

BMTFedNewsletter



Behavioural Management Techniques (BMT) is a blend of applied behavioural science tools and project management skills. BMT is used to improve business and safety performance.

Safety – be careful what you measure!

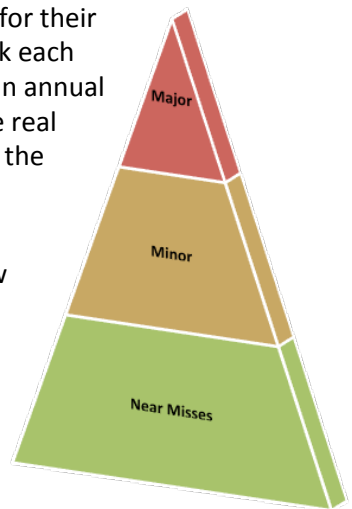
by Bob Cummins

We've been monitoring and measuring health and safety for so long now you would think we would have it right, yet I still see companies and managers setting targets that don't drive safe behaviours.

The frequency of injuries, of plant damages, or the number of hours worked without a lost time accident are measures of results rather than behaviours. We recognise that there is a need to focus on lead instead of lag indicators yet we find it difficult to know what to target.

The Tool Box Talk is a good example; don't get me wrong, a good tool box talk on the right subject, delivered by the right person is a valuable, well, tool! However, a number of companies have created a target for their managers linked to tool box talks - Your front line supervisor must deliver at least one tool box talk each week. The company then measures compliance to this target and sometimes it is even linked to an annual bonus. The company judges its success on how close it is to achieving this target but it forgets the real purpose of doing a tool box talk, it becomes just a numbers game. The relevance of the topic and the care and attention to delivery is lost as this is not the focus of the company or the manager.

Another example is the reporting of near misses or close calls and the use of Heinrich's triangle theorem to create a target. I was guilty of this one myself. It went something like this; I know how many serious injuries and incidents I have had, therefore I can calculate how many near misses should be occurring and that is the number I want to be reported from my sites. This edict was made to sites - please report "X" amount of near misses each month, this is your target and this is what I will measure you, judge you, reward you, chastise you on, this number, not how safe you actually are but this number. – sound familiar? When you focus and measure people on a number they quickly learn that it is the number that is important. They may even construct near misses or report any old tosh in order to satisfy the target that you have put in place.



These are just two examples but there are plenty more around you, just look at what your company measures on a monthly basis, chances are it's a piece of paper rather than a behaviour.

To be blunt, if you are measuring a number instead of the behaviour, be this the number of inspections, the number of tool box talks, the number of near misses etc., then it is not only lazy, it is irresponsible and downright dangerous. You are reinforcing the "tick box" exercise; you are generating and supporting virtual safety where it is more important to fill in a bit of paper than it is to actually create a safe environment for the worker.

If you are a manager, director, vice president or whoever, be careful what you measure, because whatever you measure is what you will reinforce. If it is just a number, that is all you are reinforcing, not the reason, not the idea nor the behaviour, just the number.



The latest book by Howard Lees – **The Too Busy Trap** is now available to buy at www.bmtfed.com

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So you thought weddings were all about love, eternity, flowers, and meringue dresses?

by Claire Waghorn-Lees

Well, maybe, but Dave and I have recently discovered weddings are actually all about managing the environment to create desired behaviour.

In fact, at least in Western culture, weddings are probably one of the most culturally recognised and celebrated uses of behavioural management. In a fit of complete honesty, there is recognition we cannot change others' personalities, so we make guest lists and seating plans. We sit separated parents at opposite sides of the venue, and put our friends with hilarious tendencies for inappropriate jokes as far away from Grandma as possible. We adjust the environment to get the results we are after, hopefully a chance to celebrate with friends and family having found someone so stupidly amazing that you want to spend an entire lifetime with them.

Although couples can be insightful at recognising how environmental changes can help manage behaviour during the wedding event, we must also recognise how important it is to carry through into our relationships. Let's not try to change one another, let's focus on environmental tweaks to find solutions. So Dave, when you're reading this, I'm sorry for always finishing the last of your juice when you're not looking. It's just part of who I am. For the longevity of peace and harmony in our relationship, I suggest we adjust our glass sizes so I get the tall one.



**"The results of hard work often appear as magic;
the work itself is often invisible."**

- John Austin

A Layman's Entry into Behavioral Management – "I Am The C.E.O."

by Don Kernan

John Austin made what I thought to be a very profound statement during a recent general managers meeting. John said, "to your workers, you are the CEO". I imagined myself as one of my workers, 'Joe', and tried hard to visualize how he views 'the boss'. Joe knows that he works for a very large corporation but he doesn't think about this when he reports for work. Why? Because his day to day work experience is completely separated from any other environment but the local one in which he participates. The true CEO of the company is not visible to him. Only his boss matters to him because that is who he looks to for authority and direction. This should be a very daunting, eye-opening moment for all business unit leaders, unless they have an extremely large ego.

Now Mr/Ms leader, how will you impact your team today? Forget today, how about every time you encounter a colleague? The reality is, you are being judged every single time you interact or fail to interact with your workers. If you fail to engage in some way, you've just created a negative personal experience with your team or team-member. That's just not fair, you say! Try asking someone how fair it is when you ignore them. Or, how unfair it is because you acknowledged a colleague standing close by but failed to acknowledge them?

The wise leader will embrace the opportunity to connect positively with their associates because they will easily recognize that they have more to gain than lose in the relationship. The opportune leader will invest in learning more about behavioral management techniques and best practices in order to drive long lasting results.