AGC Safety Initiative E-News
December 2, 2020

OUR Safety MISSION: Help each other enforce safety rules to ensure that every person on construction site goes home safe and healthy at end of the workday.

Supplement your safety program with AGC Nebraska Building Chapter Safety Resources. The site offers on-demand, online or on-site training opportunities on a variety of topics; services; regulations and news within our industry. Share this link with team members!

Calendar of Events – Learn more
Supervisory Training Program--Risk Management and Problem Solving
1/03/2021--1/30/2021
Supervisory Training Program--Improving Productivity and Managing Project Cost
1/31/2021--2/27/2021
Supervisory Training Program--Planning and Scheduling
2/28/2021--4/3/2021

5 Strategies for Successful COVID-19 Strategic Pivots
Adapted from Resilience: Adapt and Plan for the New Abnormal of the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic by Dr. Gleb Tsipursky (Changemakers Books, 2020).

When dealing with chaos caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders must act decisively and quickly. A strategic pivot is often necessary to keep a firm grip on problems brought by COVID, which can include employee difficulties working from home, supply chain disruptions, and cancelled orders. Here are five strategies you need to use for successful COVID strategic pivots:

1. Reassess Business Model Assumptions
Start by listing the issues you've faced to reassess assumptions about the company's business model.

For instance, a manufacturing startup faced the new problem of selling its high-tech products. It didn't have trouble before the pandemic because it was known for high quality, and operations managers demanded its products.

However, as the pandemic took hold, the startup's salespeople noticed that customers had to clear several hurdles before approving a purchase. Most notably, accounting departments demanded lower-cost options unless operations managers could prove the startup's products brought sufficient ROI.

That's where the problem was centered. Though the startup heavily focused on innovation, it didn't offer a direct ROI measurement tool. Due to this, some customers had to choose cheaper alternatives. That surprised company executives, who were eager to reassess their assumptions and implement tools to counteract customers' new policies.

2. Gather Critical Internal Information

After examining business model assumptions, ask department heads to gather internal information critical to revising business strategy. This includes feedback from direct reports on ways their department's goals, structure, and customer relationships could be revised. Ask them to challenge assumptions based on each of the following scenarios:

- **Scenario one:** A vaccine with more than 90 percent effectiveness would be found by spring 2021, and the pandemic will mostly be over by spring 2022.
- **Scenario two:** A vaccine would be found by spring 2022, and the pandemic would mostly be over by spring 2023.
- **Scenario three:** A vaccine more effective than 50 percent would not be found, just like we haven't found a vaccine more effective than that for the flu.

3. Go on a (Virtual) Retreat

Conduct a two-day strategic retreat, in-person or virtual. Spend Day One on broad strategy, and Day Two on adapting operational strategy.

In one case, a company with more than 500 employees wanted to address the fact that employees were experiencing work-from-home burnout. What it didn't realize was that such problems originate from many other factors than simply working from home, such as:

- Mental health challenges brought about by the pandemic
- Pragmatic challenges related to COVID, such as juggling work with caring for family members
- Social isolation
- Changes in routine
- Loss of outside hobbies, entertainment, and exercise
- Poor virtual communication and collaboration skills
- Missing the sense of fulfillment, meaning, and purpose that work previously provided

It's disconcerting that most of us don't realize that what we're feeling isn't just work-from-home burnout. In fact, we don't seem to recognize what it is we're missing.

Dealing with this issue doesn't just mean providing funding for home office setups or allowing flexible working hours. Companies also must facilitate professional development in effective virtual communication and collaboration, as well as emotional and social intelligence.

4. Operationalize the New Strategy

On Day Two of your retreat, focus on operationalizing the strategic changes to the business model. Address potential threats and opportunities for different future scenarios. Revise the new strategy from Day One, if needed.

5. Implement and Check Regularly

At the close of the retreat, identify next steps for each new initiative and the resources required, and establish metrics for success. Assign one leader to roll out the initiative and provide regular progress reports. Lastly, prepare a detailed report for the Board of Directors.

