



# Implementing an Integrated Approach

Weaving Worker Health, Safety, and Well-being into the Fabric of Your Organization



**HARVARD T.H. CHAN**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CENTER FOR WORK,  
HEALTH, & WELL-BEING

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**Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health**  
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# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

An emphasis on worker health is an emphasis on business health. While many organizations realize this, it's not always clear how to simultaneously create positive outcomes for both. That's where an integrated approach comes in. It views work and the workplace as having tremendous potential to improve employee safety, health, and well-being.

It empowers your organization to address deeper, systemic issues, and in the process, weave together your safety, health, and organizational goals. The purpose of this guide is to demonstrate how to implement an integrated approach to worker safety, health, and well-being at your workplace. The first chapter covers the essentials of the approach: what it is, what makes it different, and why it's valuable. The second chapter examines how to build support for an integrated initiative among leadership and throughout your organization. The final three chapters walk through how to plan, implement, and evaluate an integrated approach. Throughout the guide, you'll find real-world examples from various organizations that exemplify the concepts and processes presented.

This guide shows you how to:

- Inspire key worksite stakeholders to support and participate in an integrated approach
- Identify goals and objectives for an integrated initiative
- Target your efforts on working conditions
- Implement policies and practices that create and sustain positive working conditions
- Evaluate and continually improve your efforts to enhance worker safety, health, and well-being

We summarize the contents of each chapter below.



## Chapter 1

# An Integrated Approach to Worker Safety, Health, and Well-Being

An integrated approach is a comprehensive, management systems approach to worker safety, health, and well-being that's shaped by employee input and participation. The difference with this approach—and its greatest strength—is a sharp focus on using policies and practices to influence working conditions, which are often the drivers of safety, health, and well-being issues.

By targeting working conditions, an integrated approach naturally guides your attention to the systems level, which has several critical advantages. A systems approach can demonstrate how multiple factors contribute to health and safety issues. And looking further upstream may allow you to address root causes instead of just symptoms. A comprehensive approach that's collaboratively designed and implemented is the most effective path to improved safety, health, and well-being outcomes. And it can positively impact employer outcomes, as well.

## Key Characteristics

An effective integrated approach is based on six key characteristics:

- **Leadership commitment.** Leadership makes worker safety, health, and well-being a clear priority for the entire organization. Leaders drive accountability and provide the necessary resources and environment to create positive working conditions.
- **Participation.** Stakeholders at every level of an organization, including employees and organized labor, help plan and carry out efforts to protect and promote worker safety and health.
- **Policies, programs, and practices focused on positive working conditions.** The organization enhances worker safety, health, and well-being with policies and practices that improve working conditions.
- **Comprehensive and collaborative strategies.** Employees from across the organization work together to develop comprehensive health and safety initiatives.
- **Adherence.** The organization adheres to federal and state regulations, as well as ethical norms—such as a respectful workplace—that advance worker safety, health, and well-being.
- **Data-driven change.** Regular evaluation guides an organization's priority setting, decision making, and continuous improvement of worker safety, health, and well-being initiatives.

## What Makes It Valuable

A growing body of research shows that an integrated approach can lead to healthier and safer employees, as well as improved operating and financial outcomes. Organizations already using this approach have found that it:

- Improves market performance <sup>[1]</sup>
- Leads to safer workplaces <sup>[2, 3]</sup>



- Boosts productivity and worker satisfaction <sup>[4]</sup>
- Reduces absenteeism and lowers turnover rates <sup>[4, 5]</sup>
- Bolsters employee participation in safety, health, and well-being initiatives <sup>[6]</sup>
- Creates stronger health and safety programs <sup>[7]</sup>
- Results in greater improvements in health-related behavior changes <sup>[8-10]</sup>

## Chapter 2

### Integrated Leadership and Collaboration

Buy-in and collaboration from across your organization are vital to the viability and sustainability of an integrated approach. Also important are leaders who show clear commitment to improving working conditions, managers who facilitate the process, and workers at all levels who provide input and participate in your initiative. To build support for an integrated initiative, you'll need to:

- **Seek top leadership support early on.** Leadership can set the tone for new initiatives, influence management and employees, commit resources, and create supportive environments. Such actions demonstrate a clear commitment to worker health and safety and serve as an essential driving force behind an integrated initiative.
- **Encourage collaboration.** Whether you create an integrated approach team or tap into another collaborative effort within your organization, diverse perspectives and expertise can help with everything from planning the initiative to continual improvement.
- **Work closely with middle managers.** Middle managers often hold the keys to successful implementation of an integrated initiative because they directly manage both workflow and employees. It's critical that they understand how to support both the effort and their workers.
- **Give workers clear opportunities to participate.** Involving workers in your initiative is a key characteristic of an integrated approach. You'll need to show employees that their involvement will lead to substantive change and improved outcomes.

## Chapter 3

# Integrated Planning

Successful initiatives typically start with a clear, thorough plan. While the steps outlined below are typical of many detailed planning processes, integrated planning focuses on working conditions to improve employee safety, health and well-being. It also emphasizes comprehensive solutions, collaboration, and participation by all levels of employees.

Here are the key steps:

- **Define your goal.** An effective goal provides direction for your team. When you align the initiative's goal with your organization's mission and business objectives, you also increase the odds that you'll get buy-in and support from across your organization.
- **Choose SMART objectives.** SMART objectives—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound—help you get the most from your process. They drive accountability and clarify what you want to accomplish.
- **Identify relevant working conditions.** By targeting working conditions, you work at the systems level and focus on the root causes of health and safety issues.
- **Gather and analyze essential worksite information.** Focused information gathering gives you a baseline to measure progress, verifies your choice of objectives and working conditions, and helps you select and prioritize your tactics.
- **Select tactics to achieve your objectives.** Your tactics influence which policies and practices you'll need to create or change to improve working conditions.
- **Create an action plan.** A well-crafted plan charts your course and drives accountability. It also guides efforts to track progress, allowing you to identify areas that need improvement.
- **Identify required resources.** Consider especially if staff needs to be hired or tasks reassigned, and if new funds are required for items like changes to the physical environment, new employee benefits, or training costs.



During your planning process:

- Make sure to reach out to those impacted by the initiative, including workers, as they may offer critical suggestions and solutions.
- Contact those who need to be convinced about the initiative's value and invite them into the process.
- Allow for plenty of time and discussions around planning. This early effort may help prevent later surprises or roadblocks.

## Chapter 4

# Integrated Implementation

With a plan in place, you can move on to implementation. This is where the rubber meets the road, and you see how changes to policies and practices actually play out in the workplace.

To facilitate implementation:

- **Start small.** Do a trial run of your plan before scaling up more widely. You'll likely learn important lessons in these first steps, allowing you to tweak your tactics before making broader changes.
- **Change working conditions through policies and practices.** For instance, to increase the use of mechanical lifts in areas where moving heavy items is common, you can use worker and management input to implement standard operating procedures for lift use, inspection, and maintenance.
- **Monitor progress.** It's important to track progress toward your objectives and to check how the process itself is going. You'll learn not only if your tactics are working, but also why, which helps make your process even more effective.
- **Review accountability procedures.** During implementation, it helps to examine the procedures you put in place to ensure that all those responsible for implementing an integrated approach know their roles and are held accountable.
- **Communicate with leadership, management, and employees about progress.** This helps maintain interest and build support and participation for an integrated approach.
- **Train employees for successful implementation.** Weave integrated approaches into your existing trainings. And, consider training all levels of employees, including management, on their roles in protecting and promoting worker safety, health, and well-being.

As you go along, remember to:

- Give employees opportunities to participate in implementation—this is critical for your initiative's long-term success.
- Use existing processes. For example, continuous or quality improvement processes in industries such as health care or manufacturing, or pre-task planning in construction, can serve as great platforms for an integrated approach.
- Engage leaders in an on-going way through frequent meetings and communications.
- Communicate often—you'll build trust and support, gain valuable insight, and increase participation.
- Identify the resources you need. If some employees take on new responsibilities, consider shifting their responsibilities to prevent work overload.
- Listen to stakeholders. Workers and managers at all levels can provide critical insights. It helps to listen closely to their input and keep an open mind to changing which tactics and working conditions the initiative focuses on. If key stakeholders aren't participating, talk to them and address their concerns.

## Chapter 5

# Integrated Evaluation and Improvement

When you monitor and analyze data about your initiative, it helps you measure success and improve policies, processes, and practices to reach your objectives. You also get concrete evidence to guide decision-making and resource allocation. Organizations vary in their capacity for evaluation, so gear your effort appropriately for your worksite.

As you evaluate and continually improve your initiative:

- **Remember the key characteristics of an integrated approach.** This will help keep your efforts focused on working conditions.
- **Use a variety of data collection methods.** You'll develop a more complete picture of the issues at hand when you gather evaluation data in multiple ways, such as surveys, walk-throughs, and conversations with employees.
- **Limit how much data you collect.** Focus just on the data that helps you evaluate the objectives, working conditions, and tactics in your action plan.
- **Form a diverse evaluation team.** A team with a variety of backgrounds, skills, and experience gives you a wider range of perspectives and insights.
- **Evaluate as needed.** There's no formula for how often to evaluate your initiative. It's based on your objectives and capacity, and it may change over time.
- **Communicate often.** Regularly share the results of your findings and ask for feedback.
- **Let the data guide you.** Your evaluation results help determine your next steps so you can continually improve your initiative.

## Looking Ahead

Whether you use this document as a trusted guide or an occasional reference, you have a framework, processes, tips, tools, and resources for weaving an integrated approach into the fabric of your organization. We encourage you to use it to improve working conditions and achieve better outcomes for your employees and your organization. Also, be sure to see the on-line [Tools and Resources](#).

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# Chapter 1

## **An Integrated Approach to Worker Safety, Health, and Well-being**

## Chapter 1

# An Integrated Approach to Worker Safety, Health, and Well-being

An emphasis on worker health is an emphasis on business health. While many organizations realize this, it's not always clear how to simultaneously create positive outcomes for both. That's where an integrated approach comes in. It views work and the workplace as having tremendous potential to improve employee safety, health, and well-being. It empowers your organization to address deeper, systemic issues, and in the process, weave together your safety, health, and organizational goals.



## What is an integrated approach?

**It's a comprehensive, management systems approach to worker safety, health, and well-being that's shaped by employee input and participation.**

An effective integrated approach is based on six **key characteristics**:

- **Leadership commitment.** Leadership makes worker safety, health, and well-being a clear priority for the entire organization. They drive accountability and provide the necessary resources and environment to create positive working conditions.
- **Participation.** Stakeholders at every level of an organization, including organized labor, help plan and carry out efforts to protect and promote worker safety and health.
- **Policies, programs, and practices focused on positive working conditions.** The organization enhances worker safety, health, and well-being with policies and practices that improve working conditions.
- **Comprehensive and collaborative strategies.** Employees from across the organization work together to develop comprehensive health and safety initiatives.
- **Adherence.** The organization adheres to federal and state regulations, as well as ethical norms, that advance worker safety, health, and well-being.
- **Data-driven change.** Regular evaluation guides an organization's priority setting, decision making, and continuous improvement of worker safety, health, and well-being initiatives.

## What makes it different?

**The difference lies in a sharp focus on using policies and practices to influence working conditions, which are often the root causes of safety, health, and well-being issues.**

An integrated approach starts with a safe work environment as fundamental to every workplace. It then builds on traditional safety and health initiatives by identifying and enhancing the working conditions most relevant to your employees' health, safety, and well-being. When you use an integrated approach, you harness a unique and powerful business solution that impacts your workers and your organization.

## What do we mean by working conditions?

Working conditions vary by organization and even by worksite. There are three main categories:

- **Physical environment**, such as chemical exposures, workstation design, and fall hazards
- **Work organization**, including workload, job demands, and work schedules
- **Psychosocial environment**, which covers psychological strain and social supports in the workplace, including peer and supervisor relationships and harassment



## Why focus on working conditions?

Working conditions naturally guide your attention to the systems level, which has a few critical advantages. A systems approach can demonstrate how multiple factors contribute to health and safety issues. Using this insight, you can develop more potent tactics for change. Also, looking further upstream may allow you to address root causes instead of just symptoms. This is the most effective path to improved safety, health, and well-being outcomes. <sup>[1]</sup>

For example, suppose you wanted to reduce back injuries at your workplace. Depending on your industry, these injuries might occur more often among employees who lift or move heavy objects. Or, they might occur mostly among those who sit or stand in one place for many hours.

One common approach to reduce employee injuries is to offer classes. Workers might learn about exercises to strengthen their backs and the importance of physical therapy. But this approach fails to address the job demands that can cause injuries, like lifting heavy objects or standing in a stationary position.

With an integrated approach, you step back and ask: What are the root causes of these injuries? This leads to a closer examination of working conditions and possible solutions to improve them. For example, you could:

- Make lifting devices more available to employees and train them on use
- Reorganize work so employees don't sit or stand in the same position for many hours at a time
- Implement a job rotation policy to reduce risk of injury related to a repetitive task
- Build a culture that supports taking breaks so employees can rest, physically and mentally
- Train supervisors to support worker well-being

## What makes it valuable?

**Growing evidence of research shows that an integrated approach can lead to healthier and safer employees, as well as improved operating and financial outcomes.**

Companies that have committed significant investment to employee safety and health have outperformed the U.S. stock market index called the Standard & Poor's 500 over multiple years. <sup>[2-4]</sup> Organizations already using this approach found that it:

- Improves market performance <sup>[5]</sup>
- Leads to safer workplaces <sup>[6, 7]</sup>
- Boosts productivity and worker satisfaction <sup>[8]</sup>
- Reduces absenteeism and lowers turnover rates <sup>[8] [9]</sup>
- Bolsters employee participation in safety, health, and well-being initiatives <sup>[10]</sup>
- Creates stronger health and safety programs <sup>[11]</sup>
- Results in greater improvements in health-related behavior changes <sup>[12-14]</sup>

## What will it take?

**For long-term success, an integrated approach requires sustained leadership commitment and employee input and participation.**

An organization's leaders can support the approach in several ways. For example, they can:

- Set and communicate an organizational vision to support positive working conditions through policies and practices
- Motivate all levels of management to embrace this vision
- Allocate human and financial resources required for success
- Drive accountability throughout all levels of the organization
- Model appropriate safety and health behaviors

Beyond leadership support, you'll also need:

- An empowered decision-maker to lead the effort
- Collaboration among diverse stakeholders to design, plan, and run the initiative
- Cooperation across the organization among all functions that impact worker safety, health, and well-being
- A willingness and clear process to continually improve
- Strategic planning with clear goals and objectives
- Employees at all levels of the organization to participate in the process and have the necessary resources to do so

## Can you measure it?

**Yes, and you'll need to in order to show progress.**

Measurement is actually embedded in one of the key characteristics of an integrated approach—data-driven change—and it's essential to the process we describe in this guide. In [Tools and Resources for Chapter 3](#), we offer several ways to measure an integrated approach. <sup>[15-18]</sup>

## What does it look like in practice?

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is a nonprofit academic health center based in New Hampshire. During one of their strategic planning sessions, leadership decided they needed to take action on their rising employee health care expenses, which had reached 10% of their annual budget. But rather than focus just on financial concerns, they chose to seize a broader opportunity.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock had already set an organizational vision to achieve the healthiest population possible. As the largest employer in New Hampshire, they realized they could take a significant step toward achieving that vision—and simultaneously address their health care costs—by focusing on their own

workforce. In other words, they could strategically align their financial objectives with their organizational vision. This is when they launched their integrated initiative, called Live Well/Work Well.

