

THE PEOPLE-PROFIT CONNECTION

HOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
CAN MAXIMIZE PEOPLE SKILLS
& MAXIMIZE YOUR
PROFITS



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will save millions by lowering insurance rates, reducing worker's compensation claims, decreasing wrongful death lawsuits, and increasing productivity.

We have developed a safety program called Primal Safety®. This unique program states that everyone has the basic human right to go home alive and free from injuries at the end of the day. But with that right comes the responsibility to watch out for each other, to care for each other enough to point out unsafe situations, and to take the necessary corrective actions.

PRIMAL SAFETY®: A GUT LEVEL APPROACH The costs for not working safely can be monumental both in financial and human terms. Most safety programs are comprised of objective rules and regulations. When it comes to safety, there is a right way and a wrong way to work. Even though there are severe consequences when these rules are broken, workers still may not follow these rules. Why is that? According to philosopher, Ken Wilbur, these objective approaches, as effective as they are, will always hit a limit, a barrier. In order to break through this barrier, you must tap into the subjective side of safety, the primal side, the emotional side. Emotional responses are far more powerful than responses to rules and regulations. Once you tap into these emotional responses to safety, this objective barrier is breached and you will improve the effectiveness of your overall safety program.

Primal Safety® uses the following methodology:

Employees and project teams focus on emotional competencies such as empathy and interpersonal relationship skills. Key team members should take the EQ-i® and develop the areas that are required for a successful program.

Employees and project teams form closer relationships with each other with a deliberate approach to relationship building.

Employees and project teams learn about each other's lives

outside of work. This is done both formally and informally through activities for the workers and their families. Family members and loved ones become part of the safety process.

Employees and project teams develop a greater awareness of safety – not because of rules but because the workers will care enough about each other to keep each other safe.

Primal safety program specifics:

- 1 The purpose of this program is to enhance the safety program that you already have in place.
- 2 The project team and any other appropriate parties take the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i®). This measures their social competence, including areas such as empathy and interpersonal relationships. Without this foundation, typical construction EQ profiles will likely limit the effectiveness of this program. One of the highest competencies measured by the EQ-i® for construction folks is independence. We will emphasize that by working unsafely and being involved in an accident, workers may experience a great loss of independence, something that is very important to them.
- 3 The basic premise of the Primal Safety® program is that everyone in your company has a moral imperative to implement an effective safety program for all workers, including subcontractors, affording every worker the basic human right to go home each day uninjured to their family and loved ones. This means ZERO TOLERANCE! No accident or unsafe situation, no matter how small or insignificant, is acceptable. This approach is similar to how Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, cleaned up New York City. It was called the broken window theory. When there was a broken window, it was replaced. When graffiti showed up, it was removed the same day. There was zero tolerance of the smallest of infractions, because if minor infractions were not addressed, it led to larger infractions and more serious crimes.

- 4 All employees are encouraged to report any accident, potential accident, or unsafe situation, no matter how small. Every report is acted upon. Blame is not assessed, violators are not punished, and reporters are thanked and encouraged. The process is as follows:
 - a. Analyze why the hazardous situation exists.
 - b. Correct the situation.
 - c. Educate the violators as to the proper means and methods in the spirit of learning and improving.
 - d. Communicate these reports to everyone in order to avoid this situation in the future.
- 5 As part of the safety orientation, all employees watch a safety video. This video depicts interviews with workers who have been disabled by workplace injuries as well as interviews with their family and friends. The employees learn that these injuries not only rob them of their independence, but also create ripple effects that touch many people. This is a powerful way to make safety a personal issue.
- 6 All safety activities are tracked and recorded including accidents, avoided accidents, unsafe situations and behaviors, corrective actions, and communications. Everyone has access to this information, which is reinforced at all meetings.
- 7 There are numerous activities to reinforce these safety concepts. Some ideas:
 - a. Each morning, the entire project team does five to ten minutes of calisthenics and warm-up exercises. This reinforces the team approach to safety and prevents accidents by getting the blood flowing, warming up joints, and waking the team up mentally. We provide specific instructions to project team leaders on how to conduct this morning session. You may also use this session to highlight a safety issue for the day.
 - b. Safety milestones are celebrated with jobsite lunches and team activities. These celebrations are also an opportunity to

enhance the spirit of the team and create closer relationships among the workers.

c. There are social activities outside of work to encourage the workers to create closer relationships with each other. These may include sports activities, team sports, and other social activities.

d. The toolbox safety meetings not only discuss best safety practices, rules, and regulations, but they address the emotional side of safety as well. We provide specifics on this to the project teams in charge of these meetings.

e. Celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries, births, life milestones, etc are encouraged. These celebrations reinforce the human side and put a face on safety.

8 There are family/social activities that reinforce safety. Some ideas:

a. All of the children of the workers make safety posters encouraging their parents to come home safely to them each day. The posters are laminated and placed throughout the project. A safety coloring book for all of the workers' children teaches them about how their parent stays safe while on the job.

b. There are family days so that family members can visit the workplace and see demonstrations of the safety equipment that keeps their loved ones safe.

c. There are family social days such as picnics and parties. Every employee has someone who cares about his or her safety. Employees are not numbers. They are sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

d. Workers are encouraged to take their safety equipment home and show their families how this equipment protects them from getting hurt on the job.

e. Families are involved in the safety process. If there is a habitual violator, the family can be called in to help motivate

that worker. This type of intervention has the potential to save lives.

THE FUTURE OF SAFETY: Where do you go after you reach zero accidents?

For a moment, look to the future and see a vision where the construction industry is not only a safe industry, but actually becomes restorative. Imagine people working in this industry for years and retiring not only free from disabilities, but healthy and full of vigor. That is the next step in this process. Some say it is impossible to achieve. Some use the excuse that “this is a dangerous industry”. Although there is no doubt that the work is tough and dangerous, we firmly believe that we can reach that level of health and safety through this emotionally intelligent approach.

STRESS, BURNOUT AND LIFE BALANCE ISSUES: The construction industry has always been stressful, but according to a recent global study compiled by the International Metal Worker’s Federation, stress and burnout in the construction industry are on the rise around the world. Our workers are being asked to do more with less. The physical and mental demands are tremendous. Many employees are working 60, 80, even 100-hour weeks, sometimes for extended periods of time.

Take a look at some of the people who have been in the industry a while. Many of them look older than they are, and appear beaten down and worn out. Frequently, these workers develop stress related illnesses such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. A surprising number depend on nicotine and caffeine in the morning to get started and alcohol at night to calm down. Many use both prescription and over-the-counter medications to control the symptoms of stress such as headaches, stomach problems, allergies, pain, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, and irritability. When managing projects, I used to visit the