

Measuring Behavior-Based Safety: The Perfect Leading Indicator

It is possible to successfully work your process and be working on the wrong things.

What is most important to measure with Behavior-Based Safety (BBS) processes? There are process and results indicators in BBS, and both need to be understood and managed. However, there is a single Key Performance Indicator that allows for better management of both the process and results of BBS, and it isn't the number of observations.

Your BBS tool should be flexible and its usage determined by the culture, systems, and maturity of safety efforts for every organization. Any approach that mandates you stay within their methodology, use their software and purchase their checklists, hinders an organization's ability to stay result-oriented. Any improvement methodology that produces results creates a new reality. As we know, repeating the same activities and hoping for different results is delusional. We should also realize that any approach that becomes an awkward fit to the culture and needs will, at best, lose support and interest.

External advice prompting you to "work your process," "trust in the methodology," or require continued investment to use the tools necessary for your success are more interested in your money than your results. If what you are doing is not producing the necessary results, you might need to change either what or how you are doing what you are doing. But how will you make this decision without good measurements?

As the measurement quip goes, "Be careful about what you measure because people will work towards the measurements." If the only measurement of your Behavior-Based Safety process is the number of completed observations, checklists, or people observed, you are in a process- rather than a results-orientation. To stay results-focused, there are five indicators of a Behavior-Based Safety process that must be managed. Consider how to leverage the model outlined below to improve efforts with your process.

Measurement 1: % of Observation Target. Most organizations have a goal to observe and provide feedback to a set number of people in their operations on a monthly or weekly basis. This goal changes based on the culture and process maturity and is typically set at the number of people, rather than number of activities.

Measurement 2: % Action Plan Tracking. Like observations, measuring the number of created and closed action plans could prompt an action plan to create action plans. Most clients tend to measure the number of closed vs. completed with the intent to not create many, but to create the right ones.

Measurement 3: % Participation. How many trained individuals are conducting the number of observations requested of them?

Measurement 4: % Knowledge. There are two indicators that provide insight into knowledge: 1) How many people can recite from memory the precautions you are focusing on? If it never gets in their memory, it will never get in their habit. 2) How many people can name a recent success or three? If the customers of this process (everyone) do not view it as effective or valuable, support will wane.

Measurement 5: % Safe. Whether you are focusing on one behavior or many, what is the average percent safe during your observations for the behaviors of focus?

A Single BBS Leading Indicator

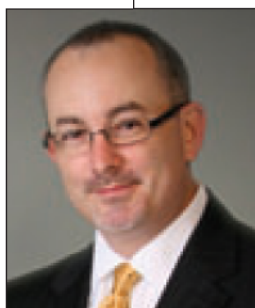
Add the totals of all five measurements and divide by the number of measurements (5). This provides you a single BBS indicator that outlines the health of a process. Moreover, this information helps to provide valuable insight into those whose support is necessary for continued success or investment in responding to action plans.

Of course, the qualifying metrics are the lagging indicators that help manage the focus within the BBS process. If the process is completing the observations, maintaining great participation, and creating action plans and knowledge is high but incidents are still occurring, perhaps it is focusing on the wrong behavior, time, area, tenure of employee, etc. It is possible to successfully work your process and be working on the wrong things. Alternatively, if you are completing observations but not action plans, participation is low at meetings, and no one knows the focus or successes, you may have good results due simply to luck.

Any reported or activity-based measurement can be manipulated to meet goals, so be careful about setting numbers requirements. The goal of this tool is not to provide more accountability opportunities

to focus people on numbers; rather, it is to better understand the health of your process and to feel more confident in where to focus time, energy, and resource decisions.

Finally, remember, any safety measurement system is only as effective as the integrity of and belief in the tool, the priority placed on it by leadership, the value recognized by its customers, and internal capability to make methodology and systems adjustments based on the measurement outcomes. If you would like a copy of a template to begin using this framework to drive improvement, please contact the author at info@proactsafety.com. **OHS**



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