGE!

More specifically: People embracing change and their willingness to lead it.

To change the direction of an organization, requires changing both:

- What people think and do

- The work that gets done

In other words: **Changing the Culture**

Creating high-performing cultures – ones that value the safety of every employee – requires challenging what is for the sake of what could be. It requires examining the current culture and adapting to make a change.

How to Change Culture

Culture Starts With Leadership.

Actions of employees (followers) can be traced back to their supervisors (leaders). What a leader does differently in what they say or do – through meetings, personal conversations, how they track budgets, etc. – sets the climate for everyone else.

This stands true for every leader in an organization: from the CEO all the way to the front-line supervisor.

The leaders actions set the climate and followers behaviors will begin to change – for the good or bad. These actions will affect attitudes and beliefs and eventually create the culture everyone lives within.

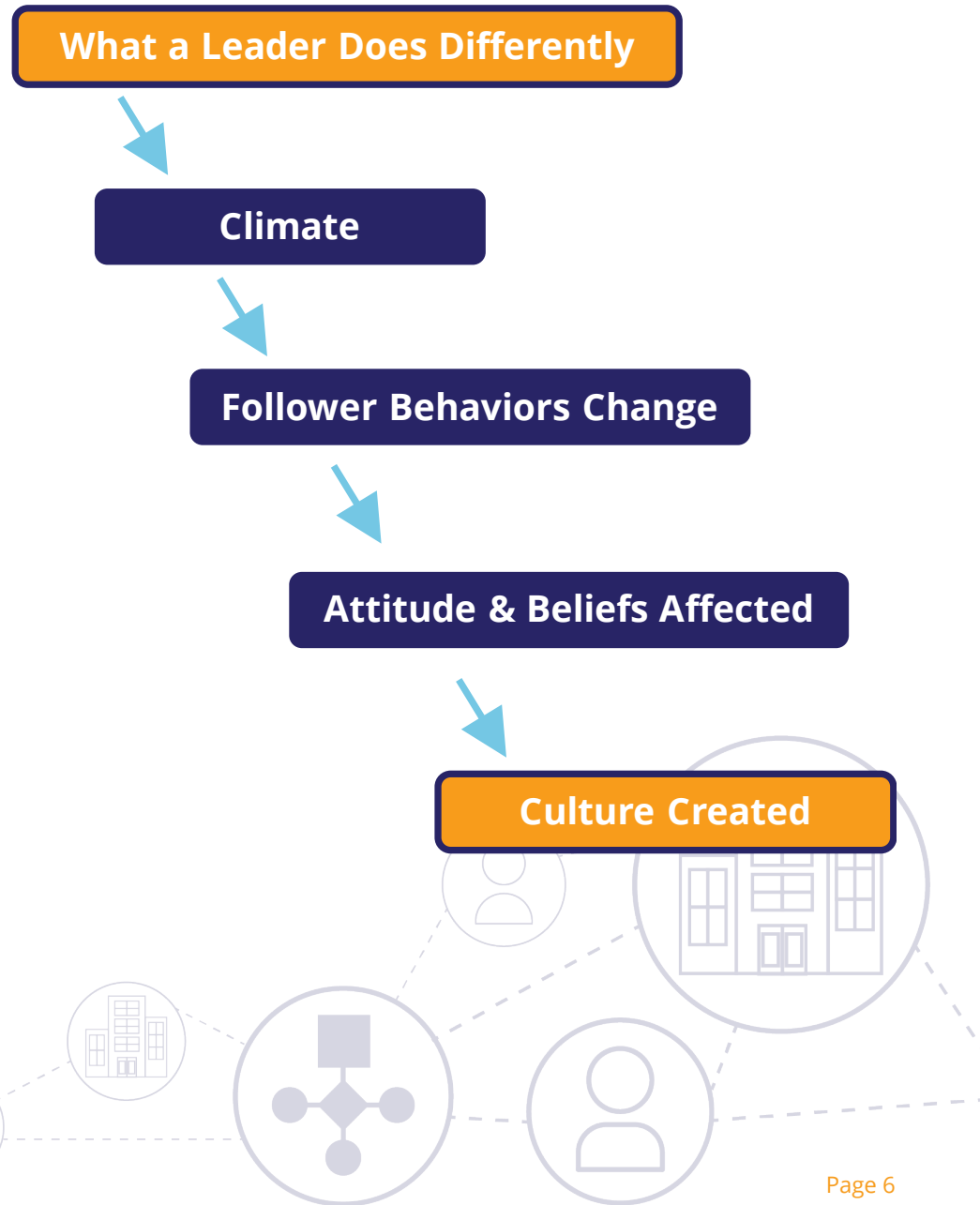**Culture is the result of leaders' actions and the climate they set.**

Moving Towards a Culture of Safe Production™

At the end of the day, what we as leaders really need is a culture of safe production. In a culture of safe production, employees actively seek the betterment of the organization, minimize exposure for themselves and others and produce long-term sustainability.
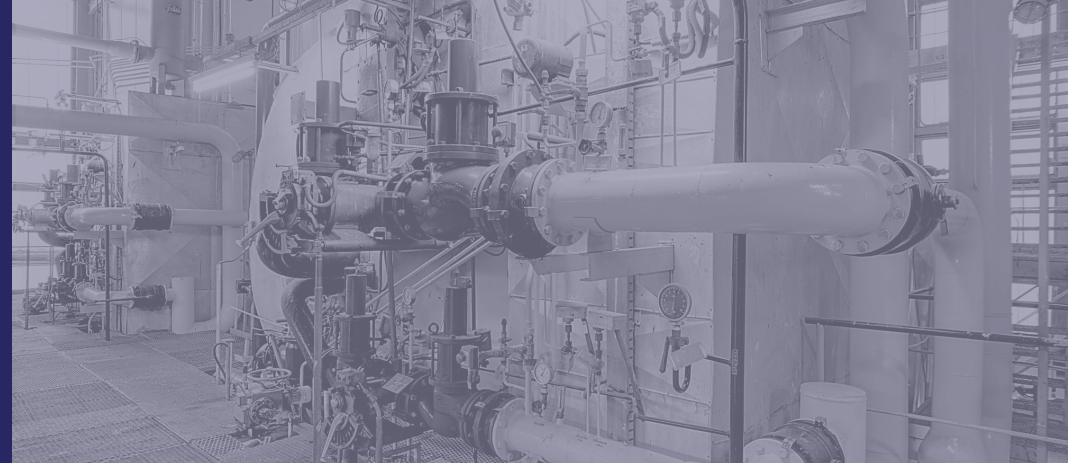
Moving from a culture of compliance to safe production rests on these three principles:

- Employee Commitment is a Result of Engagement

- Employee Engagement Starts with Culture

- Culture is a Result of Leadership

What will you do today to shift your organization's culture towards safe production?

What a Leader Does Differently

↓

Climate

↓

Follower Behaviors Change

↓

Attitude & Beliefs Affected

↓

Culture Created

Get Started Today with a Complementary Consultation.

We're here to be your partner on a Journey to Zero™

Start your Journey today with a **complementary 30-minute consultation.** Our team of cultural-change experts is here to help your organization strengthen culture and increase profitability.

During your 30-minute consultation, we'll:

- Discuss the goals of your organization

- Show you the "3 Ps of Exposure"

- Identify actions you can take to reduce exposure and strengthen culture

To schedule your consultation, email **Info@Optimum-USA.com** with the subject **'Schedule My Consultation'.**

OPTIMUM SAFETY MANAGEMENT™