Hold regular status updates, ideally during weekly leadership team meetings. Evaluate the strategy's progress during a half-day meeting a month after the retreat, and adjust as required. Schedule another follow-up meeting after three months.

5 Takeaways:

1. Start by challenging assumptions.
2. Have top leaders gather internal information from direct reports.
3. Conduct a two-day retreat, in-person or virtual, to focus on strategy and operationalization.
4. Commit to next steps, identifying resources needed, metrics of success, leadership point person, and report to the Board of Directors.

5. Provide status updates weekly, and a half-day progress check and course correction after one and three months.

Though success can never be guaranteed, taking these steps will help steer your company toward thriving—not just surviving—in these troubled times.

Read the full article.

Can the virtual learning environment truly be effective in developing safety leaders?
Virtual training is common for most industries. (For the purpose of this article, we define "training" as the transfer of information and "development" as the acquiring of new skills and sustained skills application.)

However, the open question about virtual delivery is whether you can use this approach for development. We're not talking about short-term behavioral change, but development that generates a change in a person's belief system resulting in long-term behavioral change. This means that when the person reverts back to the old way of doing things, something feels fundamentally wrong and he or she returns to the new behavior.

In doing this work for nearly a year now, we can unequivocally say the answer to this question is "Yes." The following are tips we've learned to develop safety leaders in a virtual environment.

- **Get managers comfortable with the technology.** Before training, conduct a session on how to use the technology and outline the full development plan. Verify everyone can successfully log into the training platform. This may seem obvious, but a barrier to learning is when people struggle to use the technology or feel uncomfortable using all the tools available in the virtual delivery.

- **Prepare the senior-most leader.** The most senior leader needs to have a significant role in the virtual delivery and must be active throughout.

- **Before training the target audience, train the leaders of leaders on effective coaching.** Development is a multistep engagement. A crucial element of training in a virtual environment is taking the new knowledge and skills to the workplace and applying it. To ensure the person can apply the new skills, he or she needs to be observed and coached.

- **Install a data collection system.** Make sure the data collection system is ready to go and will be put to immediate use by the leaders.

- **Limit group size to 12 people or fewer.** It's so easy to think that because it's a virtual classroom, you should pack people in. Huge classes might be OK for training, but they don't work for development.

- **Limit the use of breakout sessions.** Breakout sessions can be useful, but overusing them is typically problematic. When you keep the group to 12 people or fewer, the facilitator – with support from the senior leaders – should be able to manage a larger group "break out."

- **Introduce new concepts in small doses and practice new skills in large doses.** Spend the bulk of the virtual training on engaging activities that build, practice and reinforce skills.

- **End the session with a call to action.** This needs to be predetermined and introduced by the senior-most leader in the session. It must include a specific action for all participants with an expectation that they will track their actions in the data collection system.

- **Require the immediate application of the new skills after the session.**
  - **Use field coaching.** The classroom environment is only one element in the learning process. For skill development however, ongoing coaching is pivotal to give the leader the confidence that

employees can do what is being asked of them. Also, when managers coach their direct reports, it demonstrates their commitment to change.

- **Use the data.** It will reinforce the behavioral change and address the exposures identified in the field.

Virtual learning is changing how we train and develop employees. However, one isn't like the other. Training is the sharing of information from one person to the next, which is fairly easy to do virtually. Development requires more because it's inevitably about sustaining change in the culture. For this reason, development requires a tremendous amount of preparation and involves a series of learning activities that can be revisited over time.

Development is possible in the virtual environment. Not only are leaders growing and changing, but organizations are seeing a change in culture and a significant reduction in injuries.

Read the full article

Safety Initiative Goals:
As an AGC Nebraska Building Chapter member, are you participating with:
- 100% of all AGC members and other contractors on AGC jobsites enforcing OSHA standards as they apply to falls, electrical safety and possible another topic.
- 100% of all AGC members will have set their own company goals to improve safety in their firm and have a way to measure progress towards the goal.
- 100% of all AGC members will encourage and support all contractors on their jobsites to set their own company goals for improving safety.