



SAFETY CULTURE: A GLOBAL APPROACH, SUPPORTED BY THE HIERARCHY

1. Organisations involved



2. Description of the case

2.1. *Introduction*

The American multinational Avery Dennison is active in publishing in the graphic sector as well as printing. The company employs 36,000 people in over 200 various production and distribution divisions in 60 different countries all over the world. The company's headquarters are in the United States in Pasadena. 400 people are working in the Luxembourg plant. Avery Dennison specializes in producing self-adhesive label material. The company signed the EHS-Charter (*Environnement, Hygiène et Sécurité* – environment, health and safety) and introduced a process of long-term improvements in the safety and health of its employees in the year 1989.

2.2. *Aims*

After a great amount of efforts in the area of engineering as well as safety and management systems, Avery Dennison had reached its limits of technical possibilities for improvement. An efficient safety policy was required in order to be able to initiate the process of improving the safety culture in general and to change possible unsafe behaviour during work.

In order to prevent more accidents and incidents, habits needed to be changed. The only way to achieve this change in mentality was to implement a new health and safety culture.

2.3. *What was done, and how?*

Claudio Clori, EHS Manager at Avery Dennison, declares that the implementation of a safety culture has been part of their global health policy for many years now. Based on the initiative and the support of the board of directors, health at work has become one of the core values of the company.

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Reinforcing a safety culture consisted in a change management process, where good and strong leadership of the top management is of crucial importance for its success. A corporate EHS leadership team was set up.

Reinforcing a safety culture requires a change management process on all organizational levels. A change in the safety culture will not be achieved without an evident involvement and support of the top & middle management by way of words, but also deeds¹. Along with a safety policy that focuses on the prevention of accidents, norms and values concerning health at work should be implemented, which are defined by the management.

The safety standard that the direct manager employs should become the group standard. This applies to all management levels, including the top management and the board of directors. In order to be able to put this change in mentality into effect, the importance of education and practical training is highlighted. Education and practical training are supposed to help comprehend the way of thinking, involve people in the policy and facilitate applying the elaborated safety processes in practice. The trainings within the company were conducted both by internal and external trainers and focused on the desired safe behaviour. Training topics were: leadership training programme by Prevent, safety training for team leaders in terms of communication, toolbox meeting animation, training on risk assessment, ergonomics, chemicals, personal protective equipment usage, forklifts, manual handling, pallet trucks, hot work and confined space.

The board of directors, the corporate EHS leadership team and the direct managers were made aware of the fact that it is their responsibility to set an example. The entire hierarchical line had undergone a comprehensive training process. The success of this training process was based on the fact that the entire management participated, and not only the direct managers. The involvement of the top management was an essential element that convinced and motivated the other managers. An additional requirement for changing the general culture in the company was the involvement of all divisions.

Another part of the policy is the involvement of clients and subcontractors. The safety awareness is being reinforced when it comes to people from the external environment as well. Contractors and suppliers are constantly being invited to actively participate in the trainings for free. Clients are invited on the site and they can screen the company policy and subsequently give their feedback. This method of working increases communication, provides greater transparency and consequently also improves the relations with the clients.

The internal training was conducted by various staff members. Here the principle of “train the trainer” was applied in the different hierarchical levels. The EHS Manager trained various managers who then trained the supervisors. The supervisors conveyed the message to the employees within the company. The implementation of this strategy resulted in a great involvement of the entire company with regard to health at work. A good explanation of the significance of work safety was essential, because every safety consideration of individual employees was influenced by the knowledge the employees had on the risks and measures. In order for on-going improvements to be possible, this process needed to be evaluated on a regular basis and proposals for improvement needed to be carried through. The knowledge transfer in the different levels in the company was evaluated by the EHS manager through regular audits on the shop floor and during the evaluation of the employees during the performance review. This way, he could implement additional corrective measures where necessary.

A policy that functions and that is being maintained is only possible by maintaining and improving good communication and by setting an example. For further development of this awareness among the employees these two elements play a crucial role, especially when conveying the idea to all the staff members. The actual implementation of a safety culture was only possible on account of a high degree of involvement from the base of the enterprise. In order to preserve this involvement

¹ Van Wissen P., 2006. “Tips voor het versterken van arbeidsveiligheid, met tien praktische tips gegeven om de veiligheid van medewerkers binnen de organisatie verder te verbeteren” (*Tips on how to reinforce safety at work, including ten practical tips on how to further improve the safety of employees within organizations*) Logistiek, Expert Article.



horizontal consultative meetings were established, the so-called Kaizens. These meetings received the same name as the method they were based on. A Kaizen could be summoned by the management as well as an employee and served as a consultative body. During every Kaizen both the employees and the employer's side are represented. The aim is to create an opportunity to discuss proposals for improvement. Another example of stimulating involvement is the possibility of doing safety observation rounds.

The aim of a safety observation round is to conduct task-specific observations of employees and to consequently identify and adjust dangerous proceedings. Every person in the plant from the manager through the supervisor and finally the operator has to perform at least one safety observation per week and to document the observation. The auditor (who can be a member of the management team, the supervisors on the shop floor or even the operators) can decide on the workplace, the time and the area he wants to observe. All the observations are recorded into a database to make sure that regular observations are conducted and that all areas are covered. Safety observation rounds do not merely consist in communicating the negative observations, but also entail giving positive feedback. In practice this means that during these rounds the employees are motivated by complimenting them when they demonstrate safe behaviour and pointing out identified unsafe behaviour.

These rounds are not only conducted by the management team but also by shift supervisors and operators. This method of working has various advantages. On account of the fact that all employees can point out to their colleagues that they are proceeding in an unsafe manner, a high degree of involvement is developed. All this information is recorded in a database by the direct manager. This way the prevention advisor can conduct specific statistical research. This source of information allows the site management team to undertake specific preventive measures before accidents can even take place.

