

SAFESTART® - CASE STUDY SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC



THE REQUIREMENT

Schneider Electric North America was seeking zero incidents. Addressing incidents caused by individuals making mistakes had been a struggle for the company. A number of behaviour-based safety (BBS) programmes were utilised over the years with varying degrees of success.

SafeStart® was initially implemented at one of Schneider Electric's facilities in Toronto, Canada. People were very receptive to the programme and SafeStart® was integrated into their daily activities. This initial exposure prompted Schneider Electric to begin the rollout of SafeStart® across their North American facilities.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Classroom training varied across locations, based on the specific resources and requirements of each facility. At one location, 2 people were certified and conducted all the training. At another location, there were approximately 25 classes for each module and the 10 members of the senior team, including the plant manager and direct reports, each conducted 10-12 classes. Typically classes were conducted once a month. New hires now receive training

for the initial five modules within their first 30 to 60 days of employment.

MAKE IT PERSONALLY RELEVANT FOR EMPLOYEES

SafeStart® is non-accusatory and focuses on causation. Driving a car, an almost universal experience in North America, offers prime examples of how SafeStart® can identify some of the contributing causes of an incident and offer effective solutions. In the case of an auto accident, the driver is in one or many of the states identified by SafeStart®. This recognition makes the programme personally relevant. Table group discussions, where people share their personal SafeStart® stories, reinforce this understanding. Sharing these stories motivates people to participate positively.

FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS AND POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication is important and focusing on positive communication is a priority. Schneider Electric produces in-house DVDs on a quarterly basis using SafeStart® concepts. In addition, they converted

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their Accident/Incident investigation to integrate and focus on SafeStart®. The overall intent was to keep the concepts in front of people every day. Schneider has produced DVDs on such topics as ergonomics, lifting, slips & trips and electrical safety. Each 10 minute DVD relates the given safety concern to events at work and at home.

There is a core group of people who are currently responsible for coordinating ongoing training and making the DVDs. An outside firm does the filming. One individual, David, is a recurring presence on the DVDs and he does all the training at his location. Most of the filming has been done at David's site. He also participates in the story writing process for the videos. David lives and breathes SafeStart®.

INVOLVE EVERYONE, INCLUDING SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Sessions are specifically scheduled to view the in-house videos. This provides the opportunity for manufacturing and logistics personnel to see familiar places and faces in conjunction with a positive safety message. In addition, group safety sessions are conducted every month or every other month. Frequent safety messages are provided by the senior team. Toolbox talks take place on a continuous basis. Some members of Schneider's office staff have already received training at the manufacturing and logistics sites. Introduction of the DVDs and SafeStart® to the remainder of their office staff is a priority amongst future training initiatives.



INCORPORATE SAFESTART® INTO YOUR OVERALL SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Safety is a guiding principle at Schneider Electric. As Rich Widdowson remarked, "It is what we do first, look at a situation from a safety perspective." People on the floor are recognising rushing, complacency and other contributing factors to incidents and injuries. People are thinking more about safety. By incorporating SafeStart® with other pro-active safety programmes, huge success has been achieved over a six year period. In 2002, Schneider's medical incident rate was 3.6. It has now been 0.8 for the past few years.

A company acquired by Schneider in 2005 had 75-80 doctors' cases a year. By 2008, the number was reduced to five cases. Success was attributed to the introduction of Schneider's safety programmes and the way they do business. Better gloves were selected to protect against sharp materials being handled. Triggering on "rushing" and fighting complacency regarding wearing gloves definitely became a priority. Procedures and PPE were introduced to emphasise safety on a 24/7 basis. People were given the option to take their gloves and safety training home to keep them safe.

Schneider's philosophy is choices have an impact. It is not a question of bad behaviour, the employees need to recognise factors that contribute to injuries such as: rushing, fatigue, frustration, and complacency; and critical errors such as eyes and mind not on task, being in the line-of-fire and loss of balance/traction/grip.

Continued manager involvement in SafeStart® is strongly encouraged throughout the company. The goal is to speak the same language and drive the message. Near misses and first aid injuries are investigated using SafeStart® concepts. People are volunteering information that is expressed using SafeStart® principles. A definite reduction in the severity and frequency of incidents and injuries has been seen.

TAKING SAFESTART® HOME

Taking SafeStart® Home DVDs have also been shown to all Schneider employees. One year they had a contest based on SafeStart® stories from home – each location filmed 4 or 5 of their best stories. The overall winner from amongst all sites was shown across all Schneider locations. The senior team contributed their SafeStart® Stories as well and a number of these were shown at the viewing of the selection from the winning site.

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SAFESTART WORKS ACROSS CULTURES

For Schneider Electric, SafeStart® began in Canada and progressed across various U.S. locations and has now been implemented at Schneider Electric's facilities in Mexico. The safety banners are enthusiastically embraced in Mexico. This provided a highly visible method of incorporating SafeStart® into their existing safety culture. Mexico particularly wanted to make the programme their own. Posters and other visuals are being used at most sites in Canada and the U.S. as well.

Plans for the future include the expansion of the footprint of SafeStart®. Additional implementations will be scheduled to incorporate locations in North America at Square D and affiliates. Rich Widdowson will be encouraging all businesses within the sphere of his responsibilities to embrace SafeStart®. Some additional international locations like Brazil and Spain will also be encouraged to use SafeStart®. The ultimate goal is to share SafeStart® across Schneider Electric internationally.



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