Leaders knew that departments with higher injury rates would also have higher health risks. <sup>[19, 20]</sup> They reviewed internal injury data to identify those departments, then invited managers and employees from those units to collaborate with them on improving safety, health, and quality outcomes. They used interconnected tactics, such as:

- Policies and practices for safely moving patients and preventing staff injuries
- Exploration of staffing and scheduling changes
- Supervisor training on how to be more supportive of employees
- Environmental and organizational supports, such as a rigorous safety and health program, comprehensive benefits package, healthier food options in the cafeteria, and behavioral health resources for burnt-out or anxious employees

As a result, Dartmouth-Hitchcock realized several positive outcomes, including:

- 85% of employees stated that Dartmouth-Hitchcock supports their safety and health
- 18 of 25 at-risk departments reported fewer injuries
- Employees engaged in these efforts not only reduced their personal health risk factors, but also their healthcare costs
- Due to improved health management, in 2016 health claim costs decreased 3% compared to the 4.07% increase in the national health care inflation rate for that year.

With comprehensive policies and practices aimed at working conditions, Dartmouth-Hitchcock achieved clear, measurable results in reducing injuries and lowering costs—something they had been unable to do before using an integrated approach.

## What This Guide Offers

We present this guide not as a prescription, but as a reference that gives you tools, resources, and suggestions to create supportive working conditions in your organization. There's no simple, one-size-fits-all recipe for an integrated approach—it needs to suit your organization's specific resources, culture, and experience. If you already have successful processes or systems in place, build on them! Take what's useful here and adapt it to suit your needs.

This guide will show you how to use common management systems and processes to:

- Motivate key stakeholders to support and participate in an integrated approach
- Target your efforts on the working conditions most relevant to your workers' needs
- Plan and implement policies and practices that create and sustain supportive working conditions
- Evaluate and continually improve your efforts to change working conditions
- Integrate health and safety concerns into your business processes and decision-making

## Guide Layout

In the rest of this guide, we'll walk through the typical stages of a management systems approach to change. The first step in this process is to build leadership support and engage key stakeholders. Then, you make a plan, carry it out, review your results, and adapt accordingly.

This process is sometimes called Plan-Do-Study-Act and may be part of an organization's continual improvement cycles. In fact, some companies have found that their quality improvement processes are very effective platforms for an integrated approach. We'll look at each step in this process with an eye toward how you make it integrated.

And while each chapter builds on the one before it, you don't need to read the guide straight through. Feel free to jump to the sections most relevant to your organization.

You'll notice as you read through the Guide that we reference tools and resources for each chapter. You can reach them on the Center's website by clicking on the live [red link](#) in the document.

## A Note on Terminology: Workers and Employees

We recognize that organizations may have various arrangements with workers, which may include employees, contractors, subcontractors, temporary workers, and more. It's also true that terms like "employee" and "worker" can mean different things in different industries or worksites. For the sake of simplicity, we use "worker" and "employee" interchangeably to refer to anyone working at a given worksite. We trust that you can apply the guidance here to best suit your organization's needs.

# Chapter 2

## **Integrated Leadership and Collaboration**

# Chapter 2

## Integrated Leadership and Collaboration

With an integrated approach, you work at the systems level to create supportive working conditions. Ultimately, you need your entire organization—including top leadership, middle management, and all workers—to participate in building a safer, healthier workplace. Whether you're just starting a new initiative, or you have one in place and want to take it further, such broad-based support will help advance and sustain your efforts.

**In this chapter, we'll cover how to get buy-in, support, and collaboration from:**

- Top leadership
- The champion
- Integrated team
- Middle management
- Workers



## Top Leadership Support

An organization's top leadership plays a critical role in the long-term success of an integrated approach.<sup>[21,22]</sup> They can set the tone for new initiatives, influence high-level management, commit resources, and create supportive environments. These kinds of actions demonstrate a clear commitment to worker health and safety and serve as an essential driving force behind an integrated initiative.

Top leadership can mean different things at different worksites. It could be the C-suite, the CEO of a small business, or the highest-level decision makers at a branch office. To see why their support matters, consider two stories from the field—one with sustained leadership support, one without.

### FROM THE FIELD

## Two Tales of Leadership Support

### "The Way We Do Business"

TURCK, a Minnesota-based manufacturer, makes technology products for the automation industry. The company has used an integrated approach since 2003, consistently making strategic decisions that benefit both workers and the bottom line.

Backed by the CEO's sustained commitment and leadership, stakeholders at every level—including directors, supervisors, and workers—actively support and contribute to the health and safety of TURCK employees. It's now, as the CEO says, "the way we do business." The company has built an innovative well-being culture that's led to lower health care costs, a healthier and more engaged workforce, and improved financials.<sup>[9]</sup>

### A Break in Leadership Support

Without such deep, sustained leadership support, another manufacturer had a very different experience. The CFO fully embraced an integrated approach, but didn't share the vision company-wide or build organizational support for it. The CFO left shortly after starting the initiative and passed responsibility for implementation to a newly hired, mid-level manager. Without knowledge of the CFO's vision and with little support throughout the company, the manager wasn't set up to succeed in leading organizational change. The initiative floundered because it lacked a clear purpose and an authoritative driving force.

When leadership establishes and communicates a clear commitment to supportive working conditions, they can drive change that simultaneously benefits workers and the organization. Without that strong backing, integrated efforts aren't likely to gain the traction needed for long-term success.



## How Leadership Can Provide Supportive Environments for Health, Safety, and Well-being

One of leadership's primary responsibilities is to ensure safe and healthy worksites for all employees. They can make sure the organization adheres to all regulations and can guide efforts to eliminate or reduce exposures to worksite and work hazards.

Beyond these essential safety and health considerations, providing a supportive environment can mean different things in different settings. For example, leaders might also:

- Create a workplace culture that supports taking a break, including attractive break rooms where employees can rest.
- Provide living wages and good benefits to give employees the best chance to succeed and be productive.
- Make sure all employees feel comfortable expressing their views without fear of reprisal. For instance, employees at TURCK can talk to the CEO and top management at any time. Leadership welcomes employee feedback and makes changes based on their input.

## How Leadership Can Drive Accountability for an Integrated Approach

To support implementation of an integrated approach, top leadership can create and drive accountability. Holding all staff accountable for safety and health was one of the keys to how TURCK established a culture of safety, health, and well-being.

Some organizations add integrated approach responsibilities to job descriptions and make them part of performance reviews. This can be done over time. It's helpful for staff to understand their role in creating a culture of safety, health, and well-being. Leaders can also help with accountability by providing staff with the necessary resources to do their jobs successfully.

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**See this chapter's Tools and Resources for more ways top leadership can support an integrated approach, and for potential roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.**

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## The Champion

System-wide initiatives typically require a point person to lead the effort. We call this person the champion—that might be you. In some cases, top management chooses the champion. Other times, the champion is self-appointed—someone who sees the value of an integrated approach and wants to push for change.

Some organizations have a single champion, others have several. In either case, to be successful, champions need to have leadership support and the authority to develop and implement policies and practices that impact working conditions.

The champion helps figure out how an integrated approach fits into an organization's culture





and business plan, and then leads the initiative by taking on several roles. For example, if leadership isn't already on board with an integrated approach, the champion may present a business case to convince them. Once top leadership buys in, the champion sustains commitment by continually seeking input and support. The champion may also build collaboration among supervisors, manage employees responsible for implementation, and communicate with various stakeholders about the integrated approach and its results.

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**See this chapter's Tools and Resources for more details on the many roles of a champion.**

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## How Champions Can Get Leadership Buy-in: Presenting the Business Case

Some organizations have strong support for an integrated approach from the start, and the leaders themselves spearhead the effort. In other cases though, leadership may be unsure about the approach, and someone else needs to convince them it's worthwhile.

A business case can help build support. You'll want to focus on how an integrated approach both satisfies organizational needs and benefits employees. Make sure to:

- Address leadership and organizational pain points
- Describe how the approach will help reach organizational goals and business objectives
- Use relevant data and stories
- Pitch your case to colleagues first to get their input and support

If you do get leadership buy-in, ask for their commitment to provide the funds and staff required for the initiative. Leadership may want to use this as an opportunity to combine budgets for safety and health goals. With an integrated approach, those responsible for safety, health, and well-being work across their traditional functions—it may help to consolidate or coordinate resources.


If you don't get leadership support at first, make sure you understand their concerns—it'll help you build a stronger case as you go forward.

## Qualities of an Effective Champion

As the face of the initiative, the champion needs to be respected by top management and fellow employees alike. While some employees will jump right in with an integrated approach, others will be hesitant or skeptical about its value. The champion needs to anticipate objections, and be able to listen and respond effectively. That sometimes requires thick skin and tireless effort.

An effective champion is:

- Committed to employee safety, health, and well-being
- Experienced in leading and managing systems-level efforts
- Persistent, committed, and persuasive
- Analytical and strategic
- An effective speaker and strong listener
- Able to manage up and down all levels of the organization

 **Tip:** *Appoint at least one person to have overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations of implementing an integrated approach.*

## Collaboration with an Integrated Team

For the rest of this chapter, we turn our attention to a key characteristic of an integrated approach: collaboration. While top management helps sustain an initiative with vision and commitment, and a champion provides leadership and implementation oversight, broad collaboration is vital for successful implementation.

You can encourage collaboration in several ways. One is to form an integrated approach team. Rather than stay in their silos, team members reach across traditional functions—like occupational safety, human resources, health promotion, and purchasing—and work together to enhance worker safety and well-being.

### Is a team necessary?

Not always. While some organizations may not use a team, others find it a useful way to collaborate and to bring together key stakeholders. A well-designed team can advocate, exert influence, and relay feedback at every level of your organization. They help design, plan, implement, and evaluate your approach.

You don't necessarily need to create a new team, either. Some organizations do, but you could also combine or expand the scope of existing teams. By using effective teams and processes already in place, you can build on their current success to continually improve.


Whether you create a team or not, the key is to encourage collaboration among the different functions responsible for protecting and promoting employee safety, health, and well-being. Even if they're not on the same organizational team, it helps for people to see how their work aligns with a common vision and the strategic goals of improving employee and organizational outcomes.

### Who belongs on the team?

You may want to consider four types of team members:

- **People responsible for employee safety, health, and well-being.** This could be anyone from a medical director to a human resources director to a workers' compensation vendor. It may also include less obvious choices, such as people from the facilities department who may be responsible for hazard control. Or those from the purchasing department who might buy new equipment or less hazardous substances.
- **People from different levels of the organizational hierarchy.** Include upper and middle management, supervisors, and workers.
- **Employee representatives.** If your worksite has them, invite union or other employee representatives and groups onto your team. Unions are natural allies for your initiative because they advocate for supportive working conditions.

- **Subcontractor representatives.** Also, if you have vendors, subcontractors or multiple employers at your site, include representatives from those organizations. You'll want to have vendors align with your vision, and you'll need to ensure representation for the safety, health, and well-being concerns of all employees at your worksite.

 **Tip:** *If you have unions or other groups representing employees at your workplace, emphasize to them that an integrated approach gives employees a voice in creating working conditions that protect and promote their safety and health.*

As you put your team together, it helps to find people who can impact organizational systems and shift your culture. Look for people who are:

- Experienced in managing or participating in systems-level approaches
- Committed to employee safety and health
- Representative of diverse functions and viewpoints
- Optimistic and have can-do attitudes
- Open to innovation and new ideas
- Familiar with your quality improvement process
- Skilled collaborators

#### FROM THE FIELD

### Teams in Complex Organizations

Larger organizations may need multiple teams. At Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, a steering committee oversees their integrated efforts. The members are higher level managers and directors from several groups, including the Employee Assistance Program, Health Coaching, and Safety and Environmental Protection.


Steering committee members then participate on a larger, overall implementation team that carries out integrated efforts across the hospital. This team also includes staff from departments with high injury rates, as well as managers and experts in safety, health, and well-being. The champion participates on both teams.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock also has other multidisciplinary teams that focus on areas such as finance, benefits, dietary, security, and facilities. The key to effective collaboration is that all these teams share a common goal to support employee safety, health, and well-being.

## How to Support Your Team

Hopefully, you have team members open to innovative ideas and committed to worker safety and well-being. That will help, but you can also take some steps to foster communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding, such as:

- Articulate the initiative's goal and request feedback on it. This helps people understand the purpose of the team and the initiative, and it may motivate them to more actively participate.
- Identify the roles of each team member and ask them for feedback. Some people may raise concerns over losing power or turf if different functions of the organization start to work together. Top leadership can help by communicating the importance of collaboration in achieving shared goals and business objectives.
- Provide the necessary staff and financial resources to help the team do its work.
- Ask people on the team to lead presentations or discussions related to how team members benefit individually and collectively when they work together.
- Create small wins and promote the team's successes. When people see success, they may be more likely to get behind the effort.

 **Tip:** *Before your first meeting, speak individually with team members about roles and purpose. You'll be better prepared to avoid confusion and potential conflict.*

See this chapter's [Tools and Resources](#) for roles and responsibilities of an integrated team.

