Fox Valley Companies:
Leveraging Best Practices to Promote Health, Safety, Sustainability and Stewardship

By
Margie Weiss, PhD

Five Fox Valley companies, Miron Construction Company, Werner Electric Supply, Faith Technologies, Goodwill NCW and Carew Concrete and Supply Company have been participating in HS® Best Practice exchanges and community-based, participatory action research for the past four years. The HS® research demonstrated that collective efficacy leverages the social cohesion, communication channels and activities within the workplace to promote a healthy, sustainable work culture. This in turn: 1) protects the health and safety of workers, 2) preserves the natural environment and 3) increases attachment to the organization. Collective efficacy enhances the triple bottom line: healthy people, healthy planet and healthy profits.

Strategically leveraging health and safety initiatives with sustainability and stewardship, helps organizations to improve profitability and positively impact team member and customer attachment to the organization. HS® Best Practice exchanges and community-based, participatory action research were the catalysts that encouraged organizational and cultural change. The power of group action, group education and group membership was enhanced through collaborative efforts such as: 1) setting common goals, 2) planning events and activities, 3) sharing best practices, 4) developing metrics and, 5) sharing success stories. Research shows that when adopting new behaviors or changing habits, a shared sense of collective competence is more effective than “going it on your own.” The impact of company profitability
and productivity can be demonstrated by analyzing other company metrics. For example, by integrating health, safety and sustainability efforts through the “Circles of Care” initiative, Goodwill NCW has had three years of no increases to health care premiums and a significant decrease in their safety MOD factor. Miron Construction Company’s “Cool Choices” initiative showed substantial savings in both home and business energy costs. Werner Electric Supply was recognized as a Welcoa Well Workplace. Faith Technologies is also submitting their data for the same recognition. Carew Concrete & Supply Company demonstrated improvements in HRA (Health Assessments) which have translated to health care cost savings for the company.

Community-based participatory research-the Attach21 survey, was used to assess the progress of these companies in their efforts to integrate health, safety, sustainability and stewardship. Monthly Best Practice Exchanges were used to promote collective efficacy by providing support, encouragement and motivation to share and adopt new ideas. The Attach21 tool was developed for use in profiling customer and team member attachment by Steve Tyink. For the HS™ initiative, the tool was modified by Dr. Weiss to focus on four areas- health, safety, sustainability and stewardship. The tool collected information on 6 different dimensions: consistency, stability, confidence, trust, dedication and attachment, using a 5-point Likert scale. These dimensions were used to profile customer and team member attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>How vision is shared with team members and customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Walk the talk and company metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Trust in the organization to do the right thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Individual measure of self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Recognition and reward practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key Findings:** Sharing best practices on a regular basis with like-minded organizations helped these companies to gain expertise in linking health, safety, sustainability and stewardship more quickly. By leveraging collective efficacy with shared vision and targeted metrics, these organizations developed consistent, effective messaging and communication among team members. Integrating health and safety with sustainability and stewardship positively impacted team member perceptions of the company and increased attachment.

Self-efficacy scores were rated highest by all respondents during each of the four years—the belief that health-related behaviors impact personal health and well-being and self-efficacy (trust) in one's own ability to promote their own and their family’s health and safety. The
The biggest changes over the 4-year sampling were improvement and consistency in sharing the company’s vision for environmental sustainability and stewardship with team members and customers. Participant ratings also demonstrated increased trust in the company’s efforts to protect the environment with sustainable business practices and to measures not only the effectiveness of health and safety initiatives on a regular basis but also the effect the
The environmental impact of the company.

2009-2012 Lowest Aggregate Ratings

Conclusions: Consistently sharing the company’s vision for health, safety, sustainability and stewardship are critical to changing company culture. Self-efficacy and a belief in one’s abilities ultimately affects the triple bottom line (people, planet, profits) by reducing risk, improving the health of workers, protecting the environment and promoting the company. Leveraging collective efficacy around shared goals positively impacts organizational culture and the differentiated (brand) experience for team members, thereby increasing attachment to the organization.
Five Key Messages

- Healthy, sustainable companies have charismatic, passionate, and strategic decision makers.
- Leadership requires: innovation, collaboration, values-based strategic future state planning, metrics and investment in solutions for both now and the future.
- Community-based participatory research can help to guide and shape assessment efforts, as well as benchmark progress.
- Collaboration among work-based and family-focused healthy lifestyle efforts increases self-efficacy, collective efficacy and the capacity to enhance overall community health.
- Everyone has a stewardship role in promoting healthy, safe, sustainable communities.