

A PROACTIVE STRATEGY OF THE ORGANIZATION, AND ACTION-TAKING EFFICIENCY HAVING AN IMPACT ON WORK SAFETY

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to depict a scientific attitude to systemic implementation of employee-related proactive attitude mechanisms in the context of work safety.

Design/methodology/approach: In this article, the author depicts a systemic attitude method to designing proactive safety strategy in the organization.

Findings: A proactive safety strategy in the organization involves workers' commitment through all entity levels of its management in an operating cooperation with on-the-job employees. Method to designing proactive safety strategy in the organization it is based on the integration of all levels such as: strategic, tactic and operational in terms of stimulating proactive behaviours. It requires implementing specific reaction-related procedures concerning anticipated hazardous situations. A systemic conceptualization that implements a proactive safety strategy is possible when using specific proactive factors. Their attributes result in and are strictly linked to employee's attitude towards established targets.

Originality/value: The author of this publication analyses the research literature and personal current research in the scope of systemic work safety enhancement, being concentrated on key areas of research subject, which consists of OHS action-taken efficiency, proactive attitude encouragement and, moreover, work safety standards and indicators (Key Performance Indicators - KPI).

Keywords: safety management systems, OHS proactive strategy, risk factors, management strategies, proactivity indicators.

1. Introduction

Safety management is a prevention, reaction and restoration process of appropriate functioning work safety. Depending on policy-taken work safety, aims and actions should be mainly targeted at proactive aspects. The consequence of the above mentioned fact is specific reaction procedures. It leads to superior stimulating incentive systems of proactive attitude in contrast with analysing the reporting of statistical data.

Regulating enterprise relations with surroundings emerges in three stages, on which particular problems are solved and various assessment criteria of action-taken efficiency are implied. Due to an accepted structure of aims, these ones are implemented on the operational, coordinative and strategic levels. In terms of it, for purposes of action-taken assessment in the organization, the author declared to take the analogical structure as the above mentioned levels. Practically, those three levels need to be firmly connected and coherent each other in order to achieve established aims in the organization (Walczak, 2012).

Contemporarily, the attitude to management plays an increasing role in entrepreneurs' activity. OHS management system is a part of the general management system in the company. Its task is to help the organization control and mitigate threats for employees' health, and others as well. A proceedings scheme depicted in fig. 1 constitutes a systemic attitude method to design a proactive safety strategy in the organization. As part of taken actions on particular management levels, it becomes an implementation tool for mechanisms of a proactive attitude among employees.

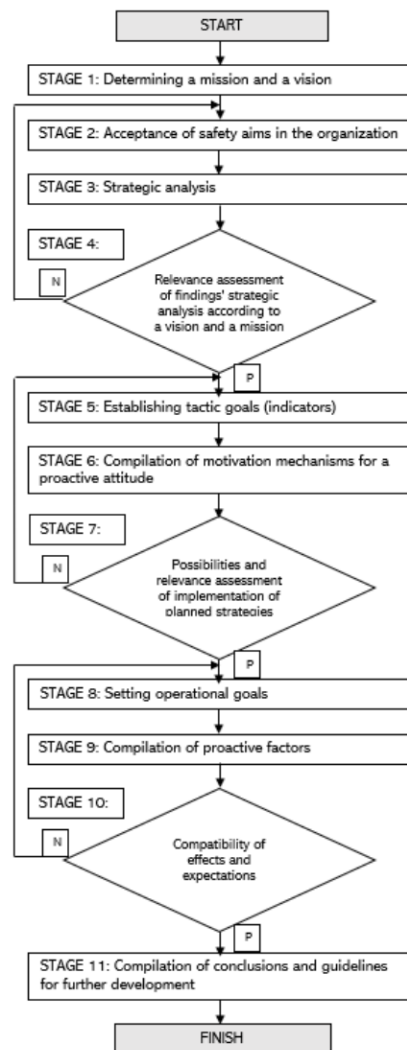


Figure 1. A method to design a proactive safety strategy in the organization.

Source: own study.