### FROM THE FIELD

## Building Cohesive Teams

Dartmouth-Hitchcock recognizes that when you bring together employees from very different departments, like Safety and Environmental Protection, Human Resources, Quality Improvement, and Facilities, team members may need some guidance on how to best work together. To help teams more effectively collaborate, Dartmouth-Hitchcock offers the following guidance:

- Explain to team members the links between occupational health risks and personal health.<sup>[19]</sup>
- Improve the organizational structure to support an integrated approach. In other words, having Safety report to Facilities, but Occupational Medicine report to Human Resources, impeded collaboration. Can you align these functions and budgets under a single reporting structure to streamline efforts?
- Set high-level team goals that everyone agrees on and that support the organization's vision. This may help avoid turf battles because you establish common ground right from the start. For instance, a broad goal to reduce worker injuries will most likely support cohesion since it appeals to multiple stakeholders.
- Ask each function for ideas to reach high-level goals. See Chapter 3 for more on goals.
- Allow time for different departments to give presentations about their work—this allows team members to understand each other's perspective and jargon.
- Present mini-case studies where team members from different departments show how they can work together to improve health, safety, and patient outcomes.

## Collaboration with Middle Management

Middle managers and supervisors have significant influence on the safety and health practices of their employees. They help create a safe worksite and can affect employee stress levels, schedules, and expectations around taking breaks, vacation, and sick time. They often hold the keys to successful implementation of the initiative because they directly manage both workflow and employees. Supervisors play an important role in modeling and supporting health and safety practices in their units. They may need some training in how to support employees in their efforts to be safe and healthy. They may also need to understand that this supportive role is an essential part of their job.

It's important to get middle management support from across departments before you roll out the initiative. As you bring them on board, keep in mind the different pressures these managers face. On the one hand, they need to make sure the primary work gets done, whether that's caring for patients or manufacturing goods. On the other hand, they have to manage their employees and create working conditions that help them succeed.

It's critical to provide managers with the resources they need to implement policies and practices in their areas. For example, to support their employees' development and work-life balance, managers may need additional staff to cover departmental needs.

## Ideas to Promote Collaboration

Ultimately, your organization's culture informs the best ways to get middle management buy-in and participation in an integrated approach. Regular messages and shows of support from top leadership can play a significant role in bringing middle managers on board, as can educating them on how an integrated approach can help them.

To get management support, you'll need to have ongoing conversations. When you talk to managers:

- Learn about their departmental cultures, resource requirements, and how they interact with other units and departments.
- Show managers how their goals align with an integrated approach and clarify the priority of the initiative in the context of their other work. For example, Dartmouth-Hitchcock links employee health to quality health care, so managers understand that both are goals of their work.
- Discuss how an integrated approach will make their job easier in the long run. For instance, a safe and healthy work environment reduces injuries and keeps employees at work and productive.

You may also want to try some of these ideas:

- Walk the floors and set up meetings with managers to discuss the approach and their role in it—both formal and informal conversations can play a big role in management support.
- Listen to management feedback and make sure to address their concerns.
- Train them on what an integrated approach is all about. See Chapter 4 for more on training.
- Invite managers to be on the integrated team—it's a great way to make sure their voices are heard.
- Ask their peers who support the initiative to talk to them.
- Make creating a climate of safety and well-being part of their job description and performance reviews—this helps with accountability, as described earlier in this chapter.



## FROM THE FIELD

## Collaboration Beyond the Meeting Room

A site champion at Dartmouth-Hitchcock found that if you want collaboration from middle managers, you need to walk the floors and have frequent face-to-face conversations. The champion noticed that it was easy for unit managers to say they supported integrated efforts in a meeting, but they might not follow through by allowing employees work time to complete a survey or attend a training. As a result, employee participation in some departments dropped.

The site champion set formal meetings with managers, but also had many informal talks by walking around the worksite. These impromptu conversations provided an opportunity for managers to express the challenges involved in letting employees attend trainings. The champion could then address these issues through changes to the initiative.

HealthPartners, a Minnesota-based integrated health system, uses daily and weekly huddles—short meetings—to share messages from leadership to middle managers and employees. This can be a great way to let middle management know what's happening, get their feedback, and earn their trust and support.

Actions like these can help you engage middle managers and show them how to fold an integrated approach into what they're already doing.

## Collaboration with Workers

Involving workers in your initiative is a key characteristic of an integrated approach. To make that happen, you'll need to show employees that their involvement will lead to change and better outcomes. When you specifically address the work environment and communicate to employees how you're going to do that, you're more likely to get them to take part in the effort.<sup>[10]</sup> Consider using some of the following ideas to get workers more involved with your initiative.

### Involve workers throughout the entire process and make change based on their input.

Employees know the ins and outs of their job and working conditions better than anyone else. When you get their input and suggestions for creating solutions, you increase the odds that you'll take on relevant issues and develop successful tactics to address them. And when workers feel part of the process, you gain their trust and support.

You can invite workers to participate in planning and design teams, focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and other activities to create and maintain supportive working conditions. You can also:

- Make it easy for them to participate by allowing them to attend meetings or events during work time

- Talk with their supervisors about the importance of employee participation
- Make changes based on their suggestions and input

### **Provide a system that allows employees to report injuries and hazards without fear of reprisal.**

When you give employees simple systems to report hazards, near misses, and injuries, you not only invite them into the process, you also learn about hazards and injuries in real time. Workers also need to feel supported in using these systems and to know that there won't be negative consequences for submitting reports. Dartmouth-Hitchcock and TURCK both make use of electronic reporting systems, but you could also use a paper-based approach.

With any type of reporting system, the key is to make sure employees get prompt feedback on how management will address the hazard or injury. If you don't close the communication loop, employees may feel snubbed, making them less likely to provide input in the future.

### **Facilitate worker engagement.**

When employees feel engaged in their jobs, they're safer, healthier, and more productive.<sup>[23]</sup> You drive engagement by respecting employees and frequently recognizing the value of their work. It also helps if you create an environment where employees feel safe to voice their concerns and make suggestions for improvement.

### **Support employee health and safety practices.**

A supportive work environment can serve as the basis for employee safety and health. You may want to provide some resources to employees to aid them in their efforts. Some organizations have in-house health clinics for employees, which can reduce barriers to self-care and disease management. Others offer on-site fitness centers. Smaller employers might provide gym discounts, link with local health care providers, or provide information from local community groups.

Keep in mind that efforts to address individual behaviors are only a small part of a larger initiative focused on working conditions. Focusing further upstream at the systems level is the more effective way to impact worker safety and health, and you'll see more about how to do that in Chapter 3.

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**[See this chapter's Tools and Resources for sample business case tips, talking points, and slides.](#)**

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## FROM THE FIELD

**Retail Employees Team Up to Create a Healthier Workplace**

A large, publicly held U.S. retailer partnered with researchers to engage their employees in creating a healthier work environment. Over 2,000 employees from 21 stores took part in the program—each store had 150-200 employees. The program aimed to build employee problem-solving capacity and create a better work environment. <sup>[24]</sup>

Workers received training and collaborated in problem-solving teams to develop, implement, and evaluate action plans that addressed issues at their stores. Although each team developed its own plan, many identified problems with the same working conditions:

- Little or no employee participation in decision-making
- Concerns about the physical environment in stores
- Lack of organizational support for employee well-being
- Scheduling challenges

By having employees participate in this process and implement their action plans, the retailer saw improvements in: <sup>[24]</sup>

- Employee involvement in decision-making
- Physical conditions in their stores
- Organizational support of employees
- Perceived scheduling flexibility
- Employee perceptions of health and safety at work
- Job stress and turnover
- Sales per labor hour

For more ideas on how to get employees involved in your initiative, visit the [“Healthy Workplace Participatory Program”](#) from the Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace.



## Final Thoughts on Leadership and Collaboration

An integrated approach is a systems-level effort to create a safer, healthier workplace through changes to working conditions. To make it viable and sustainable, you need buy-in and collaboration across your organization. You'll need leadership to show clear commitment to improving working conditions, a team to plan and implement, managers to facilitate the process, and workers at all levels to provide input and participate in your initiative.

As you try to get buy-in and participation, it helps to frame the approach in a way that appeals to the needs of your different stakeholders. For example:

- Leaders are likely to make a long-term commitment to an integrated initiative if they understand how it supports organizational goals and business objectives
- Champions may be more successful if they are empowered decision-makers that are respected by all stakeholders
- Integrated team members may need training on integrated and collaborative approaches
- Middle managers can buy in to an integrated approach if they see how it streamlines their work; keeps employees healthy, safe, and engaged; and supports the organization's goals
- Employees may participate in efforts when their input is welcomed and listened to, and when they become part of the solution

After you start to build support, you can turn your focus toward the employee health and safety issues you want to take on. In the next three chapters, we'll look at how to do just that.

## CHAPTER CHECKLIST

### **To build support for your initiative:**

- ✓ Seek top leadership support early on, emphasizing how an integrated approach focused on working conditions benefits employees and the organization
- ✓ Identify a champion to lead the effort
- ✓ Create an integrated approach team, or another collaborative effort appropriate for your organization, to help with everything from planning to continual improvement
- ✓ Work with middle managers so they understand how to support the effort and their employees
- ✓ Give workers clear opportunities to participate in your initiative, starting with the planning process

# Chapter 3

## **Integrated Planning**

# Chapter 3

## Integrated Planning

Once you build support for an integrated approach, you have a foundation for focusing your attention on the health, safety, and well-being outcomes you want to improve. In the next three chapters, we'll walk through a typical management planning process using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle as our model. You may use a different process in your workplace, but the ideas are usually similar: create a plan, implement it, evaluate your results, and make data-driven adjustments.

We'll offer tips, tools, and suggestions on how to make this cycle integrated. You'll see how to adapt your existing processes to create organizational change that enhances worker safety, health, and well-being.

**In this chapter, we cover the key steps in integrated planning:**

- Define your goal
- Choose your objectives
- Identify relevant working conditions
- Gather and analyze essential worksite information
- Select tactics to achieve your objectives
- Create an action plan
- Identify required resources



## The Value of Integrated Planning

A successful workplace initiative starts with a well-crafted plan. An integrated approach adds value to that plan because it helps you:

- Impact both employee outcomes around safety, health, and well-being and organizational outcomes, such as increased quality and improved efficiencies
- Identify working conditions that are the root causes of worksite safety and health issues
- Focus information gathering on your objectives and root causes
- Prioritize positive changes to working conditions as the most effective way to improve employee and employer outcomes
- Achieve your objectives and create accountability

Many organizations have planning tools and procedures built into the continual improvement processes they already use, such as Six Sigma, LEAN, and PDSA. In fact, these processes can be highly effective platforms for an integrated approach.<sup>[9, 25]</sup> If you already use one of them, you can adapt the guidance here to best suit your existing tools.

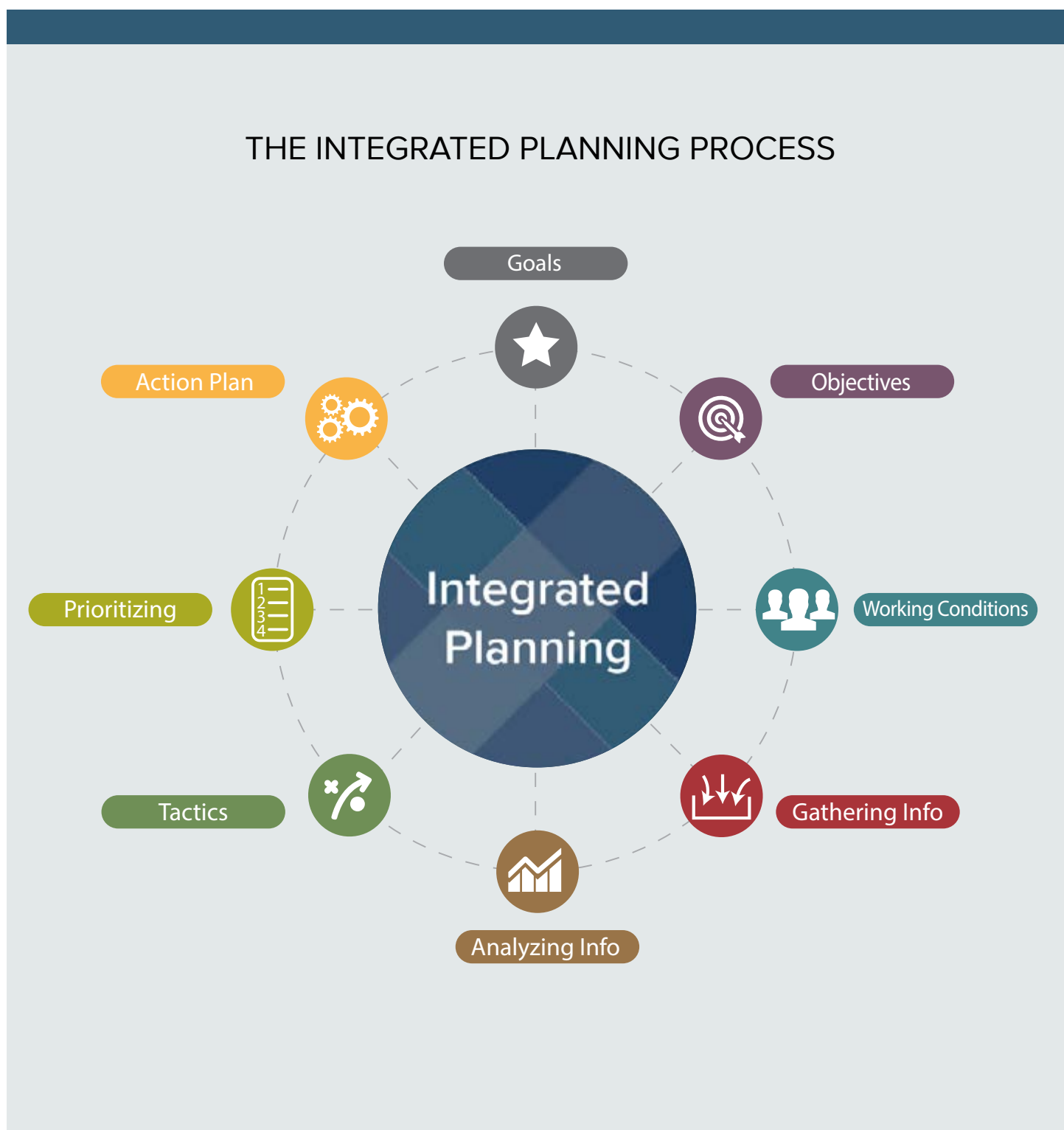
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**[See this chapter's Tools and Resources](#) for more information about quality improvement processes.**

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Figure 1 on the next page identifies steps in the integrated planning process: define your goal, choose objectives, identify working conditions, gather information, analyze findings, select and prioritize tactics, and create an action plan. This chapter addresses each step.

