WHAT IS A SAFETY CULTURE:

Every organization has set of rules, values, and methods to operate and accordingly they respond to the situations at workplace. You may also find people saying that "this is how we do it here" that is a culture of a workplace. Many times, employees say that "we don't have a safety culture and need one", but the truth is safety culture is already there, they just don't like it or want to improve the existing one. Hence, it can be said that safety culture might be good or bad, but it is always there. Safety culture may not be formally discussed in every place but can be easily observed and assessed as mentioned in this article.
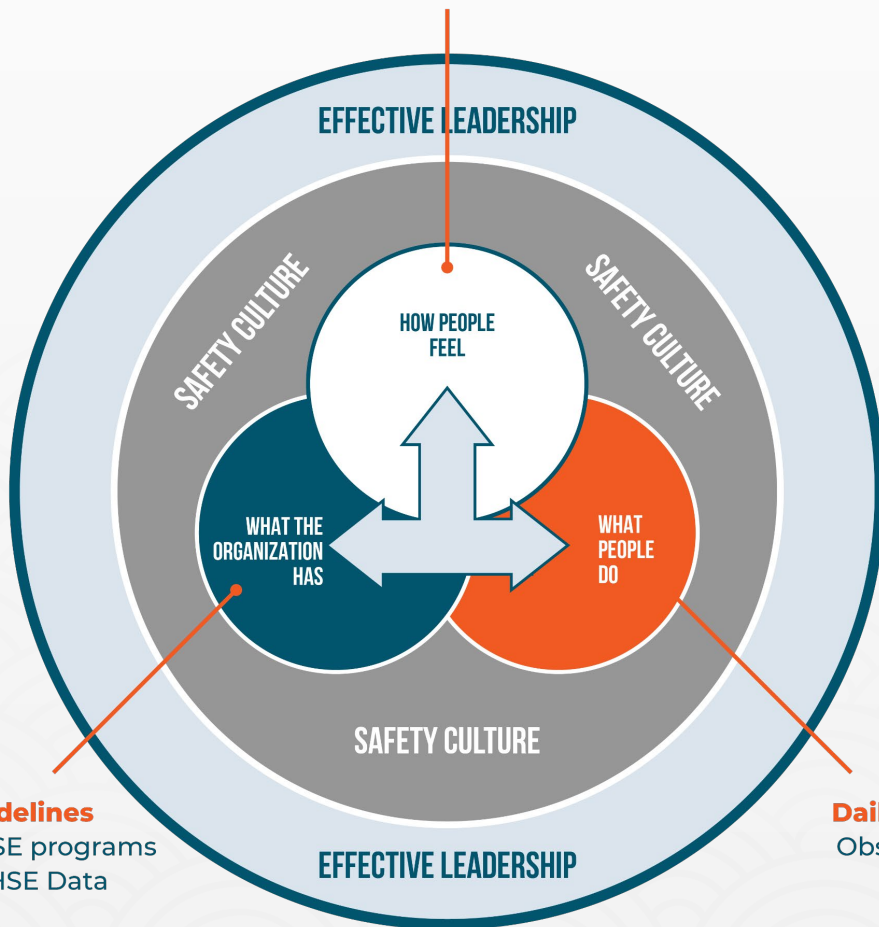
Hearts & Minds
Cultural Web Asessment
Safety Culture Maturity Assessment

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

SAFETY CULTURE

SAFETY CULTURE

HOW PEOPLE FEEL

WHAT THE ORGANIZATION HAS

WHAT PEOPLE DO

SAFETY CULTURE

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Safety Guidelines
Evaluation of HSE programs
Analysis of HSE Data

Daily Actions
Observations

Safety culture comprises of three parts: People their actions and the organization. What people think of safety, what actions they take regarding the safety situations and how organization is supporting health & safety in terms off arrangements, procedures & policies. These three aspects are interrelated and formulate the safety culture at workplace.
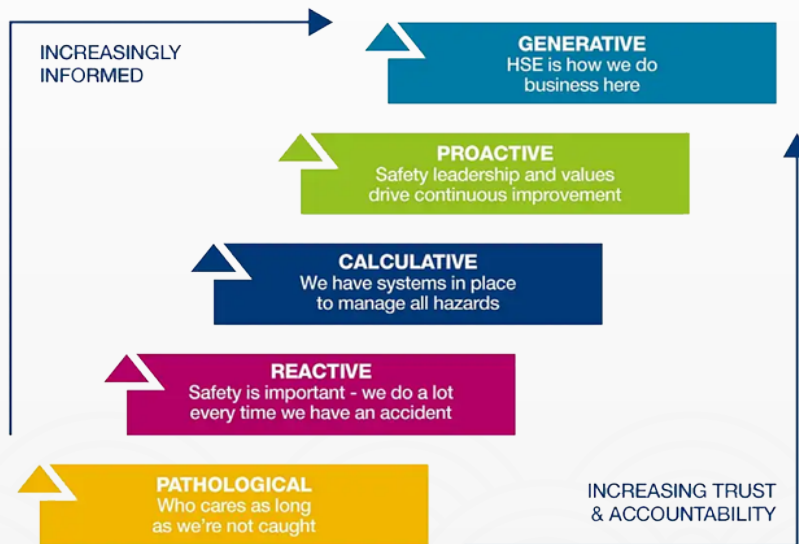
HOW TO ASSESS SAFETY CULTURE OF YOUR WORKPLACE?