Improving work safety is not possible without taking actions in an accurate manner. According to Zieja and Gołda (2014), improving actions are proactive ones based on an active strategy of performance. To make taken actions in all areas, included OHS one, give the expected result, the first action in the organization should be determining a vision and a mission (1st stage). A properly established mission allows to set the goal of further company activity, to be popularised and understood by everybody, and the way of its realization should be reliable and feasible. In turn, a vision should contain a detailed description of the aim of its activity perceived by all departments. The following step (2nd stage), which the organization should take is to accept the safety goals. It is important to accept goals that are feasible - it means that all interior and exterior circumstances are respected. Moreover, safety goals should be comprehensive, motivational and acceptable for every member of the organization. On a strategic level, the strategic analysis is essential (3rd stage), and the following assessment relevance of its findings towards a mission and a vision (4th stage). The main aim of a strategic analysis is to establish factors that will influence over the organization in the future and determine further strategies. Currently, companies in their basic activity use a range of methods described in the literature, which is, for instance, SWOT/TOWS analysis applied for key interior factors identification (strengths and weaknesses) and exterior ones (opportunities and threats) in the organization (Sadłowska-Wrzesińska, Marczevska-Kuźma, Jakubowicz, 2020).

Before operational tasks are taken, the organization should concentrate on a way of a preparation of actions that are necessary to achieve strategic goals. For this reason, firstly, tactical aims are established (5th stage) and motivation mechanisms for proactive attitude are prepared (6th stage). And, in the next stage, after carrying out relevance assessment and a possible implementation of planned strategies (7th stage), operational goals are established (8th stage). At this point, it is worth emphasizing the role of a human being that is a common element of all coexisting management subsystems in the organization. (Kubasiński, 2020). Employee involvement and motivation on different levels of an existing company, supported by top management, are one of key elements of all development process.

Setting the operational goals enables to solve current short-term problems, which are linked to tactical problems and it allows to begin the next stage, which is proactive indicators compilation (9th stage). Briefly described and explained importance of proactive indicators with their examples are presented in the third point (Controlling under the specific reaction proceeding). Compiling findings and guidelines to further development, the organization should do is the compatibility assessment of effects and accepted expectations (10th stage). It should be underlined that at this stage the verification system of effect compatibility proceeds on the basis of various forms, tools and it is individual in every organization.

In their publications (Peñaflor, Juevesa, 2021), authors demonstrate that taking actions that are characterized as proactive attitude are not concentrated only on a field of reporting incompatibility, but concern individual employee's actions. We can assume that proactive attitude in the organization should be understood as anticipating upcoming difficulties and

taking solutions in advance to probable emerging undesirable situations such as malfunctions or accidents.

The aim of this article is to depict a scientific attitude to systemic implementation of employee-related proactive attitude mechanisms in the context of work safety. The author of this elaboration, analyzing the subject literature and own research findings in terms of systemic development of work safety, concentrate on key fields of a relevant topic, which consists of action-taking effectiveness in terms of OHS, motivating for proactive attitude, and measures and indicators of Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

2. The importance of proactive strategy for work safety management

Presently, to be provided with the efficient safety area management and employee health in the organization, the key role is played by enhancing actions (Zieja, 2014). The Internet management encyclopaedia defines the term of enhancing actions as every kind of actions that are taken in order to make the organization efficient (Int, 2022). However, the author's publication together with others asserts that any actions taken by the enterprise, which are aimed at creating a safe work place, should be marked by mostly enhancing actions (Kubasiński, Piechocki, Sławińska, 2019). In a process of improving the company functioning and its areas there are numerous difficulties. The reason why it happens may be found in an individual company analysis. Generally, they result, among others, from the company idiosyncrasy, a deficiency of consequence and discipline of implementing modifications and perception of implemented changes and standards as a trial of new policy imposition and killing creativity (Kubasiński, Sławińska, 2019).

In one of their publications M. Sławińska i S. Kubasiński (2021) claimed that *To improve work safety of every employee, there must be a condition allowing to stimulate a proactive attitude*. Such formulated assumption becomes more crucial in case in the organization unwelcomed occurrences are registered and the employee behaviour observation are conducted and the way how they work in accordance with work safety policy (Ewertowski, Kubasiński, 2021). Thus, it is unnecessary to register current data linked to targeted tasks proceedings, preferably in real time. Actions that the organization can take to provide safe work place in view of the ISO 45001 directives, should be oriented to stimulating a proactive attitude in all organization areas.

