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Take a Stand to Produce Extraordinary Workplace Results

Taking a stand is a critical ingredient in achieving injury-free work and addressing other tough business issues.

Effective leaders know that taking a stand for something is powerful; whereas, ineffective leaders often take positions against something. To understand the difference between taking a stand and taking a position, dedicate a short period of time—a day, a week—to noticing how often politicians, religious leaders, environmentalists, union officers, social activists, managers, etc., take positions against what they do not want, support or desire in the world instead of taking a stand for what they do want or desire in the world. Then notice that their positions are not as powerful as a stand would be.

A good example of stand taking versus position taking occurred during the 1980s. The South African white apartheid government took a position against the full freedom and participation of South African blacks. Meanwhile, while in prison, Nelson Mandela took a stand for the freedom and full participation of blacks, and declared that whites were as much in prison as he was because of the position they had taken. Which perspective proved more effective?

In the business world, when leaders take a stand for the physical and emotional well-being of people, versus a position against injuries, lost-time, regulatory fines, insurance claims, etc., safety takes on an entirely different scope and meaning. By simply shifting from a position to a stand for safety, the conversation about how to approach the workplace safety dilemma changes dramatically and different ways forward are considered. Experience has shown that leaders who stand and speak for people instead of against injuries and accidents are much more effective at producing extraordinary safety results.

Key Points

It is useful to distinguish between taking a stand and taking a position. In safety and other endeavors, taking a stand for people is the most effective approach.

- When we take a stand for something, it typically comes out of our values and spirit. Stands are personal and courageous. They need no justification. In fact, justification weakens a stand.
- Positions are typically taken when we're *against* something. Although there is nothing wrong with taking a position, the result is often a strengthening of the opposite position.

About JMJ

JMJ Associates is a global consulting firm specializing in enterprise transformation. If your company seeks to create breakthrough performance, eliminate workplace injury, form more effective teams, enhance leadership, or build a sustainable future while consistently reaching targets, JMJ is prepared to help. We serve clients from offices in Austin, Doha, Durban, London, Perth and Singapore.