Review the safety-related documentation (risk assessment, policies, etc.), talk to the people from various levels (top to bottom) and observe the workplace by touring the site. Note the below points and look for answers at your workplace. Rate all the points on a scale (1 to 10) and you would know the level of safety culture you have. All five levels of safety culture are explained below after the assessment points:

- **What is the involvement of Leadership in workplace safety:** Needless to say, that top management influences the safety culture in every possible way. Look for the safety meeting's agenda, discussions, quality of points discussed during minutes of meetings, enough safety walks conducted, policies procedures made and updated when required.

- **Are Safety Audits conducted** (internal & external), having certifications from external bodies on health & safety is a good sign of safety culture but look for frequencies, findings, and improvements.

- **Check the methods & content of communications** and, display boards if the safety expectations are communicated to the employees.

- **Is safety a priority at work:** Evidence/situations where business decisions, procedures and policies are amended due to the safety requirements, would show the priority given to safety. Only safety-driven companies would keep health & safety in the middle of their decision-making.

- **Consultation:** Any evidence of employee engagement whilst making decisions that could affect the safety of people.

- **Empowered:** Those in charge of safety, do they have the authority to make the changes they have identified as necessary.

- **Appreciations**: Are employees valued with positive recognition when they act safely?

- **Resources:** Everyone has the tools and/or equipment they need to complete their work safely. Compare the documented safety precautions with reality while taking rounds of sites.

- **Response:** Are enough actions taken on time to prevent future incidents?

- **Space for any feedback:** Is feedback appreciated on any safety-related Communication is open, and employees feel free to voice concerns and make suggestions.

- **Talk to the people at work** and weigh the level of trust in the employee-employer relationship. You can notice the value and attention given to health & safety.

LEVEL OF SAFETY CULTURE:

Once you evaluate your workplace against all above points, you may find the safety culture at one of these five levels which are also levels of development.

1. **Pathological**: There are organizations and people who are only relying on legal forces to drive any health & safety related requirement. Any other motivation is missing, and this is bottom level of safety culture.

2. **Reactive**: At this level you would find everyone saying that they are very serious about safety, but they only take it seriously when an accident happens. Overall awareness & preventive approach is missing at this level.

3. **Calculative**: Organizations where incident data is given major priority to make any judgements / decisions on safety related matters however effectiveness of data collection may not be perfect.

4. **Proactive**: A workplace where people are involved and are aware on health & safety issues, their actions demonstrate safe practices.

5. **Generative**: This is the topmost level of safety culture where an organisation sets very high standards and make efforts to surpass them. Employees feel comfortable on giving their honest feedback, no place for blame culture and leadership is very clear with vision on what they must achieve and how. Management is aware on big or small incidents due to ideal reporting standards.

LET'S TALK SAFETY – AUGUST 2022

WHY SHOULD YOU ASSESS THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF YOUR WORKPLACE?

- **IMPROVEMENT**: We can only improve if the current level of safety culture is identified otherwise everything might be perfect as long as there is no major accident. This assessment is also an evaluation of any progress in safety culture.

- **DIRECTION**: When we want to set the tone of workplace for everyone to work in the same direction, it is critical to assess the safety culture so that common goals & targets can be decided.

- **TO MAKE SAFETY A CORE VALUE:** Companies can become safety centric when they assess their safety culture and take decisions by not bypassing critical safety requirements.

- **REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE:** Assessment of safety culture could turn your organizational approach from reactive to proactive.

- **TRUST:** This exercise can generate a lot of trust between employer and employee and that is beneficial to avoid any blame culture. When workers observe safety is being prioritized automatically, they would be more cautious with their actions.

Assessment of safety culture would be a great start to establish the foundation of health & safety and from there, an organization can decide the further way up.

Finishing this article with an open question to you:
For the benefit of people, society, and businesses, which level of safety culture should everyone aim?

Author Credits: *This article is provided by Pankaj Sharma, Health & Safety Manager, Landmark Leisure.*

Disclaimer: *The advice shared above is based on a high-level view of the How and Why of Assessing Safety Culture. It is however important that you speak with and follow the recommendations of the local authorities and regulations in the countries where you operate. Their guidelines will help you to create your own best practices for How and Why of Assessing Safety Culture at your attractions to ensure your Rules and Responsibilities are outlined to meet the requirements of your individual country, and the regulations and recommendations of your local authorities.*