

MOTIVATION WORKSHOP

Subcontractor Engagement

AIM

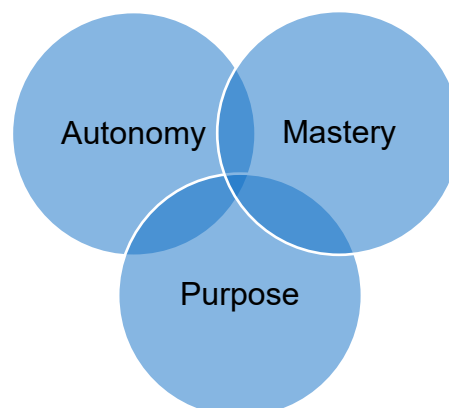
The aim of this workshop is to have a group discussion about how you can motivate subcontractors and ultimately engage them to take part in our collective health and safety efforts. Not by using the carrot and the stick, but by making the story personal and by making the motivation intrinsic.

CREATING MOTIVATION

In the framework of subcontractor engagement, motivation is the factor which stimulates certain behaviors we'd like to see from engaged subcontractors. These behaviors all have to do with taking ownership. Think of going the extra mile, analyzing a problem and finding a solution, being creative and finding the best way to do things.

Research has shown that applying the carrot and the stick approach (extrinsic motivators) doesn't deliver the results one might expect in the long run. For simple mechanical tasks and making people do things in the short term, carrots and sticks are highly effective. For tasks that are more complex (like taking ownership) and for enduring motivation this approach is inadequate and it actually often is counterproductive. For these tasks, motivators need be intrinsic.

Research has also shown that in order to have people intrinsically motivated, we need three things:



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Autonomy

Autonomy is the need to direct your own life and work. To be fully motivated, you must be able to control what you do, when you do it, and who you do it with.

Autonomy motivates us to think creatively without needing to conform to strict workplace rules. By rethinking traditional ideas of control – documents to provide, attendance to meetings, detailed and complete sets of rules, and so on – we can increase autonomy, build trust, and improve innovation and creativity. This is important because we know that people on a construction site will always improvise at one moment or another. The aim should not be to root out any improvisation, but to make improvisation as safe as possible.

Giving autonomy means giving up control and this might feel scary at first. Giving autonomy doesn't mean moving to a situation of total anarchy. It's not about tossing all rules in the bin and transferring all decision power to someone else. Giving autonomy means allowing people to sculpt the way they do their job within certain boundaries and while expecting certain results in return. Giving autonomy goes hand in hand with taking responsibility.

Mastery

Mastery is the desire to improve. If you're motivated by mastery, you'll likely see your potential as being unlimited, and you'll constantly seek to improve your skills through learning and practice. Someone who seeks mastery needs to attain it for its own sake.

For example, an athlete who's motivated by mastery might want to run as fast as they possibly can. Any medals that they receive are less important than the process of continuous improvement.

We know that not all of our subcontractors might be at the same level as us. And that's perfectly fine. The challenge is to raise their capabilities because safety is not the absence of accidents, it is the presence of exactly these capabilities that help to make things go right. Helping people to get better at what they do through learning and coaching activities is very motivating, especially because this leads to development of skills.

Purpose

People may become disengaged and demotivated if they don't understand, or can't invest in, the "bigger picture."

But those who believe that they're working toward something larger and more important than themselves are often the most hardworking, productive and engaged. So, encouraging them to find purpose in their work – for instance, by connecting their personal goals to organizational targets using– can win not only their minds, but also their hearts.

This exactly why we've adopted the "Care is at our core" slogan. When it comes to health and safety, the ultimate purpose is not to reach a certain number of man hours without an accident. This is a by-product. The purpose is to take care of yourself and of others. Caring is a universal human value and a common purpose everyone can and will be motivated to adhere to. It is the bigger picture of health and safety.

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WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

The following questions put autonomy, mastery and purpose into a practical context. Obviously they're not exhaustive, they're meant to facilitate a meaningful discussion on how to influence intrinsic motivation of people and to learn in group from each other's experiences and stories.

