

**All managers should know the best way to get employees onboard with any plan is to get them involved. By asking for their input, not only have you gained their support, but valuable suggestions as well.**


I've got a question for you: Was GEAR EXPO what you expected? Did you use any of your time there to explore safety issues? I often wonder if the ideas suggested in this column are actually acted on, because I really do hope that the information that I provide is of value to you. If there are any specific issues that you wish I would attempt to cover please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address listed below. I'd be glad to hear from you, and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

I was recently in the position of having to hire additional help. Have you ever considered safety issues when hiring a new employee? It occurred to me that simply by observing the potential hires, it was possible to form an impression of just how concerned they would be about safe conditions in their work area, as well as the safety of their fellow employees. I think that a few judiciously posed questions when interviewing new hires will go a long way toward determining their safety consciousness. If followed, this is a practice that could result in a safer environment in the workplace. One example might be: "Does wearing eye or hearing protection make you feel uncomfortable?" I truly feel that this is an area that we have neglected and need to improve upon. After all, if an employee gets hurt on the job due to his own negligence, but we have not previously determined his or her attitude toward the fundamentals of safe operating procedures, is it not just as much our fault as it is theirs?

This subject brings up another concern, namely: What are you doing to limit your

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company's liabilities concerning the safety of your employees? Do you have a company code of ethics? I believe that developing a strict, enforceable code of ethics and one that all of the employees and management buy into is one of the most important things you can do as a business to limit your liabilities concerning not only the use of your products, but the safety of your employees. You will note I stated that both the employees and management must buy into this code of ethics, because if either one does not, it might as well not exist. It is management's responsibility to establish this code of ethics, but it's you, as a safety conscious individual—and no matter what your level in the company—who must provide the input to establish a workable, effective code of ethics. This is truly a project that requires input from everyone involved. And remember, the only way you will achieve true "buy in" is to ask for—and listen to!—the input that each and every employee provides.

One of the problems you may encounter in this establishment of a code of ethics has to do with age. For a variety of reasons you're finding older people in the workforce these days. It seems that workers are remaining in their jobs longer, particularly in this industry, and there is not the same influx of younger talent that's been seen in days past. When we get older we tend to become set in our ways, and the newer employees that have learned newer methods—that are sometimes safer—of doing the things that we have been doing for years are ignored or, even worse, ridiculed. We can all learn from others, and it is important that we learn to accept new and better ways of accomplishing our goals. If there are better, safer ways of accomplishing the same ends then we should accept, learn, and utilize them. We will all be safer and happier in the long run. Don't forget that there are people who are constantly striving to make us safer in the workplace, and this can be through better practices or technology. Do not discount the value of the new technologies available to us. Just look at the advances in safety eyewear, as only one example. When I started in this business, if you had weak eyes you wore glasses, otherwise no one would be caught wearing them. Now we have learned the importance of eye safety, and wearing eye protection is a common thing that we're all comfortable with. There are many similar examples that can be made, but I'd just like to restate that having a code of ethics that involves everyone's input will protect your employees and make your company a better place for them to work. 

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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