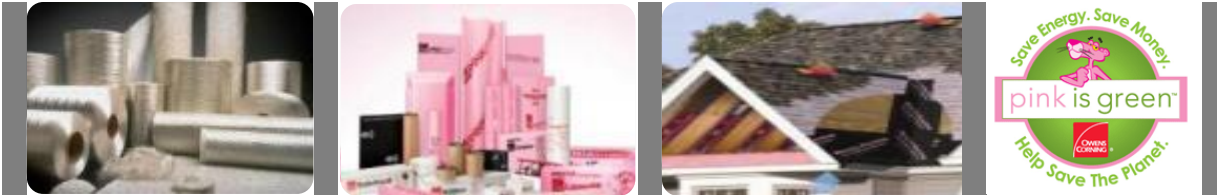




Case Study #1

Owens Corning



The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) has assembled a Risk Assessment Committee for the purposes of communicating to the business community the importance of the risk assessment process; improving the risk assessment competencies of safety, health, and environmental professionals; providing cost-effective solutions as business partners; and taking a leadership role in developing risk assessment policy. The product of this committee has been the development of a Risk Assessment Institute.

A key focus area of the Risk Assessment Institute is the study of corporations and safety professionals with successful Risk Assessment Programs in an effort to learn from their experiences and assist others in the development of their own risk assessment program. The case studies examine their experiences as they developed and implemented their risk assessment program, their lessons learned, and their suggestions to others who may be getting started on their own risk assessment program development.

Case Study Subject

Company	Owens Corning
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Date	May 10, 2013

Background

Owens Corning, like many other organizations, can proudly tell their safety journey story that highlights their historical injury reduction efforts and employee safety improvements. But most organization, including Owens Corning, are not reporting sustainable zero injury performance. Some organizations, to their surprise or alarm, continue to report serious and/or even life-ending mishaps. Each wonder what is standing between their current state (injuries still occurring) and zero injury performance. Many look externally for their answers through such avenues as bench-marking and using outside resources to assist them with their continuous improvement efforts. Such an approach can be effective, but may not be the entire solution.

Owens Corning's safety journey showcases eleven consecutive years of improved safety performance.

The Need for Action

In 2010, based on consistent feedback received from operating facilities and plants, Owens Corning Business Leaders requested the company make a concerted effort to improve and focus on hazard identification and control training. Owens Corning came to understand that specific unrecognized hazards and safety culture barriers were keeping the organization from sustainable injury-free performance. When taking a critical look inwardly at historic company injury trend data, some startling discoveries were made.



Owens Corning discovered that a low injury rate does not equate to low risk. A new common language was needed, other than solely the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Recordable Incidence Rate (RIR), to measure and track safety success. The new language centered on acceptable risk and effectiveness of controls. As research within Owens Corning was conducted with an emphasis on defining Acceptable Risk Level, it was discovered each employee was defining their own risk level or risk tolerance for the work they were doing, which often led to previously unrecognized exposure to

Owens Corning came to the startling realization that each employee was essentially defining their own risk level or risk tolerance for the work they were doing!

harm or injury. This discovery brought new understanding to the Owens Corning safety community as to the importance of identifying acceptable risk levels and communicating those to the workforce.

Owens Corning's safety leadership realized that if they did not clearly define acceptable risk level, wide variation in safety decision-making would continue. So, they made the decision to uniformly define Acceptable Risk using the steps below:

1. Each task must have a documented risk assessment (such as Job Hazard Analysis, Pre-Job Safety Plan, etc.).



2. A level of protection is assigned that is appropriate for the hazard.
3. Employees are trained and assessments are available for that task.
4. Effective process to maintain safety controls in place.

While analyzing injury trend data, the Owens Corning safety team identified four key gaps in their risk assessment process. They discovered risk of injury is elevated when these situations or conditions were present:

1. Abnormal conditions not considered.
2. Level of protection did not match the risk.
3. Exposure to frequently injured body parts was not being evaluated.
4. Hazards associated with tools not considered.

New Beginning

The following specific actions were undertaken in 2011 to raise the value of the risk assessment process and to begin to see the true risk in work conducted at Owens Corning facilities:

1. Developed internal Hazard Identification and Control Training and Certification process.
2. Trained all levels of leadership on risk-focused leadership, action plans, and risk reduction metrics.
3. Recognized those selected individuals who perform risk assessment work.
4. Each site identified and acted on their Top 5 risks – Top 5 Method.
5. Jobs were “risk ranked” to prioritize projects and action planning in absence of injury.

Owens Corning Safety Professionals developed the Hazard Identification and Control Training Modules. Regional Safety Leaders were identified as key champions to driving the new training materials and culture change globally. Each Regional Safety Leader was formally trained and “Certified” over an 18-month period. Certified Trainers were then empowered to train their respective leadership teams and “certify” Hazard Identification and Control Specialists at each of their facilities. This remains an ongoing process today.

Program in Practice

Some key elements put into place to enable the culture change and new thinking seen to date has been:

1. Organizational realization that a low injury rate or absence of injury does not equate to low risk.



2. Taking a hard look inwardly at historical injury data will spring startling discoveries and next steps.
3. Unacceptable risk cannot be seen until acceptable risk has been clearly defined.
4. Hazard control effectiveness is equally as important as hazard identification.
5. Individuals who perform risk assessment work are highly valued resources in the organization.
6. Leadership teams focusing on risk mitigation before injury fuels the culture change.

Results and Lessons Learned

The early returns and benefits seen to date are very positive and encouraging. Specifically, Owens Corning has seen:

1. Leadership focus, confidence, and communication around risk mitigation in absence of injury.
2. Skill building with Hazard Identification and Control Specialists across the organization.
3. Injury severity reduction.
4. Shared proven solutions to expedite the improvements.
5. Risk factors from data analysis have become predictive indicators or measures other than injury rates alone.
6. Higher level of controls is being put into place to mitigate risk to acceptable level.

Owens Corning's quest for sustainable injury-free performance continues with confidence that identifying and acting on risk in the absence of injury will help us achieve our zero-injury goal.