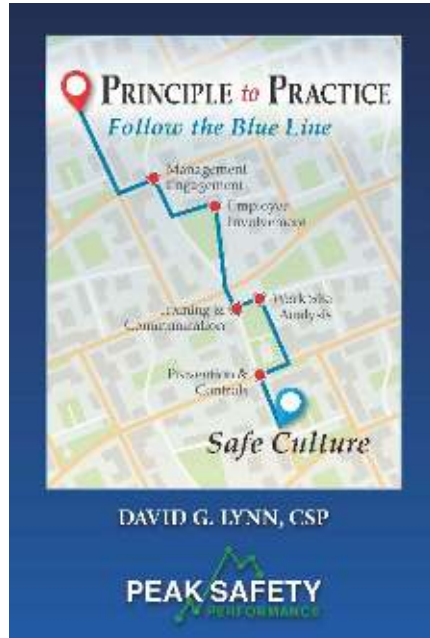


# PRINCIPLE *to* PRACTICE

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## Management Commitment and Engagement



Average safety performance is not hard to achieve, and many companies are satisfied to coast to mediocre results. Company leaders have to commit their efforts to attain exceptional safety performance. One of the first steps to transform your company's safety culture to "best in class" is to adopt a "Best is Standard" mentality. To achieve this goal, it takes 100% management commitment, participation, and engagement in leading indicator processes that drive the result.

Visible management commitment does not happen by accident. Company leaders have to establish a strategic plan with clear goals for management participation and engagement in the safety process. The plan should include ways to quantify expectations and hold leaders accountable. Keep score! The scorecard for individual contributors will drive improvement and instill accountability in the workplace. A score provides a method to integrate urgency into an

individual's daily expectations. A scorecard differentiates the best from the worst.

When I worked with OSHA as a compliance officer in the early nineties, I inspected more than 200 companies. When I asked company leaders to describe their safety performance, they provided vague responses: fine, OK, good. Superficial descriptions of safety performance are common because we do not always measure the detailed leading indicators that promote success. Strong safety cultures avoid these traps. They keep score on critical leading indicators, and they take an active interest in the details.

If your organization does not keep detailed individual scores for safety, you will experience an adjustment period when you introduce the idea. I learned this lesson the hard way. When I worked at Owens Corning, I developed a scorecard that tracked management participation in four categories. I tracked audit participation, safety team support, safety meeting completion, and safety procedure reviews. Each supervisor and manager had responsibilities, and I documented their performance. I gave them a score for each item, and I rolled up the scores into a final score. Then I stack-ranked each leader from the best to the worst. I highlighted the top 10% in green and the bottom 10% in red.

After the report was complete, I distributed the report to the leadership team. The process sounds reasonable, right? The score showed who followed through with their responsibilities and who did not. That level of data analysis is the type of accountability you need because it tells you

# PRINCIPLE *to* PRACTICE

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who deserves a reward and who needs motivation. After all, safety is a condition of employment. You have to know the score, and the score has to mean something.

The problem I encountered was my manager was in the red! How do you hide your boss's performance? The system was valuable because it measured management commitment with visible tools that are proven to drive safety success. No one could hide behind vague performance answers like good, fine, and OK. However, the backlash can be dangerous. When my manager reviewed the results, he came to my office in a bad mood. Needless to say, he expressed his urgency to change my approach. My scorecard had a short lifespan. Somehow, however, I managed to keep my job.

Where did I go wrong? Is scoring real safety performance a bad idea? My mistake was that I did not communicate the purpose and intent of the scorecard, and I embarrassed important people. The moral of the story is that you have to develop your scorecards as a team to gain the greatest value. Your team cannot fear the score. The goal is for your leaders to embrace measurement techniques and play to win. The prize is a better quality of life for your employees.

Ever since my initial scorecard experience, I have implemented similar systems with better results. Buy-in from the appropriate parties is the key to success. Stack-ranking performance in critical safety systems identifies your company's weaknesses, and it sparks a sense of responsibility in those who do not want to finish in the red.

For Principle 1, you will learn five practices that demonstrate management commitment. The goal is to provide examples for how you can get your leadership team engaged in the safety processes that produce positive safety results. The focus is on corrective action follow-up, strategic visibility, PEAK Safety Dialogues, event analysis participation, and accountability. Your mission is to evaluate how well your company implements these practices. Look for areas where you can improve, and put a plan in place to make it happen. With the right focus on character, mentality, and results, you will make a difference.