2.4. What was achieved?

The progress that has been achieved up to now is the result of a collective involvement of all the employees, supported by the company management, which believed that this approach offers an added value. On the one hand, the employees noticed that the management is making actual efforts, and on the other hand, the improvement of the working conditions increased the company's credibility for various authorities in Luxembourg, such as the ITM (*inspection du travail et de mines* – labour inspectorate), the Labour Medical Service as well as the occupational accident insurers.

The development and implementation of an efficient safety policy is required in order to be able to initiate the process of reinforcing a safety culture. To achieve this, an active and involved management is needed with the necessary commitment to safety. The management needs to develop the necessary leadership skills, which will stimulate the involvement and participation of its employees in the health policy.

The most difficult aspect of the implementation of an efficient health policy was probably convincing the direct managers that they carry responsibility not only in the production sphere, but also in the safety sphere.

By way of good and specific communication, by setting a good example and by establishing consultative bodies a great level of involvement was developed, which is essential for creating a safety culture within a company.

The great level of involvement among the employees made it possible both for management and employees to carry out safety observation rounds. By recording all the information from these safety observation rounds in a central data management system, it was possible to formulate preventive measures and undertake improvement activities in a proactive manner, before occupational accidents could happen.

CASE STUDIES

As a consequence of the interventions that were conducted, the company went down from an average of 7 accidents/year to 1 accident/year, see figure 1. The severity of the injuries went down from 90 lost days/year to 0 lost days/year due to work accidents, see figure 2.

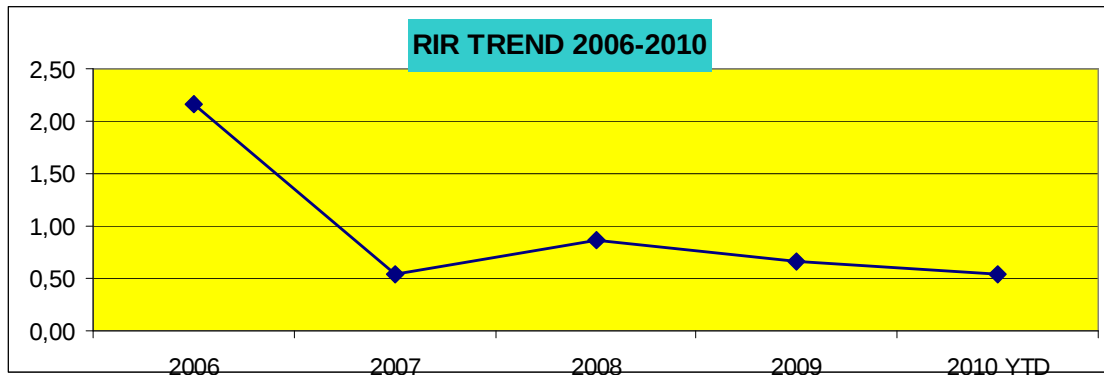


Figure 1. RIR = recordable injury rate; y-axis represents the value of the RIR and the x-axis is the year. The formula to calculate the RIR is: $RIR = \frac{\text{number of injuries} \times 200000}{\text{number of worked hours}}$

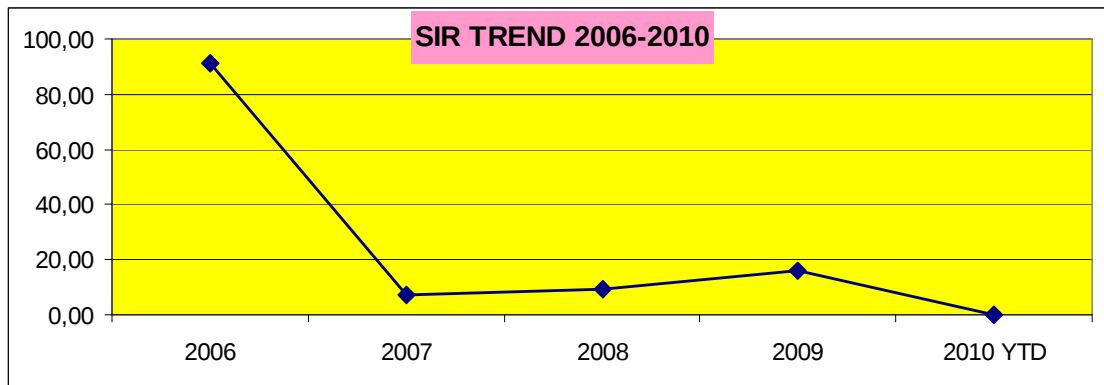


Figure 2. $SIR = \frac{\text{number of lost work days} \times 200000}{\text{number of worked hours}}$ SIR means severity injury rate, x-axis expresses year and y-axis expresses SIR value.

2.5. Success factors

In conclusion, we can say that the safety culture that is present in Avery Dennison would not be possible without good leadership. The involvement of the top management was of crucial importance, so that the standards of the managers could become the standards of the employees. A good communication, setting a good example, a wide-ranging training offer (ergonomics, risk assessment, chemicals handling, manual handling, fire brigade, pallet truck and forklift usage etc.) and horizontal consultative bodies are the predetermined methods for changing mentality. The creation of a safety culture can succeed only if all the employees are involved and if they can actively participate in the search for solutions.

2.6. Further information

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2.7. Transferability

The described methods for implementing a safety culture can be used and modified by various companies in various sectors. However, it is required that all the involved people are actively motivated to participate in this system. The participation of staff was enhanced by involving employees in safety workshops or Kaizens and risk assessments, by integrating employees in the audit process, by doing observation rounds and by providing a large spectrum of safety trainings.

3. References, resources:

- www.prevent.be