SoBran
BioScience

Behavior Based Safety

FOUR STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING A CULTURE OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

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INTRODUCTION

A culture of Behavioral Based Safety (BBS) focuses an employee's attention and actions on daily safety behavior. As a result of implementing BBS, organizations can improve employee health and welfare and lower worker's compensation claims.

This article provides a four-step framework to help ensure alignment and participation in a BBS program from top to bottom:

Step 1. Establish a need for change.

Step 2. Create a plan of action.

Step 3. Plan for implementation.

Step 4. Put energy into implementation and sustainability.

Preventative measures such as administrative and engineering controls are only effective when used properly. BBS is an innovative solution to producing results that a traditional safety program cannot deliver.

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A workplace injury can have lasting ramifications not only for the employee who is hurt but also for an organization. When someone is injured on the job, budgets may stretch to cover compensation claims and overall employee satisfaction often decreases, making it more difficult for the organization to achieve success.

To improve workplace safety, organizations must look beyond their existing protocols and systematic compliance of rules and regulations. To affect long-lasting change they must address the fundamental attitudes and behaviors that put employees at risk.

Within the first six months of starting a BBS program, SoBran has found that organizations see an initial reduction of workplace accidents by 10% or more.

THE BENEFITS OF BEHAVIORAL BASED SAFETY

A culture of Behavioral Based Safety (BBS) focuses an employee's attention and actions on daily safety behavior. BBS helps an organization observe and measure the attitudes and behaviors that increase risk, and provide feedback to encourage change.

As a result of implementing BBS, organizations can:

- Improve employee health and welfare
- Increase job satisfaction
- Improve employee retention rates
- Lower or eliminate cost of worker's compensation claims
- Reduce costs related to employee medical leave and absenteeism

Within the first six months of starting a BBS program, SoBran has achieved an initial reduction of workplace accidents by 10% or more. As a BBS culture is adopted widely throughout an organization, reductions will be even more dramatic.

WHY BBS WORKS

Adopting a holistic approach to understanding worker behavior helps to increase safety awareness and improve safety practices.

First, by observing worker behavior, managers can use workflow design and task analysis to evaluate and identify mechanical, physical and ergonomic hazards of job duties. Additionally, when workers are held accountable for their own behavior, engagement improves and critical thinking and decision-making skills increase.

Further, tracking behavior to determine if training objectives are being met, risks are being reduced, and accidents decrease can provide valuable feedback and highlight areas that require additional attention.

FOUR STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING A CULTURE OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

Initiating a strategy that impacts workplace culture requires extensive planning. Employees at all levels of the organization must be committed to its success. These four steps help ensure alignment and participation in a BBS program from top to bottom.

STEP 1. ESTABLISH A NEED FOR

CHANGE.

Recognize that a current system that relies on systematic preventative measures and controls and reactive training and behavior correction is not successful at increasing long term workplace safety.

Organizations can improve employee health and welfare and lower worker's compensation claims with a BBS program.

STEP 2. CREATE A PLAN OF ACTION.

Define the elements of a new culture of workplace safety. Establish clear goals, measurement tactics, enforcement procedures and feedback systems. Build a timeline for organizational change and set benchmarks for short-term wins and long-term milestones. Celebrate positive behaviors and achievements.

STEP 3. PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

Introduce workplace safety as the new culture and "lifestyle" of the organization. Administer a brief safety attitude questionnaire to obtain baseline information of employees' existing knowledge, future needs and preferred training or learning style. Provide general BBS training to all staff with an explanation of the general principles and goals. Encourage employees to consider and share outside-the-box ideas to improve job efficiency and safety, and promote routine feedback.

STEP 4. PUT ENERGY INTO IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY.

Launch the new program with a spirited kick-off event promoting positivity and overall commitment. Regular communication, consistent support and ongoing feedback at all levels of the organization are critical for the success of the program.

ADDRESSING COMMON BBS CHALLENGES

Behavior based safety is neither an absolute cure nor a quick fix for an ailing workplace safety program. An organization implementing BBS is bound to face challenges. Here are some things to keep in mind.

Employees who are overconfident and complacent may require additional instruction and incentives to change their behavior

Turn the lens around and evaluate one's own at-risk behavior to avoid overlooking any areas of concern

As BBS is an evolving process, results may not be immediately evident. Communicate progress to help ensure all levels of the organization stay committed to continuing the momentum of a behavior based safety culture

CONCLUSION

Preventative measures such as administrative and engineering controls are only effective when used properly. The safety of every employee relies on the conscious choice made by each individual whether or not to use those controls appropriately.

