Building Effective Safety Committees
2022 WSC Annual Conference
Chris Seider, CSP, PHR, ARM, CHST
Sr. Safety & Risk Mgmt Specialist

Vs.
“Young” Chris   “Older” Chris

Building Effective Safety Committees - Agenda
- Value of Safety Committees
- Creating a “Charter”
- Effective Meeting Facilitation Skills
- Tips / Next Steps
Value of Safety Committees

Why form a Safety Committee?
- Further ownership of culture
- Workforce engagement
- Wider net of perspectives
- Delegation of duties
- Succession planning
- Expansion of resource capacity

Creating a “Charter”
Creating a "Charter"

◆ Why create a charter?

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

Creating a "Charter"

◆ Charter Components
  ▪ Introduction/Purpose
  ▪ Expectations
  ▪ Team Structure
  ▪ Team Member Selection Criteria
  ▪ Primary Activities
  ▪ Supporting Activities

Creating a "Charter"

◆ Charter Components- Introduction/Purpose
  ▪ Why does the team exist?
  ▪ What does the team deliver to the organization?

Why am I here?
WHAT'S MY PURPOSE?
Creating a “Charter”

- Charter Components - Expectations
  - Meeting frequency
  - Attendance expectations
  - Participation/engagement
  - Term limits
  - Deliverables
  - “High Agreement”

Creating a “Charter”

- Charter Components - Team Structure
  - Chairperson
  - General Membership
  - Task/Function Specific Roles
  - Program Owners
Creating a “Charter”

- Charter Components - Team Member Selection Criteria
  - Department/Shift Representation
  - Union Representation
  - Demographic considerations
  - Position within the company
  - “Formal” and “Informal” Leaders
  - Capacity and **passion** to participate

Creating a “Charter”

- Charter Components - Primary Activities
  - Mgmt System Program Element Ownership
  - Sub Team Leadership
  - Safety Improvement Initiatives
  - Communications Plans
  - Incidence Review Board
  - Chemical Safety Review Board

Creating a “Charter”

- Charter Components - Supporting Activities
  - Safety Champions
  - Project Specific Safety Planning Support
  - Moments of Safety
  - Safety Training
  - Behavioral Based Safety Program Support
Communication often fails because we take it for granted. We assume that if we're talking, scheduling meetings, sending emails and texts, and updating documents that we're communicating.
Communication – What’s the Big Deal

- We know from experience and research that:
  - Providing clear and effective communication is critical to project and team success
  - Providing poor communication is a common cause of project and team failure

Communication Fundamentals – A Few Basics

- You cannot not communicate
- Meanings are in people, not in words
- Nonverbal communication carries more weight than verbal communication during conversation

Communication Fundamentals – A Few Basics

To be effective, communication must be:

- **Timely**: Receivers must get messages when the information is meaningful
- **Clear**: Messages must be created so they are clearly received
- **Accurate**: Messages must reflect reality—be right
- **Relevant**: Messages must be viewed as relevant by receiver(s)
- **Credible**: Messages must be believed, or they will be disregarded
Communication Fundamentals – A Few Basics

- Key communication skills for effective team management
  - Active listening
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Meeting facilitation
  - Providing feedback
  - Collaboration
  - Creating and maintaining trusting and respectful relationships

3. Make Meetings Meaningful

- Before the meeting
  - Schedule meetings with ample notice
  - Circulate the agenda in advance
  - Plan use of technology and practice if you’re a novice

Prepare
- Determine meeting purpose
- Define agenda
- Determine and prepare right audience

Welcome
- Open meeting
- Align meeting participants
- Establish ground rules

Facilitate
- Manage the meeting and the group
- Assign follow-ups
- Take notes (or delegate)

Follow-up
- Close meeting
- Publish meeting minutes
- Verify follow-up
- Confirm purpose was met
Sample Agenda Template

- Incident Reviews
- Sub Team Report Outs
- Relevant Current Topics
- Safety Improvement Project Reviews
- Safety Communication Plan Review
- Open Forum
- Safety Recognition

Make Meetings Meaningful

- During the Meeting
  - Stay focused and stick to the agenda
  - Start and end on time; it's disrespectful not to
  - Actively listen to participants and watch nonverbal cues for confusion
  - Use a parking lot to document off-topic issues for later discussion
  - Allow time for questions, clarification, and necessary discussion
  - Summarize at logical points to ensure alignment

Select the Right Communication Channels

- Knowing and using the preferred communication channel of your stakeholders is important to project success
- Recognize your preferred channel may not be their preferred channel
  - Face-to-face
  - Phone/Text
  - Email
  - Teams video
  - Teams chat
  - Teams project channel
  - Project site
- Understand the benefits and limitations of each channel for each communication purpose (e.g., posting docs, announcements)
Engage with Team Members

- **Influence**: Align team members to the role they will play, identify their importance to the project/team, and the related communication expectations.
- **Inform**: Provide clarity about their deliverables.
- **Inquire**: Ask about challenges or roadblocks in performing their work.
- **Resolve**: Address roadblocks.
- **Confirm**: Make sure they are ready for work.

Document and Distribute Appropriate Project Information

- **Written records of meetings and significant conversations** are important to help remember information, discussions, and action items.
- Be sure the **Communication Plan** identifies what information will be documented, where it will be posted, and who will have access.
- **Make it clear** that team members are responsible for reviewing notes for meetings they missed.
- **Distribute information** to stakeholders in a timely manner across the project life cycle.

Document and Distribute Team Information

- **Note Taking Tips**:
  - Think tweets and bulleted lists, not verbatim notes, as appropriate.
  - If notes are from a meeting, be sure to note date, time, and attendees.
  - Keep the next step in mind and note actions required, owner of the action, and target resolution date.
  - Number all pages and use standard symbols (e.g., #, ?, &).
10 "Tips" for Effective Safety Committees

1. Secure upper management support
2. Have more front-line personnel involved than managers
3. Include as many people as possible
4. Have all departments and shifts represented
5. Strategically use your subcommittees.

6. Don't let safety professionals (or anyone else) dominate committee meetings
7. Establish meeting rules and structure
8. Keep your committees fresh
9. Look at how other companies (similar to yours) are using safety committees
10. Make specific proposals (actionable)
Next Steps

- Grow your “safety culture vultures”!!

  Make your pitch for a safety committee.

  Build your charter, build your team.

  Invest in your team and enjoy the dividends.

Foth