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# The Safety Leader

A Forum for Leadership Development with Jay Johnston

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## Wisdom Shared

This issue of the Safety Leader will discuss **Safety Stubbornness**.

When trouble hits the fan I am usually called in to mitigate circumstances and evaluate safety and insurance problems. I often find that stubbornness has been a factor. This includes **owners and managers who disagree with need** or decidedly **don't make time** to manage safety process AND **employees** who make independent decisions about compliance.



**Do you have the Bull by the Horns or the Tail when it comes to Safety?**

Many companies figure no news is good news until some safety issue, accident or liability allegation leads the charge while they are left holding the tail.

**A stubborn Bull going in the wrong direction can lead to a mess.**

In safety we have to **break down the stubbornness barriers** and **take the bull by the horns**. It's **not a debate or an option** – it's the only way to prevent accidents and achieve profitable growth.

**Successful Leaders acknowledge stubborn ways and how they impact accidents, insurance rates and the bottom line.**

## **My First Rodeo with Safety Stubbornness**

In 1992 one of my large insurance clients experienced an explosion and fire which was the result of an employee and management stubbornly failing to comply.

It was an **out of gas** at a **rental unit** and the former tenant had taken an appliance and **shoved the open line through the floor**. Our driver filled the tank, turned it on and left. The result being **a woman and 4 children were severely burned** when they came home and hit the light switch.



**Until we got that situation under control – it was a scary safety ride.**

There were many factors related to safety stubbornness.

- 1) Management had made a number of acquisitions and failed to overcome employees who were stubborn about the need to comply. They had not been properly trained or held accountable.**
- 2) Management let those situations slide.**
- 3) My job was to overcome those safety obstacles and get both management and branch employees in each state to make compliance a stubborn priority.**

**The reality of that first experience of significant liability made me determined and stubborn about encouraging compliance.**

At your next safety meeting I encourage you to talk about Safety Stubbornness. Talk about **stubborn customers who inhibit employee ability** to comply. Talk about **known accidents or incidents** where stubbornness on some ones part contributed to failure to comply. Talk about **management's commitment to comply in stubborn terms** - underscoring important reasons like preventing accidents and large liability claims.

**Successful Leaders learn from mistakes born of Stubbornness.**

## **DOT Compliance should be a Stubborn Priority**

Recently here in Minnesota we had a **transport hit a train**. You may have seen it on the news. The cause was a **driver who stubbornly refused to adhere to DOT regulations** requiring him to stop and put his flashers on. **The transport tank was on fire, the train derailed** and later the tank Exploded. Thankfully there were few injuries, no one died, but it will be very expensive to settle all claims.



Imagine if the train had been hauling crude from the Bakken Oil Fields.

**Successful Leaders know their company cannot afford stubbornness when it comes to DOT safety.**

### **How to Use this Newsletter**

This newsletter is primarily designed to encourage proactive thinking and leadership development. It is filled with opportunities for you to expand an old idea or tryout a new concept.

This issue was focused on understanding **Safety Taxes**.

If you use this issue in a safety meeting – spend some time talking about how to encourage each other and show the support required to achieve safe growth. **Discuss the Problems. Design Solutions.**

**When you manage your compliance efforts you can reduce safety taxes.**

**Jay Johnston** – Editor

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