Figure 1. The Integrated Planning Process



## ★ Define Your Goal

When you start a new initiative, the goal provides direction for your team. For some companies, the goal for worker safety, health, and well-being may be clear. For instance, consider an oil platform at sea where employees work 12-hour shifts in dangerous working conditions for ten days at a time. They might want to focus on how to improve safety on the platform by ensuring workers get enough sleep, breaks, and opportunities to communicate with their families.

For other organizations, it won't be so obvious. If your team isn't sure where to start, brainstorming can help. Or, consider what brought you to an integrated approach:

- Does your organization want to reduce employee stress from job demands and long hours?
- Do you want to create an environment where employees feel supported and are engaged in their work and with the organization?
- Do you aim to be an industry role model in supporting employee health and safety?
- Does management want to build a culture of health?
- Do you have a burning issue or specific pain point, like rising health care costs, injuries, or employee turnover?

Even if you think it's self-evident, spend time with your team to decide what you want to accomplish. Conversations about goals can reveal more than you might expect, and they can help people feel more invested in the process. When your team openly and honestly discusses questions like those above, your goal will become clear. See Chapter 2 for more information on collaboration and team building.



## How to Make Your Goal Integrated

To align your goal with an integrated approach, aim for one that might help you:

- Sustain leadership buy-in and commitment, potentially by aligning with organizational objectives
- Focus on organizational policies and practices that improve working conditions
- Promote collaboration across functions responsible for worker safety, health, and well-being
- Encourage employee input and participation

### FROM THE FIELD

#### The Power of Integrated Goals

Consider the goal for Dartmouth-Hitchcock's Live Well/Work Well initiative: to have the healthiest workforce possible. It's based on the premise that healthy employees also use safe work practices, both of which positively impact quality. Their initiative's goal for a healthy and safe workforce ties directly to their corporate goals for patient safety and compassionate, high-value care. This link helped motivate and sustain strong leadership commitment for their integrated initiative.

It also went a step further. Their goal was both broad and clear. To reach it, they knew they'd need comprehensive, collaborative, systems-level solutions with a focus on working conditions. By weaving the initiative's mission into organizational interests, their goal became part of the very fiber of their organization that all employees could get behind.



## Choose Specific Objectives

With a goal in place, your team has a long-term target. Next, you can zero in on objectives that move your organization toward that goal. With an integrated approach, objectives focus on work itself to create the best circumstances for employee safety and health.

### SMART Objectives

SMART objectives—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound—help you get the most out of your planning process. They drive accountability and clarify what you want to accomplish.

To create SMART objectives, you can:

- Choose a specific change you want to make
- Identify measures that help objectively check progress toward that change
- Set an outcome that's realistic for your timeframe
- Verify that your objectives are important to the organization and to those involved in the initiative
- Set a target date for measuring objectives
- Specify which parts of your organization will be involved—you may want to try your changes in a small area first, such as a group that has high rates of injuries or absenteeism

 **Tip:** Choose *SMART* objectives for your initiative: *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.*

#### FROM THE FIELD

### SMART Objectives Provide Clear Direction

Every department at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center sets annual SMART objectives to help them reach high-level goals. Here's one department's objectives for the year:

- Decrease total employer health claims cost by \$5.5 million
- Reduce OSHA incident rate by 25% for our department and by 10% for Dartmouth-Hitchcock
- Deploy an integrated approach in at least two work units

With a simple, direct statement, they hit on every aspect of a SMART objective. It's specific, reasonable, and relevant, and it's clear to anyone reading it what they want to accomplish. It also makes obvious the kind of data they'll need to collect to evaluate progress.



## Identify Relevant Working Conditions

Next, you'll need to identify working conditions that affect your objectives. Some health and safety initiatives miss their aim because they only address symptoms. But when you focus on working conditions, you get to the root causes of accidents, illnesses, mental health conditions, and other safety and health outcomes.

For instance, if you simply tell workers to stretch or work out to ease their back pain, it usually doesn't prevent or reduce injuries because the real causes of pain might be:

- Moving heavy, awkward loads
- Sedentary or stationary work where employees don't move enough to get the kinks out
- A hostile supervisor who triggers stress, which can tighten workers' back muscles and make them more susceptible to strain
- Obstructions in hallways or on scaffolding that workers trip over
- A combination of some or all of these factors

The Hierarchy of Controls for Total Worker Health®, developed by The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), further highlights the critical role of working conditions. As shown in Figure 2, the most effective ways to improve employee safety, health, and well-being are to:

- Eliminate workplace hazards
- Update policies and practices to support worker safety and health
- Redesign the work environment

This is exactly what you do when you create positive working conditions. While training and other employee activities have their place, they're most effective as part of a broader effort to ensure a healthy and safe work environment. Also keep in mind that when you do offer activities and training for employees, it's important they receive the resources they need to apply what they've learned.

Figure 2. NIOSH's Hierarchy of Controls for Total Worker Health®

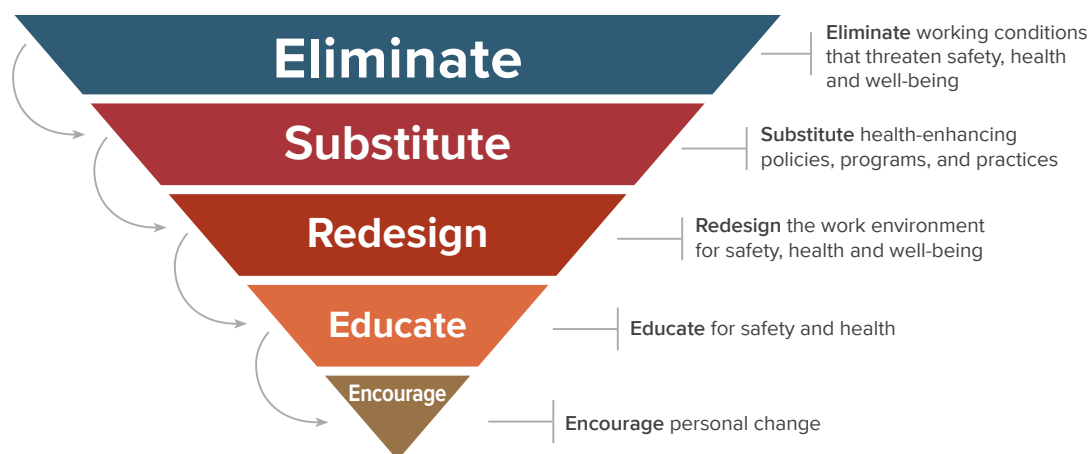
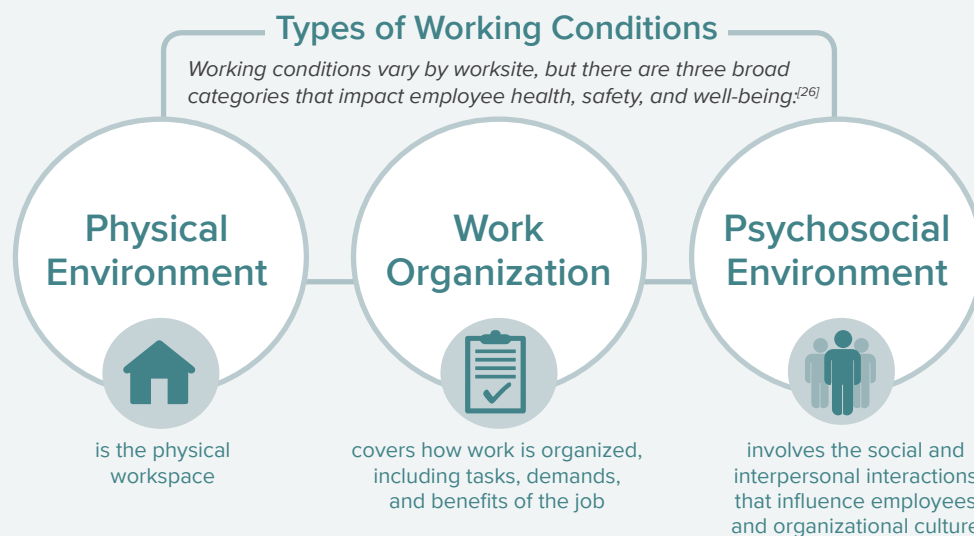


Figure 3. Types and Examples of Working Conditions



While it's beyond the scope of this guide to identify every working condition across various organizations and industries, the lists below provide examples of conditions that might exist at your worksite. You may want to identify and provide solutions for:

### Physical environment

- Accessible restrooms and eating facilities
- Air quality
- Chemical and physical hazards
- Healthy food options
- Housekeeping
- Lighting
- Materials handling equipment, such as lifts and tables
- Noise
- Opportunities for safe movement, such as machine guarding, walking paths, and stairwells
- Weather

### Work Organization

- Wages
- Stationary sitting or standing time on the job
- Break schedules
- Insurance benefits for health care, disability, and workers' compensation
- Pace and amount of work
- Paid sick time
- Scheduling flexibility
- Shift work and hours worked
- Staffing levels
- Training and mentorship

### Psychosocial environment

- Harassment and bullying
- Work-life balance
- Supervisor and co-worker support
- Violence

It's also important to realize that employees respond to working conditions in various ways. For instance, shift work, job demands, and supervisor support can influence stress, sleep, eating, and physical activity patterns. Your worksite's particular working conditions—and how employees respond to them—may influence the focus of your initiative.

## How to Target Relevant Working Conditions

You can use your objectives as a starting point to zero in on the working conditions that are the root causes of worker safety, health, and well-being issues at your worksite. If your organization uses tools for root cause analysis, such as Six Sigma's 5 Whys, you can begin there.

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[See this chapter's Tools and Resources](#) for more information on root cause analysis.

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Another option is to brainstorm ideas with your team to get viewpoints from across the organization. For instance, if your objective focuses on back injuries, you can brainstorm for working conditions that lead to back problems. Moving heavy loads without lifts might be an obvious cause, but be sure to dig deeper and look for other factors, too. For example:

- Were supervisors and employees trained how to use lifts?
- Does the department's culture encourage or inhibit the use of lifts?
- Are lifts placed in locations that encourage use?
- Is there an adequate maintenance plan for lifts?

It may also help to consider applying three key characteristics of an integrated approach:

- **Leadership commitment:** Target working conditions that leadership will support and that contribute to organizational goals
- **Collaboration:** Invite into the process worksite players across the organization who might have a stake in changing working conditions
- **Participation:** Include workers in your discussions who might be impacted by the outcomes; for example, if you want to reduce back injuries, include employees who've had them

**To get started:** Trust your team's ideas. If conversations keep circling around the same working conditions, start with those. By collaborating with stakeholders, including leadership, you can reach consensus on relevant working conditions to address.

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## Example: Identifying Root Causes of Back Injuries

In this chapter and the one that follows, we'll use an ongoing example to work through some of the steps in planning and implementing an integrated approach. For starters, let's assume you work at a midsize manufacturer and you've set the following goal and objective:

- **Goal:** Reduce worker injuries
  - **Objective:** Reduce worker back injuries on plant floor by 10% over the next 12 months
-

Table 1 shows possible working conditions and employee responses you might want to target for this objective.

Table 1. Sample working conditions that may impact back injuries

	Category	Working Condition
	<b>Physical Environment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and availability of operational lifts for moving and lifting heavy or awkward products</li> <li>• Obstructions in production plant walkways that people might trip over</li> <li>• Slippery floors that may lead to falls</li> </ul>
	<b>Work Organization</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break schedules and practices—not enough time for breaks can impact injury rates</li> <li>• Duration of stationary or sedentary work at each work station—too much stationary work can impact injury rates</li> <li>• Productivity demands that conflict with safe work practices or appropriate technology use</li> <li>• Systems for implementing policies, handling materials, and maintaining technology—barriers to using safe and healthy practices may result in injury. For example, if lifts are broken or moved to another department, workers may get hurt.</li> <li>• Return-to-work policies and practices—effective policies support both supervisors and injured employees when returning to work</li> </ul>
	<b>Psychosocial Environment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisor support—supportive supervisors are associated with reduced injuries</li> <li>• Supervisor encouragement of safe equipment use</li> </ul>
	<b>Employee Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of supervisor support—employees who feel they have supportive supervisors also report less pain</li> <li>• Reported stress levels—employees who report less stress also report less pain</li> </ul>



## Gather Essential Information

Once your team identifies relevant working conditions, you can gather information that helps you:

- Establish a baseline—where does your organization stand today in terms of your goal and objectives?
- Verify your choice of goal, objectives, and working conditions
- Select and prioritize tactics. See section later on in the chapter for tactics based on real evidence

Organizations have different capacities and interests in collecting and analyzing information. Some are very data-driven, others less so. You may have strategic data gathering and reporting built into your quality improvement efforts. If so, consider how you can adapt your existing processes to suit an integrated approach.

You might also want to use a benefits provider or similar vendor to collect and analyze data for you.

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[See this chapter's Tools and Resources for guidance on working with vendors.](#)

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### Example: Gathering Back Injury Data

Let's return to the midsize manufacturer who wants to reduce back injuries. So far, you have a goal, objective, and possible working conditions to target. The next step is to gather information that helps you establish a baseline for comparison and verify your choices around your goal, objective, and working conditions. Table 2 on the next page shows the kinds of information you might need and where to find it.

Keep in mind that this is just an example. You wouldn't need to gather everything in this table, but you'll get the most accurate picture by using a combination of methods, including talking to employees. As you consider the types of information you need to collect, you may want to think in terms of both employee and organizational outcomes. Both can be impacted by an integrated approach, and you'll build a stronger case for your efforts if you can show the broader impacts of your initiative.




