

A firm commitment

It starts with culture: **Chris Nelson** discusses nine steps to award-winning safety.

One of the best parts of my job is watching organizations in our industry be recognized for their commitment to safety during the SC&RA's Annual Conference. This year, in beautiful Carlsbad, California, I watched as 10 companies that NBIS is proud to insure won well-deserved safety awards, including SC&RA's **Transportation Zero Accidents Award**, a **Transportation Fleet Mileage Category Award**, a **Fleet Safety Award** for obtaining an accident frequency rate of less than 0.45 during all of 2018, and a **Driver Safety Award** for accumulating five years of accident-free driving.

Admirable culture

On an individual level, these awards speak to safety, but on a company level these awards speak to a pervasive and admirable culture of safety. Each of these companies has made a firm commitment to making safety something they don't just talk about, but something they live and breathe day after day.

Industrial Safety & Hygiene News writer Stephanie Zizzo, in a 2011 article on behavior-based safety, defined safety culture as a "broad, organization-wide approach to safety management." She went on to write that a safety culture "is the end result of combined individual and group efforts toward values, attitudes, goals and proficiency of an organization's health and safety program."

Dean Kaplan, chairman of the National Tank Truck Carriers, writing for *Transport Topics* in 2014, contended that in a competitive industry like trucking, safety is actually the key differentiator. "Only by cultivating a culture of personal accountability for safety at every level of trucking can we reduce the number of accidents."



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He went on to explain that emphasizing and ingraining safety into everything a company does is one of the most effective approaches to organization-wide safety adoption.

"At my company," he wrote, "it starts with rigorous hiring and screening processes, continues with comprehensive driver training that engages senior drivers as mentors, regular safety meetings and providing our drivers with state-of-the-art equipment to help them get the job done."

In 2007, The Transportation Board of the National Academies published a substantial research synthesis that was sponsored by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association (FMCSA) titled, "The Role of Safety Culture in Preventing Commercial Motor Vehicle Crashes: A Synthesis of Safety Practice." What the study found was that while improvement of "safety culture" is "sought by organizations that face safety risks, the specifics of the term itself and the methods by which safety culture is fostered are relatively ambiguous."

The synthesis also found that a key reason for this is "the general lack of standardization of the highly qualitative term 'safety culture,' even within the trucking and motor coach industries."

Action items

In an effort to aid in the development of a defined and positive safety culture within a motor carrier, the synthesis suggested nine action items that I believe are a great start for any company interested in developing a safety culture that lasts:

- 1 **DEVELOP OR REDEVELOP INTERNAL DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE AND SAFETY**
- 2 **CONDUCT "ROOT CAUSE" ANALYSIS (OFTEN CALLED A "SWISS CHEESE" RISK REVIEW)**
- 3 **IDENTIFY AND DISPEL MYTHS**
- 4 **CONDUCT INSTITUTIONAL SAFETY KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT**
- 5 **DEFINE OR REDEFINE EMPLOYEE SAFETY ROLES FROM TOP TO BOTTOM**



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6 ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFETY COMMUNICATION AND REENGINEER SYSTEMS OF SAFETY COMMUNICATION

7 CREATE OR ENHANCE A SYSTEM OF SAFETY RECORD DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

8 DEVELOP OR REDEVELOP MOTIVATIONAL TOOLS

9 IMPROVE DRIVER RETENTION

As most of you probably know, the amount of information available to help improve safety – and to help create a lasting safety culture that just might get you an SC&RA Transportation Safety award – within your organizations is nearly limitless. Resources abound, and this can sometimes make undertaking a new effort seem Herculean in scope. If you find yourself with questions, reach out to either me or one of the other NBIS Risk Management Team members and we can help figure out which steps to safety make the most sense for you.

Call 877.860.RMSS or visit www.NBIS.com.