In research literature, safety strategy is defined as a set of principles concerning actions linked to different in nature resources. A. Szymanek (2015), in one of his elaborations, distinguishes three safety management strategies: reactive strategy, proactive strategy and predictive strategy. In a modern organization, using a proactive strategy plays a key role in safety provision. Presently, such a strategy is the alternative to a common reactive strategy as

part of which defined corrective actions are taken only after malfunction or unwelcomed incidents. However, a predictive strategy is about foreseeing upcoming dangers, emerging new types of risk and incidents. The elementary rule is to anticipate unwelcomed incidents in a system and to notify before they emerge.

Taking the actions across proactive attitude is impossible unless all company units are engaged. Such an assumption becomes more important when areas connected with providing safety at work require facilitation. In such an example, the key role is an employee. According to Crant and Bateman (2000), this, which is distinctive for proactivity-related individuals, is the ability to perceive and exploit available possibilities and, in addition, pursue initiatives and strive for changes in the environment, in which those individuals are. Proactive-oriented individuals are valuable resource for the organization. They initiate changes in the company, predict certain events in the environment, in which they exist and, furthermore, are willing to propose solutions.

A proactive stance/attitude is expressed through motivation of gaining new achievements and pursuing tasks and challenges in non-standard situations. Taking the utterance for granted that appropriate involvement and employees' motivation on various company levels are one of key elements having an impact over efficient company performance in every field of its activity. It will happen if theretofore properly motivated individuals are satisfied and eager to perform. In Agyemang's and Ofie's (2013) opinion, employee involvement is a factor that brings or intends to bring benefits for the whole organization. On the other hand, in Sadłowska-Wrzesińska's and Nejman's research (2016), encouraging profoundly influences attitudes and behaviours among employees through applying particular stimuli. Similarly, Ruth Mayhew (2012) perceives the motivation. In his opinion, the most effective and efficient form of encouraging employees might be financial and intangible assets, acknowledgement and, simultaneously, sufficient source of information, and finally, unnecessary tools and equipment. There is no doubt that motivating employees is the essential element of forming a proactive attitude in the organization. Hereby it should be emphasized that because of diversified needs and employee expectations, top management (high-ranked company representatives) should apply numerous incentives towards subordinates.

On the basis of ISO 45001, companies are obliged to comprehend needs and expectations notified by parties' interest and to take into consideration all internal and external problems that affect the company capability of achieving OHS (Occupation Health and Safety) targets. ISO 45001 norms require awareness of the company context to make it react to changes actively. The term of content implies the company to accommodate working conditions, which are out of its direct control. The context of the organization is understood as internal and external factors, which have an impact over organization activity and target-related action performance. The Internet Polish Language Dictionary published by PWN (Polish Scientific Publishers) indicates few meanings of a word "context". It is, among others, "a set of coexisting factors linked to something". However, Daft (2000) paved the way of understanding the context

of organization as a size of the organization, accepted strategy, technology, culture and company environment. In accordance with regulations in ISO 45001:2018, comprehending the context of the organization is "used for establishing, implementing, sustaining and constant improving OHS management system". On this ground, according to Pawłowska's and Skład's research (2017), it is thought that comprehending the organization and its context, in compliance with ISO 45001, is possible to achieve if concerned parties are identified and interested in functioning the company in the OHS field. As far as it happens, the next consequence of actions is to identify factors in the external and internal area of the company (Fig. 2).

