

PepsiCo Case Study: Driving a change in culture by viewing 'safety differently'

The organisation:

PepsiCo products are enjoyed by consumers more than one billion times a day in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. PepsiCo's product portfolio includes a wide range of enjoyable foods and beverages, including many iconic brands that generate more than \$1 billion each in estimated annual retail sales.

First established in Ireland 51 years ago, PepsiCo currently employs more than 1,250 people in Ireland, increasing its workforce by more than 20% in the last few years.

Guiding PepsiCo is our vision to Be the Global Leader in Beverages and Convenient Foods by Winning with pep+ (PepsiCo Positive). pep+ is our strategic end-to-end transformation that puts sustainability and human capital at the centre of how we will create value and growth by operating within planetary boundaries and inspiring positive change for planet and people. For more information, visit www.pepsico.com, and follow on [X \(Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) @PepsiCo.

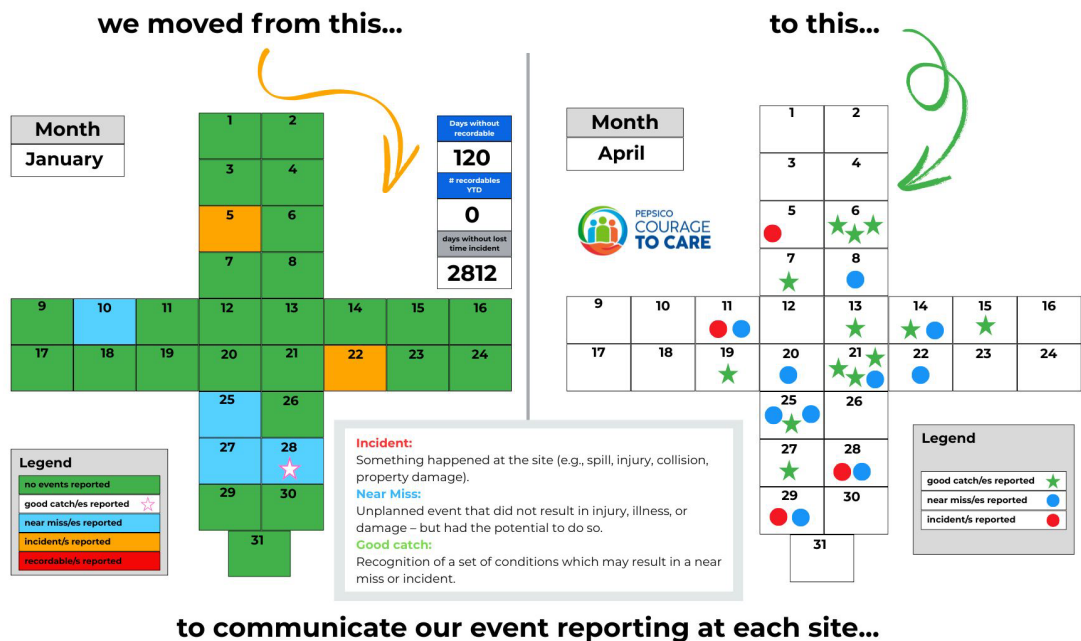


Motivation:

PepsiCo want to empower its operators and frontline teams to 'voice opinions fearlessly'. Believing that psychological safety is essential for this, a series of safety culture workshops have focused on middle management and senior leadership teams, as they play a pivotal role in shaping the culture through their responses to frontline workers who raise concerns regarding emerging risks at our sites. At PepsiCo, a core principle is "no news is not good news" (when it comes to safety). Many organisations measure their success solely based on the absence of incidents. While we work hard to create a safe workplace for our employees, at PepsiCo, we believe that focusing solely on lagging metrics isn't enough to drive real change in safety culture.

What 3 things did PepsiCo do to drive change in culture and safety communication?

1. **Get the full picture of safety and risk:** While updating our safety metrics on notice boards at one of our sites, an operator commented in passing “we’re all safe” upon seeing lots of green entries on a calendar for the month in question. That green element of the calendar reflected the days that no events were raised/reported. That got us thinking – are we communicating that the days nobody interacts with the EHS reporting system are good days? Could our messaging be improved? This sparked the following changes:
 - a. We introduced a more dynamic calendar that clearly showed the number of incidents, near misses and good catches at a glance. Being conscious of the typical connotations attached to red (bad), amber (warning) & green (good) when conveying metrics, a blank white background was used to ensure communication was clear. The feedback from this was that it was easier to see the full picture of safety activity and that it encouraged ongoing engagement.
 - b. With psychological safety in mind, we moved away from promoting recordable rates and lost time incidents (LTI’s) in communication. We didn’t want someone not to tell us about an event because they were afraid of resetting a lengthy “time without an LTI” run back to zero. We really wanted to hear where risk is present and to take action on that.



2. **Empower teams:** We encourage our associates to highlight risks when they see them and to be part of the solution-finding process. For example:
 - a. There was an incremental shift in practice at one of the morning meetings in the shipping department of one of our sites. Towards the end of the month, there were 12 events raised for that department (good catches, near misses, and incidents), which was a lot higher than usual. Previously, the question “what is going on in shipping with all those events?” might have been asked, and it could be perceived as a bad news story. Instead, the team was called out as leaders for highlighting events that posed risk and getting involved in the solution-finding process. It’s also important to note that no financial rewards were offered for this reporting. At PepsiCo, we believe that staying motivated from within is key to being seen as a

valuable part of the organisation. These employees were self-motivated to create a safer workplace for their co-workers and themselves.

- b. One team of operators led a training campaign to create a new e-learning module on use of racking after this training opportunity was identified. They developed the content and worked with third party partners & EHS to create the video, which now forms part of new employee onboarding. This is the type of leadership we encourage at all levels of the organisation.
3. **Lead with curiosity in safety talks:** We wanted to build psychological safety and trust in discussions with management, and to shine a light on the difference between 'work as imagined' by management and 'work as done' on the floor. As part of this effort, our management team and safety representatives visit an area on site and pair up with an employee on the floor to have a curious conversation about workplace safety. These Safety Talks are aided by prompts like 'where is it easy to make a mistake?' or 'is there a job/task where you regularly need to find workarounds?' to help create an authentic conversation centred on workplace safety. More examples of prompts are included below:



We were very conscious that we didn't want safety talks to be onerous. The prompts don't ask directly about safety because typically we found that people tended to think of more visible or obvious areas of workplace safety like PPE, risk assessments, chemical safety, etc. when asked about safety concerns. Instead, we ask open-ended questions focused on work which can provide valuable insights as to where risk may be less obvious or emerging. We are now utilising 'safety talks' as a leading metric, given how they are helping us develop capacity for risk anticipation and to bridge the gap between 'work as imagined' and 'work as done'.

As Marion Kiely, EHS Culture Lead, summaries: *"Our mission is that 'no one gets hurt', and we genuinely hope that our Courage to Care programme will help us achieve that. We find it's a frank and honest approach that is well received by associates as there's no perceived 'snake oil' in it (signing of pledges, taking oaths, non-value-add activities, etc) ... Central to the tenets of Courage to Care is that people are the solution, not the problem. To use a sailing analogy, we charter a course towards our destination and find we're pulled off-course*

every now and then. Once we're pulling together as a team, and are aligned with our core principles, we've a chance of succeeding in our quest..."