



The Business of Safety

Language of Workplace Safety



Safety professionals talk about workplace safety in terms of:

- *Incident rates*
- *Reportable illnesses and injuries*
- *Worker's compensation losses*
- *Experience modifier rates*
- *Regulatory compliance standards*

Language of Workplace Safety

Business managers and executives use the language of finance, or dollars.

“Economic performance is the first responsibility of business. . . . without it, a business cannot discharge any other responsibilities, cannot be a good employer, a good citizen, a good neighbor.”

- management guru Peter Drucker



Language of Workplace Safety



“It doesn’t matter what your professional responsibilities are, your management responsibilities contribute directly to your company’s profitability.”

- Michael Muckian, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Finance and Accounting*

Language of Workplace Safety

We must communicate in the language of corporate leaders. We cannot expect business managers to communicate using safety metrics and terminology. When we seek resources we must justify our requests in terms that they understand.



Safety First



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Workplace safety is about more than the bottom line!

“I will fire the first accountant that asks for an ROI on a safety investment.” - Paul O’Neill, Alcoa CEO

Safety First

It is a very bad message to say safety is about dollars.

The real message is: We are doing these things because we care about you, the company cares about you. Don't even talk to me about doing safety for money.



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How do we reconcile this corporate focus on profit with the company's responsibility to protect workers?

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Implementing safety policies that protect workers from injuries and illnesses can also benefit companies by:

- increasing efficiency
- reducing costs
- in some cases, increasing revenue



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Safety professionals should be seen as part of the management team, helping to make day-to-day decisions.

Any tension between operating budgets and safety spending recommendations is not unique to safety concerns - we must work together to find solutions.

Safety professionals should help solve business problems as part of the leadership team.

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Safety professionals can make decisions that:

- make organizations stronger,
- implement processes that protect workers better,
- and, as a result, enhance their value in the eyes of managers and organizational leaders.



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SAFETY

“The most important reason for investing in workplace safety is not saving money, it is keeping people from getting hurt.” - Tom Cecich, 2016-17 ASSE President