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**Tip:** *To streamline data-gathering efforts, focus on the health and safety information that helps verify your goal, objectives, and working conditions. Start with what you already have—like internal injury reports or workers' compensation data—and add to it as needed.*





Table 2. Sample sources for back injury information

	Factor	Types of Information	Information Sources
	<b>Goal</b> Reduce worker injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and types of injuries in the past year, longer if you want to look at trends</li> <li>• Where injuries occurred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSHA 300 series forms</li> <li>• Internal injury reports</li> <li>• Absenteeism, productivity, medical claims, and workers' compensation data</li> <li>• Worker health surveys</li> </ul>
	<b>Objective</b> Reduce worker back injuries on plant floor by 10% over 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of back injuries in the past year, longer if you want to look at trends</li> <li>• Where, when, and how back injuries occurred</li> <li>• How back injuries might have been prevented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSHA 300 series forms</li> <li>• Internal injury reports</li> <li>• Absenteeism, productivity, medical claims, and workers' compensation data</li> <li>• Worker health surveys</li> <li>• Injury investigation reports</li> <li>• Root cause analyses</li> </ul>
	<b>Relevant working conditions</b>	<p><b>Physical environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and availability of operational lifts for moving or lifting heavy or awkward objects</li> <li>• Obstructions in production plant</li> <li>• Slippery floors</li> <li>• Poor lighting</li> </ul> <p><b>Work organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duration of stationary or sedentary work at each workstation</li> <li>• Amount of bending and lifting at each workstation</li> <li>• Production processes</li> <li>• Break schedules and practices</li> <li>• Return-to-work policies and other benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>Psychosocial environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisor and co-worker support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkthroughs</li> <li>• Risk assessments</li> <li>• Task and job hazard analyses</li> <li>• Review of organizational policy and program documents</li> <li>• Employee and supervisor interviews and focus groups</li> <li>• Employee and supervisor observation</li> <li>• All-employee health and climate surveys</li> <li>• All-employee feedback surveys</li> </ul>
	<b>Employee responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical activity</li> <li>• Stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All-employee health surveys</li> </ul>

Having a list of information sources is a good start, but how do you gather the information you need? Table 3 provides some collection methods for the working conditions given in Table 2.

**Table 3. Sample methods to collect back injury data related to working conditions**

	Working Conditions	Collection Methods
	<b>Physical environment</b> 	
	Number and availability of lifts for moving heavy or awkward objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform walkthrough to determine number of operational lifts</li> <li>• Interview employees and supervisors to find out if:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Employees consistently use lifts</li> <li>◦ Supervisors encourage regular lift use</li> <li>◦ Enough lifts are available and operational</li> <li>◦ They were trained how to use lifts</li> <li>◦ They know of any barriers to lift use and possible solutions to overcome them</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review maintenance and inventory procedures</li> <li>• Conduct hazard risk mapping <sup>[27]</sup>, a participatory way to collectively identify work area hazards</li> </ul>
	Slippery floors and obstructions in production plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform walkthrough to identify any:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Obstructions that are trip hazards</li> <li>◦ Slippery floors throughout the worksite campus</li> <li>◦ Locations with inadequate lighting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interview supervisors and employees to identify ways to reduce obstructions</li> <li>• Talk to facilities, safety, and cleaning staff to identify changes to floor maintenance procedures that could reduce slippery floors</li> <li>• Review organizational policies and practices around safety, reducing fall risk, and housekeeping</li> <li>• Review job descriptions for supervisors to ensure they're accountable for safety and housekeeping in their areas</li> </ul>

Working Conditions	Collection Methods
<b>Work organization</b> 	
Duration of stationary or sedentary work at each workstation, amount of bending and lifting at each workstation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform job hazard and task analyses to identify stationary or sedentary work and the amount of bending and lifting required by the job</li> <li>• Review the NIOSH lifting equation</li> <li>• Interview supervisors to learn how production and other demands influence work</li> <li>• Review break schedules to see if they allow adequate rest from work</li> <li>• Interview workers to learn how they engage with their work and workstation</li> </ul>
Break schedules and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review organizational policies on break schedules</li> <li>• Talk to supervisors to learn how production and other demands influence break schedules and practices</li> <li>• Talk to workers to identify their needs and experiences around break-taking</li> </ul>
Return-to-work (RTW) policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review RTW policies</li> <li>• Interview supervisors to learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ RTW experiences with their employees</li> <li>◦ RTW training availability</li> <li>◦ Needs for working with injured employees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interview employees to learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ RTW experiences with managers and co-workers</li> <li>◦ Degree to which RTW policies met their needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Health benefits to support efforts to reduce back injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review health and mental health benefits</li> <li>• Talk with or survey employees to learn about their needs and interests in reducing back injuries</li> </ul>
<b>Psychosocial environment</b> 	
Supervisor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review policies impacted by supervisor support, such as flexible scheduling, working remotely, annual leave, and caregiving</li> <li>• Interview supervisors to better understand their role in supporting employees</li> <li>• Interview employees to identify their needs around supervisor support</li> <li>• Use health and safety climate surveys</li> </ul>

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See this chapter's [Tools and Resources](#) for more information on collection methods and measurement tools.

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## Maintain Confidentiality

Surveys and conversations with employees play a key role in information gathering. When you ask employees about their behaviors, jobs, and fellow workers, you may raise concerns about how you'll use that information. If employee privacy is breached, you'll lose their trust, which can make collaboration on the initiative more challenging. It's important right from the start to establish processes and procedures that maintain confidentiality.

To build trust and demonstrate transparency, it helps to tell employees:

- Why you're gathering information
- What you'll do with the data
- How they'll receive feedback

It also helps to include employees on your team and involve unions and employee representatives from the beginning. <sup>[28]</sup> This will give you a clearer picture of what you need to address.

Another way to protect confidentiality is to use aggregate data that summarizes the findings across groups of employees. For small organizations or departments—those with six or fewer people <sup>[29]</sup>—this may not be possible. In this case, some organizations combine data from multiple small departments. Others use an outside vendor to collect information, which can provide a firewall that ensures confidentiality.



## Analyze Your Findings

After you've gathered the essential information, you can analyze your findings to create a baseline for later comparison. You might also find that you need to alter your objectives or focus on different working conditions. It's best to do that now, before you decide which tactics you'll use for change.

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### Example: How Data Can Impact Focus

Continuing with our midsize manufacturer example, your team might start out with the idea that obstructions in work and common areas leads to trips and falls, which causes back injuries. But after talking to injured employees, you may find it's more complex than that.

For starters, through injury reports and interviews with workers, you might learn that it's more often slippery floors and walkways that lead to falls, not obstructions. But that's not the only cause.

Supervisors in some departments may report that upper management sets tight production deadlines. That prevents supervisors from allowing employees to take their scheduled breaks. With higher stress levels and no time to rest, these departments have more back injuries.

Also, walkthroughs may reveal that lifts in some departments are often broken or unavailable. And during discussions, some workers reported that they weren't trained how to use lifts. Both conditions lead to more injuries.

And finally, surveys and discussions with employees may reveal that more back injuries occur in departments with lower reported supervisor support.

This example shows how data can contribute to a more successful initiative. If your team had proceeded with efforts to eliminate obstructions, the impact on worker safety and health would have been minimal. After data gathering and analysis though, you can take on the true root causes of back injuries.

## How to Analyze Findings

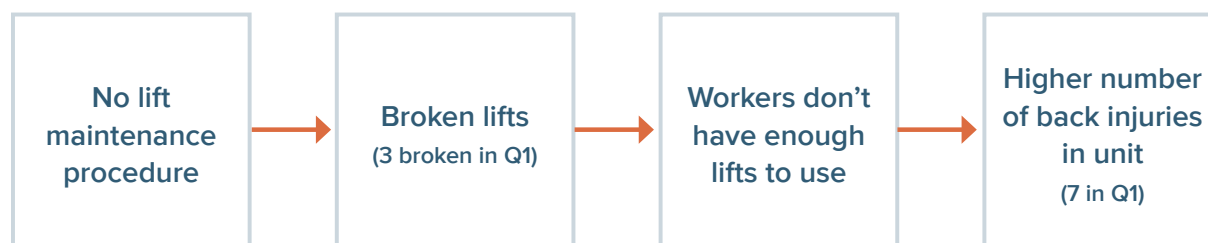
As with most steps in an integrated approach, you can analyze and present your findings in many ways. The best method for your organization depends on your culture and capacity.

**To get started:** One way to analyze findings is to jumpstart a team conversation with questions like:

- What patterns emerge from the data? For example, if the focus is back injuries:
  - Are back injuries especially high or increasing over time in particular departments?
  - Do the working conditions we've identified as root causes also exist in those departments? Are they different from other departments?
  - What story do the data, employee input, and our observations tell?
- Do the findings support the objectives and working conditions we chose? Are those working conditions the root causes that impact our objectives? Are there also other working conditions we may want to address?
- Is there a disconnect between organizational policy and findings about actual workplace practices? For example:
  - Are all workers in all departments able to take their scheduled breaks?
  - Are all supervisors implementing policies in the same way to contribute to a sense of fairness and equity? For instance, if there is a flexible schedules policy, does everyone get equal treatment in designing their schedules?
  - Are supervisors supporting organizational policies about employee safety, health, and well-being? Do they have the training they need to do that?
  - Do employees feel like they have permission from their supervisors to participate in the initiative?
  - Should our organization look at improving procedures and practices to support policies?
- Are any findings especially important to our organization's mission, vision, or goal? For example, if the goal is to reduce health care costs:
  - What is the trend over the past few years?
  - Does the trend follow health care costs in our sector?
  - What are the major cost drivers?
- Do we have data from outside our organization that we can compare to? If so:
  - How does our organization's data look against comparable industry, state, or national data?
  - If it's significantly higher or lower, is this an area to address?

Once you've done some initial analysis, you may want to prepare a simple summary to facilitate further conversation. Or, you might develop a picture or process flow of the findings to show how they relate to your working conditions and objectives, such as:

Figure 4. Sample summary of findings



You may also want to run a more formal analysis or have a vendor do one for you.

## Communicate Your Findings

It's important to communicate the findings of your information gathering process. When management communicates findings to employees, it shows their commitment to employee safety, health, and well-being. The same is true when unions, if you have them, share results with their members.

Communication also helps you:

- Build support for your initiative
- Ease employee concerns about how you'll use their data
- Show the organization's support for employee safety and health
- Demonstrate transparency in management's efforts to create a culture of health

 **Tip:** *Build trust and support by communicating your findings to all employees and their representatives.*

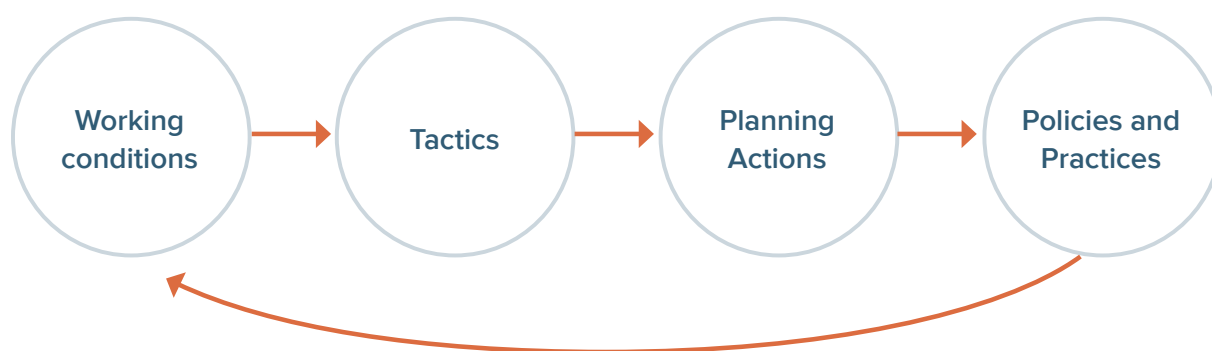


## Select Your Tactics

At this point in the planning process, your team has verified the objectives you want to achieve and the working conditions that impact them. Next, you'll decide which tactics you can use to change those conditions and create a safer, healthier workplace.

Working conditions, tactics, and planning actions are described and illustrated in this chapter while we focus on policies and practices in the next chapter on implementation. Tactics are what you do to address working conditions. Planning actions are the specific steps you plan to take to achieve your tactics. Policies and practices are the actions you implement that, in turn, influence working conditions. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Steps to address working conditions



**To get started:** To come up with appropriate tactics, your team may want to:

- Brainstorm ideas that may align with priorities for the organization
- Reach out to stakeholders interested in or impacted by your objectives—this could include department heads and employees
- Research what's worked for other organizations
- Check trade journals and your professional network for new ideas

### Consider planning easy wins that you can build on.

When you launch a new initiative, it often makes sense to start small and build on your experience as you go along. We recommend that you keep it simple at first, choosing one or a few basic tactics to start with. Consider something that's easy to change or very important to your organization—early, meaningful success can build vital support. Even if you choose a more comprehensive set of tactics, it helps to try them out in a limited way first. For instance, you might start with a pilot in just one department with plans to scale up once you test the feasibility of your tactics.

Keep this in mind when you review your findings. You may want to think about simple tactics you can use to gain early success. For example, if slippery surfaces lead to a high number of back injuries, you could create procedures to ensure that mats get put in place or wet floors get mopped up quickly. You could also investigate substituting new floor products that reduce slipperiness.

As you build momentum with these quick, early wins, you can simultaneously start to address working conditions that might take a little longer to change, such as improving break practices. A tactic to start to improve break practices might be to ask upper management to emphasize to supervisors that break-taking is an organizational priority.

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For great stories about tactics that worked in other organizations, [visit the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's Total Worker Health® website.](#)

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### Example: Tactics to Reduce Back Injuries


In the previous example with our manufacturer, data analysis revealed four main causes of back injuries:

- Slippery floors
  - Challenges taking breaks
  - Problems using lifts
  - Lack of supervisor support
- 

Table 4 on the next page provides sample tactics and associated planning actions you could take to address each of those conditions.



Table 4. Sample tactics and planning actions to reduce back injuries

	Tactics	Planning Actions
	<b>Reduce slippery floors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a procedure to follow, such as a checklist, for wet or slippery floors</li> <li>• Create policies and procedures for facilities, purchasing, and safety staff about buying floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> <li>• Train cleaning staff in procedures</li> <li>• Develop procedures to ensure managers are held accountable for housekeeping in their area</li> </ul>
	<b>Improve break practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have supervisors and employees work with HR and OSH to develop a new break proposal</li> <li>• Train supervisors and employees in new policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>• Communicate with all employees about new policies and procedures and why they've been created</li> </ul>
	<b>Increase correct use of lifts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to workers and supervisors to get their ideas on how to increase correct use of lifts</li> <li>• Talk to workers, supervisors, facility and production designers, and decision-makers to identify ways to encourage lift use and remove any barriers identified in root cause analyses</li> <li>• Look into redesigning tools and components so they're better suited for lifts</li> <li>• Plan to train supervisors and employees on correct lift use</li> <li>• Review lift maintenance procedures and if they're being applied correctly</li> <li>• Check on the need for additional lifts, lift repairs, and lift maintenance contracts and protocols. If new allocations need to be made, develop a budget and discuss with appropriate director.</li> </ul>
	<b>Improve supervisor support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with others in the organization, including HR, to create policies impacted by supervisor support, such as flexible scheduling, working remotely, annual leave, and fulfilling home caregiving responsibilities</li> <li>• Train supervisors about their role in employee support and how they can provide it</li> </ul>

See this chapter's [Tools and Resources](#) for more information on what other organizations have done to address working conditions.

