

Pinnacol Pointers for Safety Group Programs

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Cultivating Safety Leadership at Your Organization

Leadership may seem like an intangible quality — something we cannot define but know when we see it. However, safety leadership *can* be defined, learned and acted upon.

In an [article](#) last year we suggested, “Safety leadership begets safety culture, which is an attitude your employees show toward safety, i.e. ‘We want to do the right thing around here.’” Safety leadership, we wrote, is as broad as setting a vision, goals and budget and as specific as saying “incidents are preventable” rather than “accidents happen.”

Leadership starts at the top

Safety leadership begins at the top. Management sets the vision, goals and budget, and the best executive teams lead by example. [OSHA](#) charts four action items for the c-suite:

- Communicate your commitment to a safety and health program.
- Define program goals.
- Allocate resources.
- Expect performance.

Leadership throughout the rank and file

But safety leadership goes well beyond the board room. Leadership is about behavior, not job title, and [Select International](#), a Pittsburgh-based consulting firm, writes that rank-and-file workers become leaders through these actions:

- Be an example by knowing and following safety rules.
- Don't be complacent about the risks of the job and job site.
- Report safety hazards, violations and incidents.
- Communicate with co-workers and managers about safety concerns.
- Help change the work and workplace to improve safety.
- Encourage co-workers to follow safety protocols.
- Take time to celebrate safe practices by others.
- Make co-workers aware that unsafe behavior is unacceptable.
- Participate in safety initiatives and committees.

Leadership skills for you and your organization

What leadership skill do you want to learn and use? What does successful safety leadership look like at your business? How will you measure success?

We've discussed a few leadership skills here, and you may wish to identify one or more to develop in 2019. Then, take time to implement your leadership skills through research, practice, repetition and communication. Stay the course with a consistent approach and you're sure to

succeed. Remember, safety requires constant effort and innovation, just like other aspects of a business.

Pinnacol and other resources

A Pinnacol [survey](#) can help you and your team take a positive first step toward safety leadership. The second step is to create a written, safety leadership strategy. Part of that strategy may be to strengthen your safety program. Pinnacol offers access to [sample plans](#) through our partnership with J.J. Keller. To develop a plan, our safety team is here to help your organization assess safety needs and identify ways to reduce injuries and related costs. The third step is to conduct training to cultivate your safety leaders and drive a safety culture throughout your organization. Check out The Center for Construction Research and Training's [Foundations for Safety Leadership](#) course. A Pinnacol Safety Services consultant is available to customize and conduct this and other risk management training at your workplace.

Additionally, the American Society of Safety Professionals provides helpful resources. For further information and support, we invite you and your team to contact Pinnacol's Safety On Call at safetyoncall@pinnacol.com or 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752.

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