AUTONOMY

- **Fix poor and obstructive policies and procedures.** Challenge the practices you currently have on your project: are they adding to the safety of work or to the work of safety? If it's the latter, review them so that they create the added value we need.
 - o Which are - according to you - poor and obstructive procedures on your projects?
 - o What should the output of these procedures be in "the ideal world"? Why don't we see these results?
 - o What can we do to fix them? How can we get the added value we want?

- **Give as much responsibility to each subcontractor as possible.** But also hold them accountable for the result.
 - o How does this make you feel? What are your first thoughts?
 - o What would "giving responsibility" look like in practice? What activities or behaviors do you imagine with that?
 - o Which subcontractor would you give responsibility and which one not? Why?
 - o What would holding a subcontractor accountable for the result look like in practice? How would you make that work?

- **Mind your language.** Reduce controlling language in your written and verbal communication and instead use a more coaching and inviting language style. Instead of saying "you must" or "you should," use terms like "consider doing" or "think about doing."
 - o What are instances of verbal or written communication (apart from contracts) where we use controlling language? Why do we do that?
 - o How can we reframe this controlling language into a more coaching and inviting style?

- **Invite subcontractors** to come up with a safe way of working instead of trying to tell them how they should be working. Ask open questions to challenge assumptions and to facilitate the right thought process. Examples of this can be: "How would you assure that people are protected from a falling from height hazard in that zone?" or "What do you think are the most important risks of your work today and how can we counter them?"
 - o What are instances where we could perfectly invite this participation?
 - o What are instances where instead subcontractors should work as per rule?
 - o How can we define a framework for the above?

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MASTERY

- Provide effective, supportive and non-intrusive **supervision**.
 - o Do we use the Safety Walkabouts as coaching opportunities or merely as correction activities?
 - o When observing unsafe behavior or unsafe situations, do we judge and correct or do we engage in a dialogue to learn from each other and to understand the underlying reasons in order to correct those?
- Offer **training and development opportunities**, not so much for reasons of compliance (even though this remains important), but to allow people to raise their capabilities.
 - o How do we identify training opportunities for subcontractors on the project?
 - o How much time do we spend on training activities on the project?
- Invite people to **share thoughts, concerns and even failures** and treat them as learning opportunities.
 - o See also question 2 of the first bullet point on Mastery.
 - o What does a typical toolbox talk look like on our project? Do we give instructions and ask for signatures or do we give room for discussion and do we ask for participation?
 - o How do we treat mistakes and “bad news” (near-misses for instance)? How can we treat them like learning opportunities?

Note: in the BESIX Field Guide to Subcontractor Engagement you can find detailed information about how to destigmatize failure in the Leadership Toolkit section.

PURPOSE

- **Communication:** when talking to people, make sure you clarify the care principle. Not from a paternalistic perspective (“Safety is a choice” or “We need you to care about your people” for instance), but from a perspective of inclusion (“Caring for each other is something we do as a team” for instance).
 - o When talking to subcontractors, what is the main argument you use to convince people? Why?
 - o What’s your main focus? Is it avoiding accidents (negative and uncertain outcome)? Or is it caring for one another? (positive outcome and something which is certain because it’s a choice?) Which focus do you think has the most impact?
 - o Do you tell subcontractors how to do things or do you make them feel they’re part of a team? Why?
- **Proximity:** make it easy for everyone to see, feel and experience the results of what they do every day.
 - o Do you take the time during safety meetings with subcontractors to highlight positive results and efforts made by workers? Can you share a story about this?

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- When a worker shows stretch behavior (behavior which required an extra effort), do you take the time to give a compliment? If so, what was the impact of this?
- **Context:** shape your story in a way that helps people see the value of what they're doing.
 - When do you talk about compliance with legislation and requirements and when do you talk about the practical added value of doing things? What do you feel has the most impact? And in which situation?
- **Value:** find a way to reward and recognize impact at individual and team level.
 - See also the questions under Proximity.
 - When do you give feedback? When things are not according to expectation or just completely wrong or when things are according to plan or even exceed expectations? Why?
 - Do you have Daily Stands on your project? If so, do you take the opportunity to recognize efforts of people and teams? If so, can you give examples of this?
 - What ways and occasions can you think of (specific to the context of your project) to value efforts people or teams make for safety?