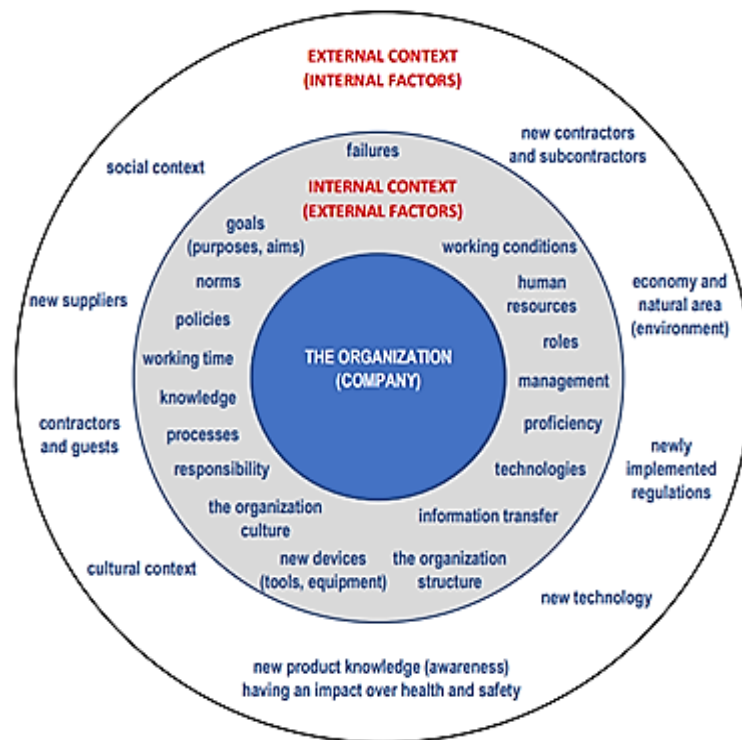


Figure 2. The context of the organization – internal and external factors.

Source: own study.

The environment influences the organization conditions and its functioning. It specifies rules and possibilities of development creating opportunities and barriers, threats as well. The environmental impact may be expressed as uncertainty, competitors' forces and disturbances (for instance, an unexpected crisis). External environment consists of everything which is beyond the organization and which can affect it. Moreover, the external environment contains itself purposeful and general surroundings. By contrast, the internal environment is described as conditions and forces emerging in the organization. It is comprised of organization owners, executive board, employees, physical ambience and culture.

3. Monitoring - the element of resistance engineering

In order fully to achieve intended results and accepted aims of OHS management system, according to ISO 45001, it is recommended to monitor, measure and analyse all occurred processes in the organization. Proper accomplishment of monitoring process enables establishing accurate dispositions and procedures. A very significant element is to arrange the periodicity (terms) of monitoring various OHS areas and individuals participating in this process. In the explanation part of ISO 45001, there are hints concerning what and how might be monitored in the area of the company. Norm regulations indicate examples, in different areas, which include:

- complaints about health, employee health (through medical surveillance) and working environment,
- work-related incidents, injuries and health ailments, complaints, trends included,
- supervision effectiveness over operational actions and emergency trainings or modification need or implementing new surveillance instruments,
- proficiency,

as well, in the scope of juridical requirements and other requirements, are:

- identified juridical requirements (e.g. if all juridical requirements have been specified and if documented company (entity) information about them are updated),
- corporate systems (when they are lawfully mandatory),
- the status of identified deficiencies in terms of discrepancy,
- regulations and codes,
- corporation policies and other policies, rules and regulations.

When it comes to benchmarks in terms of criteria that organization can apply in order to compare its outcomes, according to ISO 45001, are listed as:

- other organizations
- regulations and codes.
- own codes and organization targets.
- statistics in terms of OHS.

Monitoring and assessment of outcomes emerging in the area of OHS are key elements of efficient organization management. The basic aim of monitoring OHS is a current inspection of correctness (conformance) of all systemic actions and their outcomes with earlier accepted requirements. Scoping the occurring processes in the organization out, every enterprise should set own goals. Only properly defined goals are essential to function accurately in every field and strictly linked to gauges and indicators used for assessing actions in OHS area. A selection of particular KPI indicators is defined in order possibly to measure and assess. As authors' research literature pay attention, a selection and measurement of described KPI indicators are

meaningful only if they are legitimate in a business way and have a reflection of tangible condition of a measured field (Torbacki, Torbacka, 2015).