## How to Make Your Tactics Integrated

As you come up with tactics and actions to try, aim to align them with the key characteristics of an integrated approach.

Try to focus on tactics that:

- Appeal to leadership, so they'll communicate their support and allocate required resources
- Promote collaboration and participation by different organizational stakeholders
- Change policies or practices to support positive working conditions while adhering to regulations and ethical norms
- Are measurable, so you can gauge progress



## How to Prioritize Tactics

Once your team comes up with possible tactics for change, you can discuss which ones to try first. Since people have different priorities and unique perspectives, it helps to talk through your ideas and reach consensus.

To help the team prioritize tactics, it may help to ask:

1. Does this tactic address a working condition or organizational issue that impacts the objective we chose?
2. Is it important to our organization and our employees?
3. Can we collaborate on this tactic? Will anyone be against it? If so, can we realistically win them over?
4. Do we have data that will help show if the tactic was effective?
5. Does it help achieve our objectives within a reasonable timeframe?
6. What kinds of resources do we need in terms of money and people? Is that reasonable?
7. Has it been effective anywhere else?

Tactics that get a higher number of yes answers may be the better ones to start with. They appeal to more needs and may lend themselves to building support for an integrated approach.

See this chapter's [Tools and Resources](#) for more tools to help you prioritize tactics.



**Tip:** Choose one or a few tactics that have the team's support, test them in a small way, and adapt as necessary.

## FROM THE FIELD

## Helping Office Workers Stand for Their Health

In many jobs, employees spend most of their day sitting, which may lead to problems like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and obesity. <sup>[30]</sup> HealthPartners, a Minnesota-based integrated health system, decided to take on this problem of sedentary work in their own offices. During a seven-week trial, they installed several sit-to-stand desks in a department where employees sat and talked with clients on the phone all day.

After seven weeks using the new desks, employees reported that:

- Fatigue, energy, stress, and depression had improved
- Sitting time fell by 66 minutes per day
- Upper back and neck pain dropped 54% <sup>[30]</sup>

The HealthPartners experience shows how even modest steps can quickly achieve positive health and well-being outcomes. They also addressed two types of working conditions: the physical environment and a job demand of sedentary work.



## Create an Integrated Action Plan

After reaching consensus on your goal, objectives, working conditions, and tactics, it's time to get into the nuts and bolts of launching your initiative. That calls for an action plan.

An action plan clearly states the key details for implementing your overall strategy. It lets people know:

- Who's responsible for which steps
- What they need to do
- How they'll do it
- When it needs to happen and be completed
- Where it'll take place

Action plans vary in their complexity, and there are many models for them. If you already use a certain model, we encourage you to stick with it. A plan for an integrated approach typically includes:

- Goals
- SMART objectives
- Relevant working conditions
- Tactics that address working conditions to achieve your objectives
- Actions to carry out each tactic
- Timeline for tactics and actions

- Who's responsible for each action
- Measures to track progress for each action
- Overall budget and costs for each action
- Status of each action

Some plans also include potential barriers and ideas about how to address them.

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[See this chapter's Tools and Resources](#) for a sample template and completed action plan.

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## Identify Required Resources

Before you reach the implementation phase of your initiative, you'll likely get asked more than once, "What'll it cost?" and "How long will it take?"

These aren't always easy questions to answer because an integrated approach isn't a program—it's a management system that aims to improve how your organization functions. Generally, organizations that have successfully implemented this approach are in it for the long haul, not just one or two years.

As you try to identify resources critical to your initiative, let your objectives, working conditions, and tactics guide your decision-making. Required resources vary widely in different organizations at different times, but at a high level, you'll want to consider needs around staffing and financial resources. Your action plan may provide some guidance for costs needed.

 **Tip:** *Think about how to support your initiative's goal and objectives through:*

- *Short-term investments for pilot programs or to gain quick wins*
- *Longer-term investments to address health and safety priorities, such as reduced injuries and the potential cost savings from improved health and safety*



## FROM THE FIELD

## Start Small, Think Big

TURCK, a manufacturer based in Minnesota, started their integrated journey in 2003. They formed an integrated committee to examine the benefits of improved employee safety, health, and well-being. Their initiative launched modestly with a short-term, team-based physical activity challenge that encouraged co-workers to support each other. It was a low-cost effort that proved highly effective in engaging their employees.

Over time, their LifeWorks@TURCK program has grown from this one activity into “a comprehensive ‘platform’ of services and programs all directed toward the creation of a culture of [safety], health, and well-being at the workplace, for families, and connected to the community.”<sup>[9]</sup> They call it a platform because the initiative has no start or end date—it’s an ongoing, continually improving effort.

## Adjust Employee Priorities and Responsibilities


When you ask employees to plan, implement, and evaluate an integrated effort, it’s important to recognize the impact it may have on their time and other priorities. Additionally, you need to think about how an integrated approach will impact managers’ and supervisors’ roles and work.

You may need to update job responsibilities to include tasks and expectations related to the initiative. How many people you’ll need and how much of their time goes toward the integrated effort depends on your goals, as well as the size and complexity of your organization. And, it may change over time.

At a minimum, you need at least one person, the champion, to take responsibility for the initiative. This may be a full-time position, but it doesn’t need to be—it depends on the scope of your initiative and what you hope to accomplish. The champion’s important role is covered in more detail in Chapter 2.

When you ask other organizational stakeholders to be involved in the initiative, consider reassigning some of their typical work tasks to others, especially if you’re just starting out. Adding this responsibility to an already full plate may be overwhelming and could prevent success.<sup>[31]</sup>

You also need to allow time for employees to participate in the initiative’s activities, such as attending meetings, completing surveys, and participating in trainings about new policies and practices.

 **Tip:** Allow employees to take part in meetings, activities, events, and surveys on company time. It increases participation and sends a message that management strongly supports employee health, safety, and well-being.



## Consider Financial Resources

The financial resources you'll need depend on your objectives and the size of your organization. To get started on a small pilot project, you may not need much at all. As you look at your objectives and action plan, consider the funds you might need for items like changes to the physical environment, new employee benefits, or training costs.

You might also want to offer incentives to your employees to encourage their participation. <sup>[32, 33]</sup>

 **Tip:** *To develop compelling incentives, ask employees what motivates them.*

## Putting It All Together: A Plan to Reduce Health Care Worker Injuries

As highlighted in earlier *From the Field* stories, leaders at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center set a goal for their Live Well/Work Well initiative to create the healthiest workforce possible. They started out with clear, reasonable objectives to reduce worker injuries.

To gather information, they turned to the numbers they had most readily available—their own occupational injury data. Based on this and other internal data, a team focused on integrated solutions invited departments to work with them who had both:

- High rates of injuries and
- High absenteeism or other high outliers of health and performance risk

Then, they proposed several tactics that could address working conditions and achieve their objectives, such as:

- A standard process to immediately address employee and patient safety after an injury
- Daily safety huddles to emphasize ergonomic and other safety measures for moving patients
- Environmental supports for personal health, such as healthier food options and discussions about potential staffing and scheduling changes
- Reviews to look for common causes between patient and employee safety events—this leads to interventions that improve safety for both workers and patients
- Care for injured individuals—they receive treatment from clinicians, as well as resources and support for other illnesses and behavioral risk factors
- Supervisor training to learn how to be supportive of employees
- Team resiliency training
- Behavioral health resources for burned-out or anxious employees, including spiritual health resources

With clear objectives, baseline data, and effective tactics, their initiative was primed to succeed. And it has—they've managed to reduce injuries, save money, and increase employee satisfaction. At the end of Chapter 5, we'll return to the Dartmouth-Hitchcock story to see how evaluation and continual improvement also impact their success.

## Final Thoughts on Planning

It's not unusual for the systems-level process laid out in Chapters 2 and 3 to take up to a year or more. Taking the time to lay the groundwork within your organization, communicate the purpose of your efforts, and develop consensus around an integrated plan will serve you well in the long run. Identifying quick wins helps build early success and momentum. And, as with most systems-level efforts, it's an on-going process built on continuous improvement.

To build the broadest possible support for your plan, and to ensure you'll have willing collaborators, it may help to:

- Reach out to those most impacted by the initiative, including employees, as they may have relevant suggestions and solutions.
- Invite into the planning process those likely to need convincing about the priorities chosen.
- Link your initiative's goals, objectives, working conditions, and tactics to business goals and objectives. It's easier to get colleagues on-board when they see how the initiative relates to their work and the work of your organization.
- Allow plenty of time and discussions for the planning process. This early effort may help prevent surprises or roadblocks later.

Next, you move onto the implementation phase of the PDSA cycle, where you put your action plan into practice.

## CHAPTER CHECKLIST

**As you move through the planning process, make sure to involve all levels of employees as you:**

- ✓ Define the high-level goal for your initiative
- ✓ Choose objectives and measures that help move your organization toward your goal
- ✓ Figure out which working conditions are the root causes of health and safety issues you want to improve
- ✓ Gather and analyze the worksite information most relevant to your goals, objectives, and working conditions
- ✓ Prioritize and select the best tactics related to improving working conditions to achieve your objectives
- ✓ Create a detailed action plan to guide your implementation
- ✓ Identify the initiative's needs for human and financial resources

# Chapter 4

## **Integrated Implementation**

# Chapter 4

## Integrated Implementation

The previous two chapters examined how to generate support for an integrated initiative and how to develop an action plan to address root causes of employee safety, health, and well-being. The next phase—the Do part of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle—builds on this essential work. As you execute your plan, you'll find multiple opportunities to garner even more support for your effort.

**In this chapter, we cover how to implement an integrated approach. You'll get tips and guidance on how to:**

- Start small
- Change working conditions through policies and practices
- Monitor progress
- Encourage accountability
- Foster participation through ongoing communication
- Train employees for successful implementation



## Start Small to Build Momentum

While an integrated approach aims for system-wide changes, it's built on incremental improvements. Small starts can lead to early wins, which can generate more interest in your initiative. They also allow your team to come up to speed in a more controlled environment. If things don't go as planned, the impact is minimal. And if you succeed, you quickly have something to build on.

You may want to:

- Start with one or a few simpler tactics to reach short-term objectives.
- Try out your tactics in just one or two departments at first.
- Take on larger, system-wide changes only after you've demonstrated success. Though you can make plans for them while you are implementing the simpler tactics.

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### Example: Small Steps to Prevent Slips and Falls

In the previous chapter, we introduced a series of tables with examples from a midsize manufacturer who wants to reduce back injuries. When we left off, data analysis had revealed that four working conditions were root causes for back injuries:

- **Slippery floors.** Worker falls on slippery floors lead to back injuries.
- **Break schedules and practices.** Tight production deadlines prevent supervisors from allowing workers to take breaks. Departments where employees can't take time to rest and recharge have more injuries.
- **Number and availability of lifts.** Departments where lifts are broken or unavailable, or where workers haven't been trained to use them, have more back injuries.
- **Lack of supervisor support.** Departments with low supervisor support for employee work and home lives also have more back injuries.

Table 4 in Chapter 3 then listed possible tactics and actions to address these working conditions.

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When you're just getting started, you may want to target a simpler working condition, like slippery floors, to get a quick win. For instance, the facilities department could work with supervisors to develop a procedural checklist for handling wet floors. Or facilities, purchasing, and safety staff could discuss buying a new floor cleaning product that's less slick and doesn't need special preparation. They could also train cleaning staff how to use it. As you implement these changes, you could track the number of new injuries. If falls persisted, you could investigate further and update the plan as needed. But if falls decreased, you might celebrate a quick win.

You can use basic tactics to produce clear results. That, in turn, provides motivation for tackling more complex issues. Quick, early success is important, but it's just a first step. In the next section, we look at how you might implement policies and practices to influence more complex working conditions.


## Change Working Conditions through Policies and Practices

To change working conditions, you implement policies and practices that support worker safety, health, and well-being. Working conditions, tactics, and planning actions were described and illustrated in the last chapter. Tactics are what you do to address working conditions. Planning actions are the specific steps you plan to take to achieve your tactics. Policies and practices are the actions you implement. Planning actions and policies and practices are often similar, but occur in different phases. To see this more clearly, consider the following example.

### Example: Policies and Practices to Reduce Back Injuries

Let's return to the manufacturer who wants to reduce back pain. Table 5 provides possible tactics, policies, and practices you could use to improve working conditions and prevent back injuries.

Table 5. Sample tactics, policies, and practices to reduce back injuries

	Working Condition	Tactics	Policies and Practices
	Slippery floors	Reduce slippery floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement procedural checklist for wet or slippery floors</li> <li>• Implement policy about buying floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> <li>• Train facilities, purchasing, and safety staff to buy floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> <li>• Train cleaning staff in procedures</li> <li>• Implement procedures to hold managers accountable for housekeeping in their area</li> </ul>
	Break schedules and practices	Improve break practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Human Resources, supervisors, and employees to update break policy, if needed</li> <li>• Use policies and practices to create a culture where taking breaks is the norm</li> <li>• Ask leadership to communicate to all employees about the importance of breaks in reducing injuries</li> <li>• During supervisor and worker trainings, talk about how breaks increase productivity</li> <li>• Use employee input to provide clean, attractive, and convenient break areas where employees can rest and relax</li> <li>• Evaluate supervisors' and directors' success in improving break practices in their areas—identify and address any barriers</li> </ul>



Working Condition	Tactics	Policies and Practices
Number and availability of lifts for moving heavy or awkward objects	Increase use of lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a policy to reduce injuries through increased lift use</li> <li>• Leadership communicates new policy to all employees</li> <li>• Implement production processes that integrate lift policy into key areas of plant</li> <li>• Use worker and management input to implement standard operating procedures for lift use, inspection, maintenance, and repair</li> <li>• Purchase more lifts if supervisors and workers state the need for them</li> <li>• Train employees and supervisors how to use lifts and offer a refresher for those already trained</li> <li>• Monitor periodically and talk to supervisors and directors about any challenges that arise</li> </ul>
Supervisor support	Improve supervisor support of employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with HR to update work-life policies impacted by supervisor support, such as flexible scheduling, working remotely, annual leave, and caregiving roles</li> <li>• Train supervisors on ways to support all workers</li> <li>• Hold supervisors accountable for taking actions that support their employees, such as encouraging taking breaks</li> <li>• Create policies and trainings to prevent abuse, harassment, discrimination, and violence</li> <li>• Create policies and trainings to build respect for the ideas, values, and beliefs of others</li> </ul>

## Monitor Progress

As carefully as your team crafts your action plan, the real test comes when you put it into practice. That's why monitoring progress is so important—it allows you to quickly adapt and find new solutions, if necessary. It also helps your team know when you've reached your initial objectives and it's time to set new ones. And, your measures feed the next step of the process—the Study phase of the PDSA cycle. They give you the evidence you need to set priorities and guide decision-making.

