

INDUSTRY:
Food Production & Distribution

SOLUTION:
SafetyDNA for Leaders

Reducing Injuries Over Time by Developing Safety Leadership Skills

Authors: Matt O’Connell, Ph.D. and Esteban Tristan, Ph.D.

THE CHALLENGE

A well-known U.S. food processing and distributing company was struggling with a high incident rate at one of its key facilities. Despite having safety programs and training in place, employees were experiencing several injuries due in part to slips, trips, and fall incidents. These were partly a function of the work environment, which includes wet, slippery surfaces. It was also clear that the site supervisors played a role. Despite having years of experience on the job, they lacked the skills needed to lead safety effectively. The company contacted Select International in an effort to assess and improve the safety leadership skills of its supervisors and improve safety performance at the site. To that end, the site implemented the SafetyDNA for Leaders Development Program.

THE SOLUTION

SafetyDNA for Leaders is a validated, online assessment that measures an individual’s SafetyDNA, leadership style, and safety leadership competencies. The assessment is only the first step in the full SafetyDNA for Leaders Development Program, which also includes:

- A safety climate survey which measures 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, how their profile impacts safety, and how to create a personal safety leader action plan to reduce exposure to risk

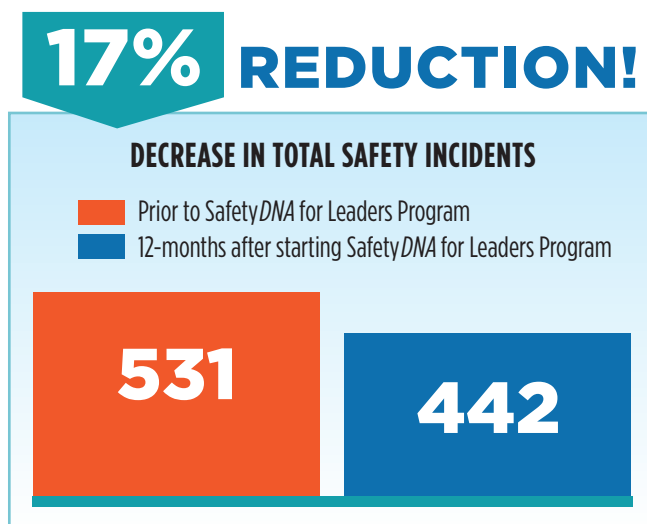
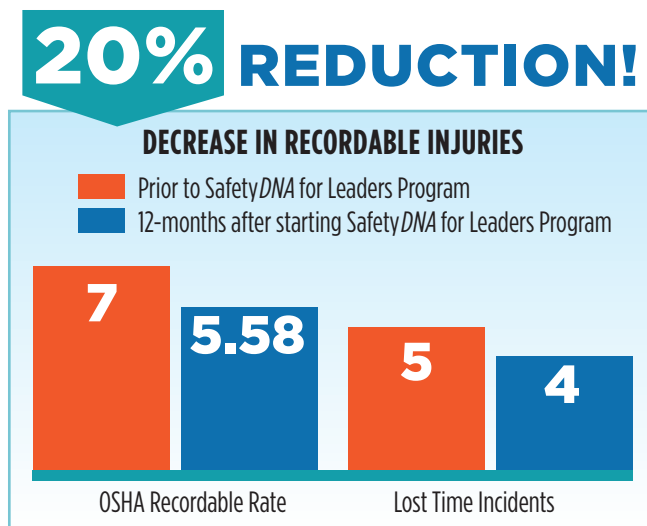
In the initial phase, the 12 supervisors and managers at the site completed all of the steps listed. Subsequently, the site progressed to the second phase of the SafetyDNA for Leaders Development Program, known as L.E.A.D. This sustainability phase consists of four half-day workshops dedicated to different safety leader behaviors measured in the assessment. They are hands-on and skills-based in nature, and are coupled with additional one-on-one coaching sessions for each participant. The L.E.A.D. modules were delivered quarterly and covered the following safety leader topics:

- L** LAYS OUT A VISION
- E** EMBRACES CHANGE
- A** ACTS AS A COACH
- D** DEMONSTRATES CREDIBILITY

The same 12 leaders participated in each of these ongoing modules and coaching sessions. At this point in time, the facility has completed three of the four L.E.A.D. modules over the course of approximately 12 months. This study is longitudinal in nature because it follows safety incidents over this time period, starting before implementation of the SafetyDNA for Leaders Development Program and comparing incidents 12 months after implementation.

OUTCOMES

The chart below compares the total number of OSHA recordable and lost time incidents that occurred in the 12 months prior to implementing the program versus the 12 months post-implementation. The results are straightforward and positive. **Both Recordable and Lost Time incidents dropped by 20% in the 12 months following the start of the program.** In addition, overall safety incidents, which included any near miss, first aid, recordable, or lost time incidents, dropped by nearly 17% during that same time period.



While these results are preliminary and cover only the initial year, they are significant and meaningful. These results indicate that there has been a change in the safety culture of this organization, which may be attributable in large part to a change in leadership style and a renewed focus on personal safety behavior on the part of the leaders at this site. Site leadership felt that this program was an important contributing factor to the results shown here, but more importantly, that it helped change the everyday behavior and focus of the leaders involved.

SUMMARY

The results of this study provide clear evidence that leadership has a notable impact on safety incidents. It also shows that the SafetyDNA for Leaders Development Program can help organizations to make significant strides in reducing serious injuries and safety incidents. Specifically, it provides a powerful means for engaging leaders on a personal level, helping them understand their own SafetyDNA and leadership styles and, just as importantly, providing them with hands-on tools and insights into how to make significant changes in their safety culture. As a result of this successful initial implementation, the site plans on continuing the use of this program and is planning to extend it to additional facilities in the future.