Carrying out the analysis and the assessment in the field of OHS, there are particular factors of widely interpreted working environment, which consists of occurring discrepancies in the company and incidents, taken actions in terms of banking security system and their outcomes. Indicators that are used for working environment measurements and accomplished actions are dubbed as leading indicators, whereas, indicators used for obtained outcome measurements are - output ones. According to Pawłowska and Ordysiński (2013), mentioned indicators (fig. 3) do not refer to individual workplace assessment. The substantial factor is the organization action (performance), which is oriented at defining indicators in the fields of activity, which refer to unit workplace, and are especially about: internal customers, internal processes and development processes.

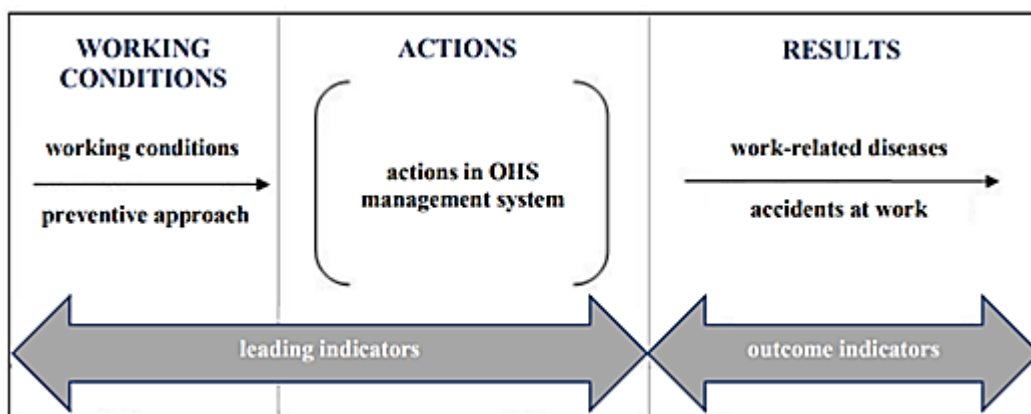


Figure 3. The measurement of functioning in the OHS area.

Source: own study.

Fields, in which the organization accepts the goals, constitute the cornerstone of properly defined and adjusted indicators. A type of a goal may, thus, condition gauges both in the internal process area and external area. Examples of such an attitude are illustrated in a table 1.

Table 1.

Exemplary goals and indicators used for improving the functioning in terms of OHS monitoring

Goals	Leading indicators
Implementation of register and potentially hazardous incidents analysis system	Number of registered potentially accidental events
Implementation of reporting applications and complaints concerning working conditions system	Number of registered employee-related applications and complaints concerning working conditions
Monitoring of schedule execution in terms of OHS	The percentage of monitor-related schedules
Implementation of monitoring and registering discrepancy concerning technical condition of machines and equipment system	Number of dropped-out discrepancies concerning technical condition of machines and equipment detected in the monitoring process

Source: Own study.

It is emphasized that a selection of indicators is as important as their interpretation. In this case, it is recommended to apply a selection based on multi-criteria assessment. Multi-criteria assessment of safety level is extensively used for recognition of real danger-related causes.

4. Controlling in the context of distinctive reaction procedures

As it was mentioned in the second chapter, controlling consists in the goal assessment for accepted proactive strategy. To portray the accepted proactive attitude in work safety, in tab. 2 there are examples of proactive indicators. To be honest, for instance, indicators referring to knowledge result from willingness of sharing one's knowledge, and in the record, they are presented as a comment.

Table 2.

Specification of proactive indicators

Proactive indicators	Description
Knowledge awareness (level)	Visible comment quality
Feedback on a problem report from a subordinate	The record of registered received calls from a subordinate
Anticipation of mechanical threats	Response register to reported exploitation circumstances
Responsibility awareness (level)	Documentation of taken complete amended actions

Source: Own study.

Proactive indicators have to be achieved on a working position and directly consulted with employees. An extensive level of work safety culture and adequate motivation system has a huge impact over efficiency of those undertakings. In Romanowska's and Trocki (2004) research, to make the company well manage and efficiently function, it is vital to carry out a regular analysis, assessment and facilitation based on the previous assessment. For this purpose, many problem solution methods are used.