Monitoring also has implications for your initiative's long-term success<sup>[34]</sup>. If you track the process itself and share wins along the way, you enhance the initiative's visibility. You allow workers and leadership to see the important changes your team has made, which builds support and sustains your progress.

To effectively monitor progress, it helps to track outcome measures and the implementation process itself.

## Tracking Outcome Measures

Outcome measures help you gauge progress toward reaching your initiative's objectives. Although the examples provided in Chapters 2 and 3 focused on just employee outcomes, for your organization it may help to think about outcome measures as two separate buckets: one for employee safety, health, and well-being outcomes, and the other for organizational outcomes. Thinking in terms of these two buckets can ensure that you gather all the data needed by various stakeholders.



**Employee  
Outcomes**



**Organizational  
Outcomes**

For example, in Table 2 of Chapter 3, we considered several ways to gather baseline data on employee back injuries. During implementation, you can collect data on various outcomes to see how they compare to your initial numbers. You might want to track:

### Employee Outcomes

- **Back injuries**, using internal injury reports, health care utilization claims, and workers' compensation data
- **Back pain**, using employee surveys
- **Depression**, using employee surveys
- **Stress**, using employee surveys

### Organizational Outcomes

- **Absenteeism**, using administrative records for sickness absences
- **Back injury costs**, using health care utilization claims for back-related injuries
- **Turnover**, using administrative records for turnover rate

## Tracking Implementation

While outcomes measures are essential, they don't give you the complete picture. They may indicate where you're having success or need improvement, but they don't tell you *why* your tactics did or didn't work. For that, you need to track the implementation process. If your outcome measures show success, tracking implementation might pinpoint what contributed to the positive change. If you don't get the results you expected, it may show where you need to adapt.

To track implementation, you may need both quantitative and qualitative information. You may have specific measures you want to check on, and you may find it helpful to have regular conversations with employees so you can understand how the process is going.

To identify gaps and challenges to implementation, you may want to:

- Create a checklist that shows if the steps in your action plan are followed closely.
- Clarify how implementation is going by talking with departments involved.
- Track the number and types of policies that you create, as well as employee reactions to them. For instance, did one person complain about a new policy or did a hundred? Did employees have any suggestions?
- Ask employees whether supervisor support has changed.
- Track the number of employees taking regular breaks and which areas of the company they worked in.
- Track the length of a certain activity or the number of weeks it took to implement a policy.
- Track the number of people who attended trainings or who were impacted by a policy or program.

Early in implementation, you can then refer to these steps to assess your process. If it's not working as expected, the information you collected may reveal problems and barriers. Then, you can come up with ways that supervisors and management can address them.

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### Example: Monitoring Efforts to Reduce Back Injuries

Returning to the manufacturer example, suppose that employees still regularly fall on slippery floors even though there's a procedural checklist for how to handle wet floors. You can interview workers and supervisors about the process to reveal where you need to make changes:

- Did the facilities department follow the procedures correctly?
- Did the process break down somewhere?
- Were all supervisors and employees told what to do and whom to call if they found wet or slippery floors?
- Is a new policy, procedure, or cleaning product needed?

Or, if efforts aimed at improving break practices prove ineffective, you might ask:

- Did supervisors support employees in taking breaks?
  - What are the challenges in departments where breaks aren't taken regularly?
  - Was this a short-term situation due to special production demands?
  - Was the plan communicated clearly so everyone understood? Did everyone agree to it?
- 

 **Tip:** *Track the implementation process to learn why your tactics may not be working as planned.*

### How to Make Monitoring Integrated

To align monitoring with an integrated approach, keep your working conditions in mind. As you implement your policies and practices, check that they impact the conditions you targeted. And if you have to change your tactics, make sure they still focus on working conditions. That way you get at the root causes that support an integrated approach.

## Example: Integrated Monitoring for Break Practices

Let's look at how our manufacturer could integrate monitoring around new break practices policies. As implementation progresses, you might check if:

- Senior leadership communicated to all employees the importance of taking breaks to reduce injuries
- All employees and supervisors were informed about the new policy—you could track communications sent, meetings held, and feedback from staff
- Supervisors and managers have the resources they need to implement the changes
- Directors and supervisors are held accountable for ensuring that job demands and responsibilities are reasonable in their areas and allow time for rest and recovery—you could use performance reviews to help and check with their employees too
- Directors and supervisors are held accountable for ensuring that employees have opportunities to take breaks—again, you could make this part of performance reviews
- Employees feel encouraged to voice any concerns about policy implementation without fear of retaliation
- Employees report that break areas are clean, attractive, convenient, and suited to their needs
- Any departments face challenges with the new policy—if so, discuss possible solutions with supervisors, directors, and employees
- The break policy achieved its objective or if it needs to be updated

As you monitor, try to understand and address any concerns as they arise.

### FROM THE FIELD

## How Monitoring Evolves over Time

In the many years that Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center has been taking an integrated approach, they've learned to monitor their initiative using several different outcome measures and ways to track their process. For example, to track occupational health outcomes, they look to OSHA recordable injury rates, as well as workers' compensation claims. They conduct employee surveys to track job engagement and healthy practices. And, they perform environmental audits of the cafeteria to monitor healthy food offerings. For business outcomes, they consider turnover rates and health care costs.

They also integrate dashboards across outcomes. For instance, they look at patient and employee safety data together. They also examine data related to employee safety, health risks, and health care claims costs.

To track process, they look at what components they delivered to which units, as well as participation numbers in surveys and programs. They also use satisfaction surveys to gauge participant experience.

Constant monitoring with a variety of methods allows Dartmouth-Hitchcock to continually improve their initiative.

## Encourage Accountability

For the remainder of this chapter, we'll look at a few ways you can support implementation. Early in the initiative, as you build support and plan for an integrated approach, you typically put into place essential processes and practices. For example, you might appoint people to lead the effort, communicate about it, and get employees involved. We cover these areas in Chapters 2 and 3. These early steps are critical to get buy-in and bring people onboard.

By the implementation phase, you've likely gained leadership support for the initiative. Typically, you also have various employees tasked with implementing components of the action plan. You may have even begun to add responsibilities for implementation to job descriptions and made them part of performance reviews.

During implementation, it's useful to review progress in these areas and see if you need to make changes to ensure accountability. For instance:

- Are leaders still supportive of the initiative? If support has waned, figure out why:
  - Do they need more information about progress?
  - Do they have concerns you can address?
- Have those assigned to implementation completed their tasks on schedule? If so, celebrate those accomplishments! If not, see how you can help:
  - Do they need additional assistance or information?
  - Do you need to update the schedule?
  - Do they have the resources and support they need to be successful?
  - Are they resistant to an integrated approach? Do you understand why?
- Are managers and supervisors supporting and implementing the approach in their areas? If so, praise those efforts publicly to earn continued support. If not, investigate the reasons:
  - Can you work with managers to develop solutions to barriers in their way?
  - Do they have the resources they need to accomplish the work?

**To get started:** Use columns in your action plan to track task progress and responsibility. This helps hold people accountable and keeps you on schedule. [See the sample action plan in the [Tools and Resources for Chapter 3](#).] Keep in mind that it may take time to get people up to speed and make sure you allow for discussions and training. Also, make sure that employees have the resources they need to meet their responsibilities.

## Foster Participation through Ongoing Communication

To plan, deliver, and evaluate a successful integrated initiative, you need strong participation from every level of your organization—and on-going communication plays a critical role. You'll need to explain the initiative's focus on workplace changes, how those changes impact employees, and that management and employees both have responsibilities to improve safety, health, and well-being practices.

When you communicate effectively with employees and respond to their input, you help them feel aware, involved, and essential to the process, which fosters participation. Consider the following ideas as you think about how to craft and deliver your messages. <sup>[28]</sup>

### Share the what, why, and how.

When you tell workers what you're doing, why you're doing it, and how you're doing it, you keep them more involved in your efforts:

- Share your tactics and explain how changes in policies and practices will improve safety, health, and well-being—employees want to know how the initiative impacts them
- Keep employees updated on new policies and resources and get their input
- Communicate often to all levels of employees so they feel informed and involved

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[See this chapter's Tools and Resources for sample communications to workers.](#)

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### Create an environment that welcomes, hears, and responds to workers' voices.

Clear, honest communication helps you build and maintain employee trust, which is key for participation and successful implementation. One way to do this is to provide formal channels that enable employees to give feedback and participate in communication. For example, you could use an online system for reporting injuries, near misses, and hazards that has feedback mechanisms to respond to workers. It's critical to support reporting so workers feel they can use the system without fear of reprisal. You can even reward employees for submitting reports.

You could also use:

- Periodic huddles or existing meetings where you share health and safety information and get feedback
- Focus groups
- Committee participation
- Union input
- Suggestion boxes

During implementation, you might want to use an employee survey to ask about work and behaviors. If you do, make sure to:

- Discuss the survey ahead of time and explain why it's important to employees and the organization, how employees can help, how the survey benefits them, and what you'll do with the information.
- Listen to employee feedback and address concerns before launching the survey.
- Share overall, aggregate level results with employees in a language they speak and understand.
- Ask your vendor, if you have one, to give feedback and recommendations from the survey to individual employees. Going through a vendor can ensure confidentiality of survey results while providing a way to respond to worker concerns.



## FROM THE FIELD

**Close the Loop for More Effective Communication and Participation**

A medium-sized manufacturing and distribution company in the Midwest set up an online employee communication system as part of their continual improvement process. When workers submit suggestions, a team of employees reviews the ideas, then gets back to each person who submitted one. If an idea gets the go-ahead, the employee who submitted it takes part in design and implementation. One of the keys to making this system work is that every employee receives a response to their suggestion, whether or not their idea gets implemented.

**Think about how employees interpret actions and messages.**

Since leadership and management set the tone for an organization, they need to be particularly aware of the messages they send with both their actions and their words. For instance, if leaders work long hours and weekends and make negative comments about those who leave on time, employees aren't likely to believe that their worksite supports work-life balance, even if it's a formal policy.

**Know your audience.**

Consider the interests, needs, and capacities of your different audiences, and tailor your communications appropriately. The most effective messaging reaches employees where they are, both physically and mentally. You may need to communicate in different languages, at different levels, and through a variety of channels, including meetings, online, newsletters, bulletin boards, and more.

 **Tip:** *If your employees speak multiple languages, translate your messages so all can understand.*

**Share the initiative's progress.**

To boost support and sustainability of your effort, update stakeholders with progress and successes, even small ones. This keeps them aware of what's happening and how they benefit from it, which can spur participation.

**To get started:** Use your organization's existing channels to target messages to various stakeholders. For example, you might share statements from the CEO supporting employee safety, health, and well-being through emails, intranet posts, bulletin boards, meetings, and newsletters—whatever's most effective for reaching your workers.

For more on communications, [check out CDC's guide to workplace health communications.](#)



## Train Employees for Successful Implementation

Training is an important strategy for successful implementation of an integrated approach. It helps management create positive working conditions through changes to policies and practices, and it helps all employees understand and contribute to those changes. You might be able to weave information about an integrated approach into your existing trainings.

For example, consider a few common working conditions:

- Supervisor support
- Schedule flexibility
- Employee control over where and how they work

For an employee, supervisor support, flexibility, and control over their work can reduce stress and improve well-being. They can also have positive effects on productivity. Supervisors, however, may need training on how to support employees' family and personal lives, as well as employees' professional development. They may also need training on how to effectively implement and manage practices such as schedule flexibility and increased employee control over their work.

As the following example shows<sup>[35]</sup>, supervisors gain critical skills when they learn to support their employees' work-life balance. They can create working conditions that empower employees to safely produce their best work and simultaneously reduce their overall stress.



## FROM THE FIELD

## STAR Training to Influence Supervisor Support

A Fortune 500 company wanted to reduce burnout, perceived stress, and psychological distress among their employees. Research shows that one way you can address these issues is by improving two working conditions: employee control over their work and greater supervisor support for employees' personal lives.

Consultants to the company suggested they run a pilot program called STAR (Support. Transform. Achieve. Results.). About 800 employees and supervisors in the IT division took part in an 8-hour, participatory training that was run as a workshop.

During the training, employees and supervisors identified new work practices and processes to increase employee control over their work. As a result of the STAR intervention, the company changed two major policies and practices: <sup>[35]</sup>

- Employees could have flexible schedules and work at home without prior supervisor approval
- Supervisors received additional training on how to support their employees' personal lives and professional development

After the company made these changes, employees who participated in STAR reported increased well-being in several ways: <sup>[35]</sup>

- Improved job satisfaction
- Less perceived stress and psychological distress
- Reduced burnout

The average cost was \$340 per employee, including planning, employee time, and developing and conducting the pilot. <sup>[36]</sup>

[Learn more about STAR at the Work, Family and Health Network website.](#)

## Audiences for Training


Different levels of employees need different types of training that target their specific roles. This can include training for: <sup>[37, 38]</sup>

- Leaders on how to provide a vision, policies, and practices for a supportive work environment
- Middle managers and supervisors on creating and implementing policies and practices that support employee safety, health, and well-being
- Employees on organizational expectations and their roles in sustaining a safe and healthy work environment

## FROM THE FIELD

## Training for all levels of employees


At Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, managers and executives receive training on legal, regulatory, and ethical responsibilities, as well as how to serve as role models for employee safety, health, and well-being. Unit leaders and supervisors are trained in a leadership development program on how to create a safe and healthy environment. Workers get trained on topics that impact safety and quality of care, such as safe patient handling practices.

