

HOW TO BREAK DOWN SILOS & APPLY BEHAVIORAL-BASED SAFETY PRINCIPLES TO REDUCE WORKERS' COMP COSTS

While the function of workers' compensation & safety is separate and distinct, the goal is the same. As a workers' compensation professional, understanding and applying safety principles can be incredibly impactful for injury management.

Safety Is Pre-Frame for Workers' Compensation

Pre-frame is defined as the state of mind of an individual before experiencing the next event, communication, or interaction.

Every employee who is injured at work enters the workers' compensation system with a pre-frame expectation for how they will be treated which is largely determined by the safety department. Working together as a team ensures a positive expectation.

WHAT IS BEHAVIORAL-BASED SAFETY?

Conditional/ Traditional vs. Behavioral Approach

Conditional safety includes employer-provided elements to ensure safe working conditions. BBS goes beyond the traditional approach to safety and examines the behaviors that lead to injuries despite the conditional safety elements in place.

There is a reason behind each employee action and behavior; BBS strives to uncover this reason and correct the underlying motivation.

Safety as an Organizational Value

The ultimate ideal of a behavioral based safety approach is safety as a value of the organization, rather than simply a policy. Employees who take pride in the identity of "this is how we do it here, I've got your back, and I know you have mine" creates a powerful dynamic to encourage safe behavior.

ABCs of Behavioral Analysis

With each injury, there is an action prior to injury, behavior that causes the injury, and the consequence that immediately follows the behavior.



Deadly Sins to BBS Implementation

While the concepts of behavioral-based safety have a proven track record of success, there are organizations who have experienced poor results. These poor results and frustrations are rooted in ineffective methodologies.

- 1. Blame.** Only blaming the employee for failing to adequately identify, provide feedback or report risky conditions.
- 2. Exclusion.** All employees need to be involved in the safety discussions.
- 3. Punishment.** The entire process of BBS dismantles if individuals feel they will be punished for reporting unsafe behaviors. *(continued)*

Core Elements of Behavioral-Based Safety

Identify behaviors critical to preventing accidents

Provide unlimited and multiple forms of feedback

Observe workers and provide feedback

Measure and track leading indicators of accidents

Learn and receive input for why risks occur



(continued)

UNDERSTANDING AND BREAKING DOWN SILOS

One of the biggest challenges of large organizations is collaboration across departments.

Characteristics of a Siloed Organization

In a siloed organization, employees develop a stronger loyalty to their group, rather than to the employer. This creates a negative downward spiral environment:

- Employees become more isolated and distrustful of other employees or departments
- Information sharing across divisions is held back
- Employees work to “protect their turf,” rather than embrace a greater organizational vision
- The culture becomes “that’s the way we’ve always done it,” and friction becomes the norm.

Reason #1: Individual Relationships

Each employee has their own level of engagement and desire to successfully work together with others.

Resolve a strained relationship through a professional, mature, & adult conversation.

- Assume the other person is intelligent
- Ask their greatest challenge
- Seek common ground.

Reason #2: Lack of Organizational Leadership

Lack of organizational leadership will be a catalyst for independent silos. The result is a competition among organizational divisions, which drives them to be isolated from one another.

Organizational Leadership Missteps:

- 1 Lack of vision
- 2 Lack of a common goal

Resolve organizational leadership missteps by clearly defining and disseminating company purpose and mission so everyone is working on the same team.

CONNECTING THE DOTS & IMPLEMENTING BBS PRINCIPLES IN YOUR WC PROGRAM

Leverage BBS and breaking down silos to make a positive impact on the lives of injured workers, return them to work sooner, and create significantly lower worker’ compensation costs.

There are several steps to accomplish this goal:

1 Create an Organizational Chart

- What are the names of those in charge of various divisions?
- What is your working relationship with these leaders?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each person?

2 Branding/Unified Vision

Identify (if applicable) the branded names for the safety and workers’ compensation programs. If they are branded separately, there may be an opportunity to bring the identity of these two programs together.

Example: The Acme company may have a program called IPAR — Injury Prevention and Recovery Program. But the safety program at Acme may have a completely different identity, or none at all.

3 Back Message with Action

A quick tour of the plant will tell you within a close percentage how much the company cares about safety. If a sign says, ‘safety is a priority,’ but there are no physical elements to demonstrate that safety is truly part of the culture of the organization, employees will lose faith.

Collaborative RTW Process

Collaborative return to work is a fundamental concept in success workers’ compensation management. Leverage the BBS principles of observation and feedback to pre-frame you employee’s expectations of successfully returning to work.

This collaborative process with employees has parallels for the core elements of each:

Identify

- **BBS** - identify behaviors critical to preventing accidents
- **RTW** - identify work restrictions
- Both focus on abilities rather than disabilities

Observe

- **BBS** - work with your employees and supervisors to observe workers and get their feedback
- **RTW** - work with employees and supervisors to observe and get feedback on transitional duty jobs, and create a transitional duty job bank

Learn from your employees

- **BBS** - learn and receive input for why risky behaviors occur
- **RTW** - learn from the worker the part of his job he can do today and whether he thinks he will be able to do his regular job within several weeks

Measure/track

- **BBS** - analyze leading indicators of accidents
- **RTW** - track the RTW ratio

Provide feedback

- **BBS** - provide unlimited feedback on results verbally, in written form, or through graphics
- **RTW** - provide feedback through weekly meetings with the injured worker

Safety Incentives

Safety incentives tied to zero accidents are a significant disservice to the employees and company.

While these programs are often created with good intentions, the unintended consequence is to incentivize and encourage the wrong behavior Encouraging employees not to report injuries or risky behaviors or conditions.



WORKERS' COMP TRAINING CENTER