

INDUSTRY:
Freight and Railway Products

SOLUTION:
SafetyDNA® for Leaders

Improving Site Safety Performance One Leader at a Time

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THE CHALLENGE

A Fortune 1000 organization in the freight and railway products industry sought to improve its safety culture and performance across its U.S. operations. After some significant injuries at its major sites, senior leadership identified safety leadership gaps at the supervisor level. Details gathered from incident investigations, safety audits, and interviews all suggested that supervisors at these sites regularly exhibited high-risk behaviors and lacked the interpersonal and leadership skills necessary to lead safety effectively. The organization had already been utilizing Select International's pre-hire assessments for entry-level positions for over four years at other facilities, which had led to a significant decrease in recordable and lost-time injuries over a three-year time span.

Given this history of successful partnership and proven results, the organization now reached out to Select International for a development solution that could address the need to identify and improve safety leadership gaps in its current supervision. One particular facility within the manufacturing division was identified as a pilot site. This particular site manufactures rubber products for the rail and locomotive industry and employees approximately 150 employees. Due to the fact that it was experiencing many of the aforementioned leadership behavioral issues, it was an ideal site for this pilot study.

THE SOLUTION

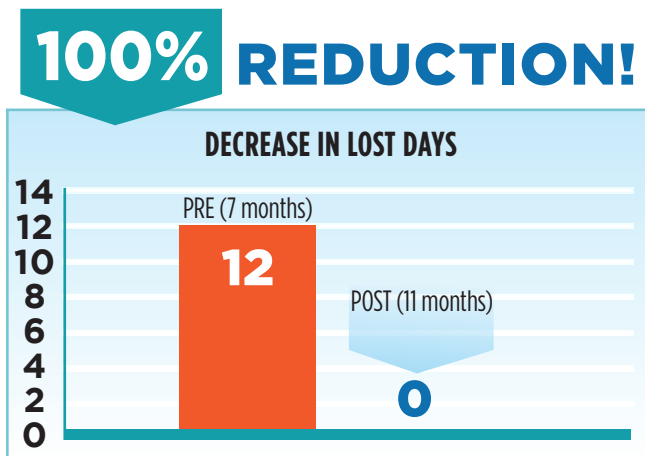
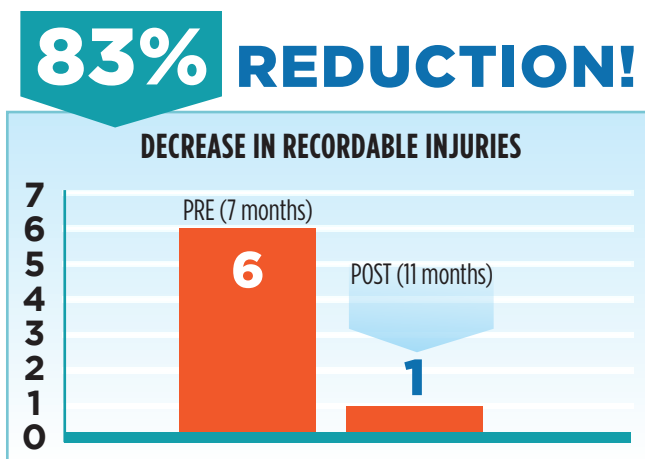
Based on the need to work with existing supervisors, the organization implemented the SafetyDNA® for Leaders Development Program. The site's leadership team, comprised of 12 managers, supervisors, and team leads, participated in the program. They first completed the SafetyDNA for Leaders online assessment, a validated instrument which measures an individual's SafetyDNA, leadership style, and safety leadership competencies. Participants also completed each of the following steps in the program:

- **A safety climate survey measuring employee perceptions of safety**
- **A one-day workshop where participants review their results, gain an understanding of their SafetyDNA, as well as their leadership style and how it impacts their team members' safety**
- **One-on-one coaching sessions where participants are debriefed on their assessment results and then create a personal safety leader action plan**

In their personal coaching session, each participant created and committed to a detailed behavioral action plan that would specifically help them overcome blind spots in their safety leader profile and to leverage their existing strengths. These plans varied by leader and addressed various situations that affected safety and risk, ranging from hazardous conditions to interpersonal dynamics with their team members and co-workers. These action plans were then followed up on regularly and completed based on their respective timelines.

OUTCOMES

The results of the intervention over time were positive and significant. The chart below shows the total number of OSHA recordable injuries and lost days due to injury during the seven months prior to implementation compared to the 11 months following the implementation. Results showed there was an **83% reduction in recordable injuries** during that timeframe, despite the fact that the post-implementation period was actually four months longer than the pre-implementation period. The decrease in lost days was even more dramatic. While there were 12 lost days in the pre-implementation period, there were no lost days at all in the 11 months following the implementation, resulting in a **100% reduction in lost days at the site**.



There were no significant changes in supervision, training, policies and procedures, personnel, or the nature of the work during this time period at the site. In spite of this, the site achieved sizeable decreases in recordable injuries and lost days. These reductions are not only statistically significant, but they highlight the impact that leadership can have on safety performance and daily safety behavior on the part of the workforce.

Based on OSHA estimates, the average direct cost of a recordable injury is approximately \$40,000. This is likely an underestimate, as some sources provide higher cost estimates. Using this estimated amount, however, the five fewer recordable injuries would amount to a **direct cost savings of \$200,000**. Indirect costs related to these injuries would likely be four times higher than this. Together, these costs could easily add up to more than \$1 million over time.

SUMMARY

These results highlight how important leader behavior is to the safety culture and safety performance of an organization. The study also provides strong evidence that the SafetyDNA for Leaders Development Program leads to meaningful behavioral change on the part of leaders, which then translates to a safer workplace, fewer injuries, and fewer lost days. By starting with each individual leader and focusing on how they can personally reduce exposure to risk, an organization can truly achieve significant strides in their safety journey and overall safety performance.