BBS programs have successfully reduced accident rates across many industries over time. BBS is an innovative solution for producing results that traditional safety programs cannot deliver. Organizations can be confident that permanent safety improvements will be achieved through cultural change.
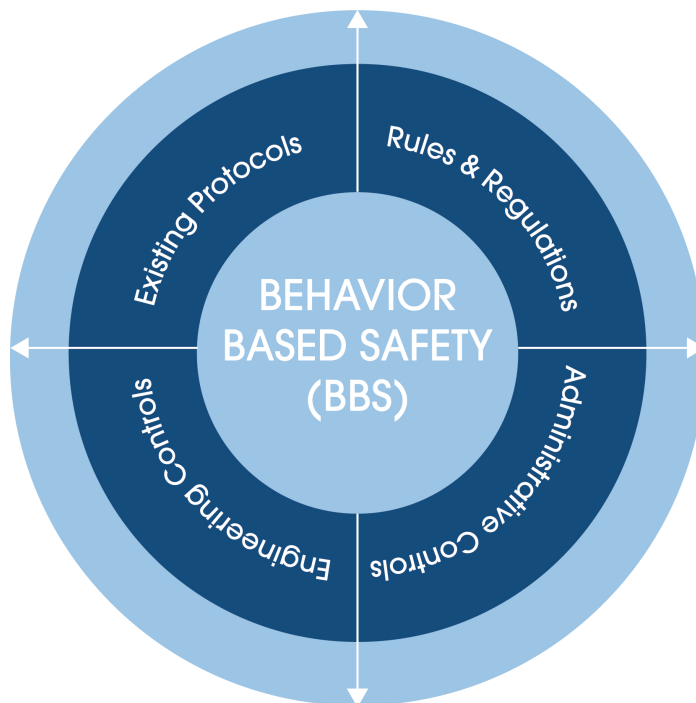
ABOUT SOBRAN BIOSCIENCE

SoBran BioScience has nearly 20 years of experience supporting complex preclinical research and drug discovery. The team manages animal facilities and provides strategic and technical support for laboratory animal and contract research projects.

Compliance Expertise

With over 500 biomedical professionals, the team has experience in all aspects of *in vivo* research. Staff members are AALAS certified and support GLP research projects. SoBran management is ISO 9001:2008 certified and leads the industry in designing and managing ethical animal care programs that meet the most demanding regulatory standards. In addition to onsite support, SoBran offers AAALAC-accredited facilities with a guaranteed 5-day IACUC review and direct communication with laboratory personnel.

SoBran BioScience clients span government agencies, academic institutions, biotech and pharmaceutical companies, and include long-term engagements with the National Institutes of Health and Walter Reed Army Institute. The company has consistently been listed on the Inc. 500 and Black Enterprise Top 100.

Experienced Leadership

A former Air Force Officer, Amos Otis founded SoBran in 1987 on the Air Force values of integrity, service and excellence. Mr. Otis continues to lead SoBran guided by his commitment to education and training. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

Dr. Gregory Kelly, Senior Vice President of Operations and head of the BioScience Division at SoBran, has conducted scientific research and directed large complex research programs in molecular biology and toxicology for over 30 years. Dr. Kelly serves as Chairman of the Greater Baltimore Council.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lauren Donato

Lauren Donato is a Program Administrator on a large NIH contract for SoBran BioScience. She focuses on the Select Agent Program, training, and innovative and proactive solutions to organizational issues, including workplace health. Lauren previously managed the facilities of one of NIAID's largest and highest volume animal facilities on the NIH campus. She has over 15 years in the animal science field, working with over 150 species of animals. Lauren is a Registered Laboratory Animal Technologist (RLATG) and earned a BS degree in Psychology and Biology from Long Island University, Southampton College.

Bradley Fisher

Bradley Fisher is the Director of Government Operations for SoBran BioScience and has 20 years of experience in the animal laboratory field with an emphasis in management and training. Brad provides operational oversight, business development, and strategic planning for a multitude of DHHS and DoD biomedical research contracts. He is a Certified Manager of Animal Resources (CMAR), and a Laboratory Animal Technologist (LATG). In addition to membership in AALAS, ICPM and LAMA, he has served as NCAB AALAS Awards Chair and on the NCAB AALAS Seminar Committee.

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