Methods that might be mentioned are failure models or better known as accident-related models, which refer to a particular problem: failure, unwelcomed event, or a post-accident (Clifton, 2005; Helander, 2006; Kjellen, 2000; Krzyśków, 2015). Applying each model, by appointed teams, for example, in the case of accident causes, contributes to identifying these places on particular positions where enhancing actions needed.

5. ISO 45001 norm - The PDCA cycle

ISO 45001 norm can be demonstrated as a new standard in the scope of OHS management system in the company, whose compliance with requirements, forms a fundamental condition of efficient company performance. It contains instructions concerning its implementation, which generates arrangement conditions for improving outcomes in the OHS field. A standard

is supposed to let companies (entities) provide a safe and healthy workplace connected with the enterprise and its area. ISO 45001 norm may be applied in every organization independently of its size, type and characteristics. It has an analogical framework in comparison with earlier published norms concerning, among others, quality management system, according to ISO 9001 and environment management system - ISO 14001. It facilitates the integration of OHS management system and organization management system. The cornerstone of functioning ISO 45001 is the PDCA cycle: Plan-Do-Check-Act. In the scope of such an accepted conception of a constant improvement in the management system, the organization can apply the model as the entity and as in its particular elements.

A significant aspect of a new norm is that it takes into consideration the interaction between the organization and its business area. It is characteristic that detailed OHS efficiency criteria are not defined, and as well, its structure is not prescriptive in terms of OHS project management system. As a consequence, it forces the organization to analyse own situational context. Simultaneously, it creates conditions to adjust the OHS management system to one's needs in terms of emerging incidents prevention and discrepancies. ISO 45001 regulations emphasise employee co-participation in the field of achieving work safety provision in the company. As Pawłowska and Skład (2017) rightfully pay attention in their research, the norm lists processes and indicates actions, whose co-participation and consultations should concern. Involvement and a role of not possessing executive positions individuals is considered to be an elementary condition of efficient functioning OHS management system. Despite the fact that the norm requirements in terms of employee co-participation fundamentally stick to the requirements, within this scope, PN-N-18000 Polish norms, in a new standard, a need for involvement and consultation among ordinary employees is clearly emphasised.

Essential changes, which are noticeable in terms of earlier standards concerning OHS, are listed below:

- the organization context in OHS management inclusion,
- risk and chances concerning both employees and other parties, and the organization itself (e.g. reputation infringement, influence over activity continuity) planning OHS management system inclusion,
- leadership role growth and OHS management importance through integration with business processes (e.g. design and development, supplies, human resources, sales and marketing),
- extension in communication requirements,
- emphasis on planning changes, among others, through consequence review,
- employee participation in terms of consultation and participation mechanisms; risk identification and risk assessment; actions aimed at risk and threat control; identification authority requirements, training needs and their evaluation,
- employee inclusion onto consultations concerning: needs and expectations formulating by interested parties; establishing OHS policy; attributing the organization roles, duties.

6. Conclusion

Constructing the safety system, which results from the integration of strategic, tactic and operational levels, makes a correlation between employee-related involvement efficiency and approved proactive strategies. The example of such relations having an impact on work safety might be observed as indicators in tab. 2, for instance, anticipating mechanical threats and the evidence of received response to reported exploitation circumstances.

Through a presented method of implementing mechanisms of a proactive employee's attitude in terms of work safety, every organization is able to set own goals on the ground of work safety improvement. The basic goal of OHS monitoring is a regular checking compatibility of conducted actions in the system and their outcomes with earlier established requirements, on particular management levels shown in a scheme (fig. 1). It is emphasised that effective monitoring in OHS management system should be both active and reactive.

In a proactive strategy, the added value is a contextualized view of enhancing actions, and not like in a reactive one, a statistical review. Thus, the efficiency of motivation system results from employee creativity and their diverse actions and not from the number of performed records related with it. Obliging the employer to provide employee co-participation in consultations, and as well, taking interested parties into considerations, condition the efficient achievement of intended goals. Foreseeing future events, which mean, anticipation that are fundamentally meaningful to a proactive attitude to OHS management, constitutes the most challenging element to achieve. Therefore, it requires the whole staff (crew) responsibly to involve in favour of all the levels of the organization supporting a proactive attitude conditioning.

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