

LEADERSHIP

An effective safety program requires strong leadership. But, what is leadership? And who leads?

We've heard and said it many times: "Lead by example." This is already taking place in your operation whether you know it or not. Somebody is leading. Somebody is setting the standard. Do you know who it is? Is it you? If not, who is it? Who are the leaders in your organization? They are not *always* the ones with the titles. They are not *always* the ones we call supervisors or managers. They are often simply the strong personalities out in the yard that other workers look to as an example. These leaders exist in every business.

In your company, are you sure that your leaders, with or without a title, are taking your people in the right direction? Are they taking unnecessary risks? Are they doing things the way they've always been done just because they can? Are your leaders showing the safest and most efficient way, or are they just using the best shortcuts?

In 2009, Tom Rath and leadership consultant Barry Conchie wrote *Strengths Based Leadership*, a *New York Times* best seller, in which they concluded:

- The most effective leaders invest in their own strengths, and the strengths of their employees.
- The most effective leaders find the "right" people to work with and strategize to maximize their team's abilities. The leaders themselves do not need to be "well-rounded", but their teams do.
- The most effective leaders understand that their followers need trust, compassion, stability and hope from them.

Donald O. Clifton, referred to as the father of strength-based psychology, once said "A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter knows his tools, or as a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths -- and can call on the right strength at the right time."

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