



VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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Safety Tips from the Restaurant Industry: Are you kidding me?

Pasteur wrote: "When it comes to observation, chance favors the prepared mind." I came across a discarded copy of "Refreshing News", a publication of Coca-Cola North America Food Service Division. One of the articles was entitled "Brighter Days Ahead". Although I don't have a clue about how well-prepared my mind is I was struck by the similarity between concepts espoused in the article and some of the ideas that I use to relate core business practices to safety.

01. Understand customer demand patterns

We do this all the time in the sense that it drives our labor scheduling and capacity planning. Do we ever stop to think about what we can do to minimize performance stressors on our employees? Can we enhance efficiencies? Working more efficiently doesn't necessarily translate into working harder.

02. Establish performance criteria & measure

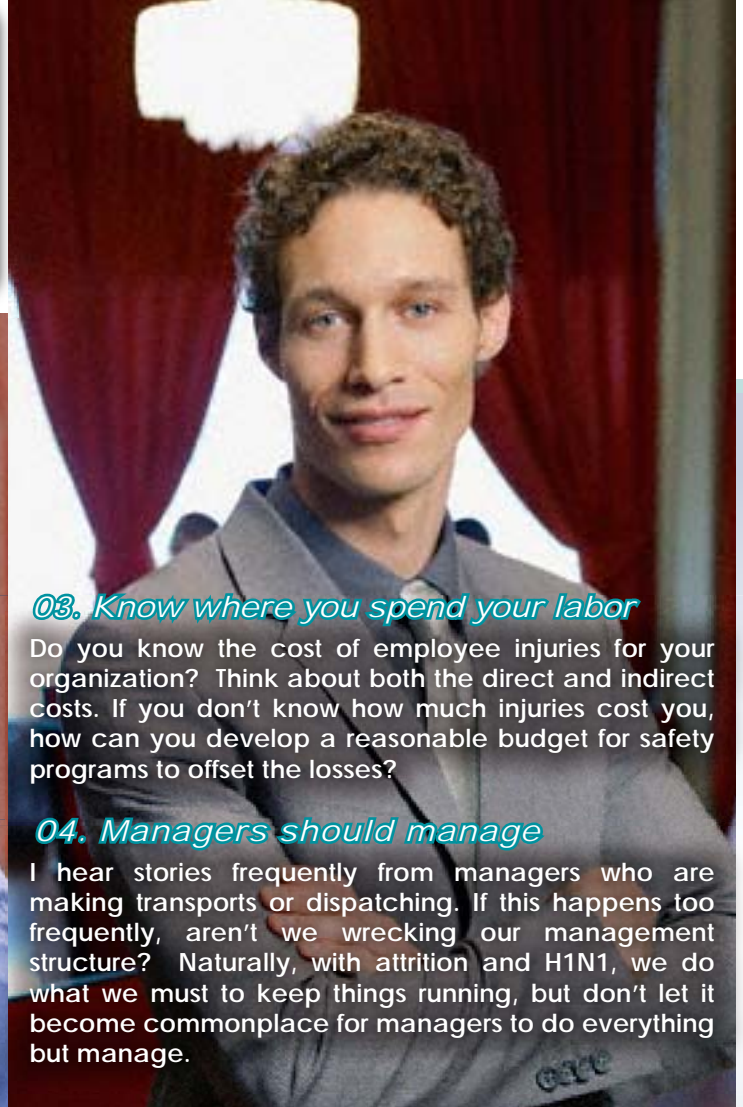
Can we quantify how safely our employees are performing? Do we have intra-organizational comparative standards so that we know who our safest employees are and reward them?

05. Hire the best people you can afford and train them all the time

Many times I have street supervisors tell me that selection criteria include the "Three Ps"; a patch, a pulse, and permission from the insurance company to drive. If you use your orientation process to mold new employees, you must follow it with consistent oversight to see that employee behaviors are in compliance with your policies. Does somebody on your management team talk to each employee about safety every day? Training doesn't need to be in a classroom or require over-time. Do your supervisors train by giving your employees good examples?

06. Invest in equipment and technology that deliver impact

I am amazed at the novel applications of technology used by our clients. Some have used GPS to change the way they assign calls resulting in greater efficiency and less stress for their personnel. On board monitoring is a great way to stretch your management FTEs. It creates opportunities for training, remediation, discipline and documentation of events.



03. Know where you spend your labor

Do you know the cost of employee injuries for your organization? Think about both the direct and indirect costs. If you don't know how much injuries cost you, how can you develop a reasonable budget for safety programs to offset the losses?

04. Managers should manage

I hear stories frequently from managers who are making transports or dispatching. If this happens too frequently, aren't we wrecking our management structure? Naturally, with attrition and H1N1, we do what we must to keep things running, but don't let it become commonplace for managers to do everything but manage.

Everybody in your organization should actively seek new ideas to make your shop safer.