Battling Complacency Meeting Kit

COMPLACENCY DEFINITION

Dictionary.com defines it as, “a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like”. The definition provided by Dictionary.com applies more to a less-experienced worker who is not trained to recognize hazards or an experienced worker who is totally unaware of a hazard in their area at a given moment. Many of the workers who are in fact complacent with the hazards of a task are experienced and are well aware that they exist. The workers are not unaware of the risk, but are more likely to accept the risks without taking the proper time or energy to address the hazards because they have been doing the work for so long. For workers who are experienced in their jobs and have become complacent with certain aspects or hazards of their job it is important to take steps to avoid this error trap.

THE RISK OF COMPLACENCY

One of the biggest signs of complacency in the workplace is disengagement or lack of involvement from employees. When employees stop engaging and communicating with their bosses it is often because they have become comfortable with the job, or they are uncomfortable making suggestions to the boss. There could be issues top management are completely unaware of because employees are too comfortable doing just enough to get by and not addressing issues. More workforce incidents occur when there is not a clear communication line between employers and employees.

Complacency also becomes a major hazard when employees begin cutting corners and taking shortcuts to meet production schedules. Skipping steps of a process, no matter how small they seem, can be the cause of a very dangerous situation. Often, employees become

complacent when they do not feel there is room for growth or promotion, and many times they do not feel their tasks are challenging enough. Employees simply going through the motions of their jobs can be signs that they are mentally checking out while working and doing the bare minimum just to get the job done.

COMPLACENCY AT WORK

Complacency at work can cause or contribute to critical errors which increase the probability of injury, from not having your eyes or mind on the task, walking into the line of fire, or losing your balance, traction or grip.

Always examine equipment, procedures and the hazards that may exist. You need to focus physically and mentally on your work, no matter how many times you may have done the same job in the past.

The first step to an accident involves the false belief that because of your experience, you cannot have an incident. Accidents can happen to you at any time and your sense should always be finely tuned to each situation and potential risks. A false sense of security is the result of poor training and following bad practices, which leads to accidents.

If you aren’t thinking about what could go wrong every day, all day while you work, you are not completing the task safely. You must examine equipment, procedures, and the hazards that may exist. You need to focus physically and mentally on your work, no matter how many times you have done the same job in the past.

PREVENT AND ADDRESS COMPLACENCY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION WITH THESE 5 STRATEGIES:

1. **Remove obstacles.** The quickest route to complacency? Provide employees with the tools and supports they need to get the job done, use your open-door policy, and solicit feedback from employees regularly, so you can anticipate obstacles before they breed disengaged and complacent behaviour.
2. **Create meaning.** Tune front-line employees into the strategic goals of the organization, share the impact of what you do, and celebrate accomplishments with all employees. Illustrate

the larger purpose of the work and the “why” behind what they’re doing to create significance and engagement.

3. **Empower and challenge.** You work with a team of grown ups, so treat them that way. Articulate the expected results, and then step away. Grant team members the autonomy to do their jobs in a way that works for them, and allow employees to take ownership of their areas of accountability. Provided the desired results are there, do you really need to micromanage the how? Empowering your team means employees will feel challenged, trusted, and supported in developing new skills.
4. **Show them a path.** If you want top performers to stick around, don’t make them guess at their future with the organization. Spell it out, and highlight what their career path with your organization could look like to keep them invested in the day-to-day.
5. **Celebrate.** Having things on the horizon to get excited about can make a big difference to how engaged employees feel. Break up monotony and encourage team bonding by holding regular mini-celebrations. Team accomplishments, birthdays, holidays, or Tuesdays all count… so pick a time and make it happen.

FINAL WORD

We all have to face and fight off complacency from time to time. It is important to monitor yourself when it comes to complacency on the job. What corners are you cutting? Why are you cutting those corners? What do you need to address in order to resist complacency with the hazards of your work?