The tricks of the trade: lessons from the program Improving Occupational Safety (VAV)

Frank Guldenmund, Safety Science Group, Delft University of Technology (NL) & Andrew Hale, HASTAM Ltd. (UK)
Overview

1. Brief introduction of the Dutch VAV-project
2. Effort and success
3. Successful interventions and companies
4. Conclusions
The program

• Program of Ministry of Social Affairs that ran between 2004 – 2008
• Subsidy for 50% of the costs of interventions at participating companies
• Requirement Ministry: decrease of LTI’s (range: 10 – 75 %)
• 17 companies included in first evaluation study (2008), 16 in the last (2010)
• 3 – 31 interventions per company
• Measures: LTI’s (p/yr.), SC questionnaire (3 surveys) plus lost days, duration, behavioural measures and reports of unsafe situations + interviews
The companies

- Corrugated cardboard (13 companies)
- Reinforced concrete element manufacture
- Forklift truck manufacture
- Steelworks maintenance department
- Brewery
- Distribution/ warehousing
- Construction (utility)
- Meat processing
- Rubbish collection/ disposal (several locations)
- Air cargo handling
- Academic hospital
- Social work provision (4 companies)
- Agricultural sector (100,000+ enterprises)
Defining effort

- Much effort; there are several new initiatives carried out simultaneously with sufficient energy and management support (GREEN)
- Moderate effort; new initiatives but less than above (YELLOW)
- No new interventions are carried out at the moment (RED)
Defining success quantitatively

- Several indicators show a significant ‘favourable’ trend: **GREEN**
- One indicator shows a ‘favourable’ trend: **YELLOW**
- No indicator shows a significant trend: **RED**
## The 2007 results

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Lessons

- Working on safety culture means developing multiple initiatives in trying to influence its development
- A focus on behaviour rather than technical fixes
- An orchestrated effort supported by top management and catalysed by a project team with ideas on how to keep going
- Starting and maintaining a dialogue w/ the shop floor is a central activity
- An inspiring, tireless, optimistic, etc. etc. safety professional is a key factor in this process
Thank you!

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