 **Tip:** *For higher impact, focus your trainings more on modeling, exercises, practice, and coaching others instead of just knowledge transfer.* <sup>[39]</sup>

## Build on Existing Training

From new employee orientation to safety training, many organizations already have some level of training to support employee safety, health, and well-being. These are perfect opportunities to emphasize the key characteristics of an integrated approach and to incorporate messages about the links between safety, health, and well-being for employees and their families. It's also a great time for different departments to learn how to coordinate and collaborate with each other.

You can also hold specific trainings on how to collaborate across departments. This might be part of a broader effort to hold people accountable for interdepartmental coordination.

 **Tip:** *Think about your organization's existing trainings and how you can weave new information into them.*

.....  
 See this chapter's Tools and Resources for more training ideas.  
 .....

## Putting It All Together: A Creative Approach for Healthier Backs

A small manufacturing and distribution company had a high rate of repetitive motion and back injuries in their production areas. After examining working conditions on their plant floor, they thought it might help if employees:

- Took their scheduled breaks and rested or stretched during them
- Rotated regularly to another job task to avoid repetitive tasks

They used various methods to get worker input on tactics to address both issues, and they decided to take on breaks first. This is where they got a little creative. The company had a lot of dog lovers and even had a policy that allowed employees to bring their dogs to work. To signal break times, they decided to play the sound of a barking dog over the plant's loudspeakers, a move that proved both fun and effective.

But it took much more than a noticeable alert to get things going. First, leadership had to communicate the purpose of the new policy to employees and supervisors. This let everyone know that senior management strongly supported employees taking their regular breaks—an important step in shifting the culture around break-taking. They also had to communicate clearly about logistics. For instance, everyone needed to know that the barking dog over the loudspeaker meant it was break time.

The company also provided employees with areas and techniques for more effective stretching. And throughout the process, staff from Human Resources monitored various measures to see how everything was working.

To complement the break-taking effort, the company also used results from a job hazard analysis. They had previously found that production work involved working in awkward positions, repetitive motions, and standing in one place for a long time. They worked closely with employees to create and implement a job rotation policy so workers could move around more and vary their job tasks. They also provided essential training to workers.

These types of systems-level, participatory efforts are more likely to reduce injuries than simply asking and expecting employees to stretch on their own. Some of the ideas this manufacturer used—like the barking dog to trigger breaks—won't work in every organization. And in some workplaces, taking breaks has much higher stakes. A hospital, where a patient's life might literally be in an employee's hands, offers a very different set of challenges.

But that's partly the point. An integrated approach has to suit your culture. Think through the best approaches to use in your organization based on input from employees, your team, and other stakeholders.

## Final Thoughts on Implementation

Implementation is where the rubber meets the road. You see how an integrated approach focused on working conditions actually plays out in your organization. Good planning and getting people on board can help.

To facilitate implementation:

- **Start small.** Do a preliminary run of your plan before scaling up more widely. You'll likely learn useful lessons in these early stages, allowing you to tweak tactics before making broader changes.
- **Use existing processes.** Continuous or quality improvement processes like those used in health care or manufacturing, and pre-task planning in construction, can serve as great platforms for an integrated approach.
- **Monitor progress.** It's important to track progress toward your objectives, as well as the implementation process itself. You'll learn not only if your tactics are working, but also why, which gives essential insight that can make your process more effective.
- **Listen to stakeholders.** Workers and managers at all levels can provide critical insights. It helps to listen closely to their input and keep an open mind to changing the tactics and working conditions the initiative focuses on. If key stakeholders aren't participating, talk to them and address their concerns—bring in top leadership or other respected allies, if necessary.
- **Communicate with leadership, management, and employees about progress.** This helps maintain interest and support for an integrated approach.

Once you've gotten implementation going, the next step is evaluation.



## CHAPTER CHECKLIST

**Implementation has a lot of moving pieces.**

**As you go along, remember to:**

- ✓ Focus on policies and practices related to working conditions
- ✓ Track outcomes and implementation—it'll inform how you'll need to adapt and set the groundwork for evaluation
- ✓ Clearly identify roles and responsibilities so implementers feel vested and accountable
- ✓ Give employees opportunities to participate in implementation—this is critical for your initiative's long-term success
- ✓ Engage leaders in an on-going way through frequent meetings and communications
- ✓ Communicate frequently—you'll build trust and support, gain valuable insight, and increase participation
- ✓ Make sure people have supportive systems and adequate resources for success
- ✓ Train new and existing employees, allowing time for people to get up to speed

# Chapter 5

## **Integrated Evaluation and Improvement**



# Chapter 5

## Integrated Evaluation and Improvement

In previous chapters, we looked at how to build support for an integrated initiative and how to develop and carry out an action plan focused on supportive working conditions for employee safety, health, and well-being. Once you've gotten your initiative going, you move on to the Study and Act phases of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. This is the time to evaluate your efforts, then take what you learn to continually improve your approach.

Evaluation is a systematic review of your initiative that shows progress toward meeting your objectives, barriers in your way, and opportunities to explore. You set the stage for evaluation during planning and implementation when you chose measurable objectives, tracked outcome measures, and monitored the implementation process. In evaluation, that earlier work comes to fruition. The data you gathered allows you to make evidence-informed conclusions about your outcomes, process, and next steps.

Organizations have varying needs and interests in how they evaluate their initiatives. As you dive into evaluation, keep those needs in mind, along with the capacity and culture of your organization. That will help you develop a process that's both sustainable and successful.

### In this chapter, we'll cover:

- Why evaluation matters
- Integrated evaluation
- Information gathering
- Integrated evaluation team
- When to evaluate
- How to communicate findings
- Continual improvement



## Why Evaluation Matters

Evaluation influences your initiative's success in several ways. It helps: <sup>[40, 41]</sup>

- **Measure change and show progress toward your objectives.** With goals and measurable objectives, as described in Chapter 3, you have concrete benchmarks that allow you to track progress over time.
- **Identify and address issues early on.** When you track implementation, as covered in Chapter 4, you learn how you can improve your initiative as you go along.
- **Demonstrate value.** Evaluation findings allow you to continually show management, colleagues, and employees the contribution an integrated approach makes to your organization.
- **Provide data for decision-making.** Evaluation lets you clearly see the benefits and costs of your initiative, which helps decision-makers prioritize your existing and future objectives.
- **Sustain support.** The data you collect can bolster the case for continued organizational commitment and financial support of your initiative.

## Integrated Evaluation

To make your evaluation integrated, recall the key characteristics of an integrated approach and consider how they can inform not only the types of data you gather, but how to gather it and when to share it. We give some examples below.

### Leadership Commitment

Evaluation can be a powerful tool to sustain top leadership dedication. When you regularly present your data to your organization's leaders, you keep them informed, aware, and engaged. You provide them with the information they need to support and participate in an integrated initiative.

### Participation





To help get workers more involved with evaluation, you may want to try some of the following:

- Ask employees individually or in groups for their thoughts and ideas
- Include all levels of employees on your integrated evaluation team (see the **Integrated Evaluation Team** section in a few pages)
- Seek input from employee committees
- Share with employees what you learned during evaluation and ask for their feedback

### Policies, Programs, and Practices Focused on Positive Working Conditions

Working conditions are central to an integrated approach, so it's a natural progression to measure changes to the conditions you target in your action plan. For instance, recall the ongoing example in chapters 3 and 4 with the manufacturer who wants to reduce back injuries. Table 6 on the next page provides some evaluation ideas.

Table 6. Sample evaluation questions for working conditions related to back pain

	Working Condition	Evaluation Questions
	<b>Physical Environment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do workers and supervisors report fewer problems with slippery floors?</li> <li>• Do they report that lifting devices are more accessible?</li> <li>• Do they report that lifts are used regularly?</li> </ul>
	<b>Work Organization</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you implement improved break policies and practices so employees could rest?</li> <li>• Do supervisors and workers report a change in culture or acceptability around taking breaks?</li> </ul>
	<b>Psychosocial Environment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do workers report a positive change in support from their supervisors in dealing with personal or family issues?</li> <li>• Do supervisors report they have the training and skills they need to support workers?</li> </ul>

## Comprehensive and Collaborative Strategies

Evaluation needs to include multiple aspects of worker safety, health, and well-being, such as:

- Reviews of working conditions and organizational policies and practices
- Surveys or discussions with employees about their safety, health, and well-being practices
- Walkthroughs of the physical environment

To encourage collaboration, you could have different departments work together to evaluate the initiative or to discuss findings and next steps.

## Adherence

Evaluation can support adherence to regulations in several ways. For example, it can help:

- Ensure that your approach to employee data collection meets state and local regulations, as well as ethical standards, for protecting personal information
- Track compliance with regulations for hazard exposures

## Data-Driven Change

Regular evaluation—through data analyses, surveys, interviews, and more—clearly supports data-driven change. You can use your findings to:

- Provide upper management with high-level reports on integrated policies and programs
- Set priorities and guide decision-making
- Determine next steps for continual improvement

Ultimately, you may want to integrate safety and health data into a coordinated data system.

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**For more detailed information about how to perform effective evaluations, check out these National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) resources:**

- [How to Evaluate Safety and Health Changes in the Workplace](#), pp. 15-26, provides valuable suggestions on how to conduct evaluations, along with examples from different industries.
  - [Guide to Evaluating the Effectiveness of Strategies for Prevention of Work Injuries](#) offers an in-depth look at evaluation and its design. This resource may be more appropriate for an organization with sophisticated data analysis capacities.
- 

## Information Gathering

In Chapter 3, we covered how to gather different types of baseline information that focused on your goals, objectives, and working conditions. Then, in Chapter 4, we looked at how to monitor outcomes and implementation to check progress toward your objectives and gain insight into barriers, opportunities, and how the process is working. Now, during evaluation, you can gather current data and compare it with your baseline information. Together, your information will show what your initiative did or didn't achieve and why.

Keep in mind that you typically get the most complete picture of your worksite by using various types of evaluation data. And, you'll likely use different ways to gather it, including: <sup>[29]</sup>

- Administrative data reviews to get information such as injury data or workers' compensation costs
- Group meetings and focus groups

- Employee interviews
- Observing employee practices and behaviors
- Policy reviews
- Surveys on employee perception, health, knowledge, and attitudes
- Walkthroughs
- Comparisons with national, state, regional, or industry data

See Table 3 in Chapter 3 for more ideas on how to gather information.

Just like when you collected baseline information in Chapter 3, there's almost no end to the evaluation data you could gather and analyze. To keep your team focused, target gathering data that helps you evaluate:

- Progress toward your goal and objectives
- Changes to working conditions
- Effectiveness of the tactics you identified in your action plan

 **Tip:** *Focus information gathering on your goals, objectives, working conditions, and tactics.*

## Integrated Evaluation Team

To perform a thorough evaluation, it's best to have multiple perspectives from your worksite. That's why it may help to form an integrated evaluation team to assist in evaluation efforts.

### Who belongs on the team?

While some members—including the champion—may come from your integrated team (see Chapter 2), evaluation and data analysis require a different set of skills. Ideally, you would draw employees from throughout your organizational hierarchy, including those who are:<sup>[29]</sup>

- Impacted by the initiative
- Implementing the initiative
- Making decisions about the initiative's future
- Responsible for protecting and promoting employee safety, health, and well-being
- Skilled in evaluation or statistics

If your organization doesn't have expertise in evaluation or statistics, you might want to use a vendor to help you. In fact, some vendors will conduct the evaluation for you.

### What will the team do?

The integrated evaluation team can help gather information and review and interpret the results. Even if a consultant gathers data and prepares a report, the team will need to determine how it applies to your organization and figure out next steps.

How your team analyzes evaluation findings will vary based on your goals, culture, and capacity. Here's one approach you could take: <sup>[29]</sup>

- Those tasked with overseeing evaluation gather data needed for the review.
- This group then summarizes the results in a way that all evaluation team members can understand.
- Next, the group sends the summary to the whole team before the evaluation meeting. Allow team members enough time to digest and interpret the summary on their own.
- When the team meets, discuss the results and compare them with the initiative's goals and objectives.
- Together, the team can make conclusions and recommendations based on the data.

## When to Evaluate

You'll likely track outcomes and implementation right from the launch of your initiative, but how often should you step back and evaluate your progress? It depends on your capacity, objectives, and measures. It also varies with different working conditions. For example:

- While employees need to report injuries immediately, you might evaluate injury data only monthly or quarterly, depending on injury frequency
- You might tie reviews of major infrastructure changes to budget cycles or fundraising efforts
- You may review your initiative's costs monthly, but only check changes in employee health practices yearly through a health risk assessment

The key is to adapt your approach and expectations based on your initiative's needs, which may change over time. There's no one way to do this, and inevitably, you'll learn and refine as you go along.

Another approach to evaluation is to use an assessment that measures your organization's level of integration. You take the assessment at the start of your initiative, then repeat it over time to see how your organization changes.

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**[See Chapter 3's Tools and Resources for evaluation and assessment tools.](#)**

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## How to Communicate Findings

When you report evaluation findings and next steps, you'll have the biggest impact if you tailor your messages for your specific audience. For instance:

- Top leadership may want high-level information that supports decision-making
- Managers may be more interested in results from their units and next steps for improvement
- Workers may want to know about changes in health and well-being benefits

When you present your results, start with stakeholders most directly impacted by your initiative. <sup>[29]</sup>

Tell them what you did and what you found, then ask for their feedback. You can do this through work group meetings or posting information where it's most accessible.

## Keys to Effective Messaging

As you consider how to best share your results, keep the following in mind: <sup>[42]</sup>

- **Keep it simple.** Be accurate, concise, and easy to understand.
- **Tell stories.** A data overview is fine, but people tend to remember stories more than numbers, even the C-Suite. Do you have an example of how your initiative improved the work and lives of employees and their families? Testimonials can be very powerful.
- **Use graphics.** Graphics help tell the story—just make sure they're relevant and easy to understand.
- **Ask for feedback.** It helps your audience feel valued and engaged.
- **Protect employee confidentiality.** You'll lose employee trust if you don't keep their data private. Present only aggregate data and be sure to combine results from workgroups with less than six people—this helps minimize the risk of employees being identified. <sup>[29]</sup>

## Top Leadership Review

It's important to regularly present high-level, comprehensive results to top leadership so they can continue to support the initiative and discuss next steps. Also, they have the big picture perspective to consider other organizational and external activities that might impact employee safety, health, and well-being at the worksite. <sup>[28]</sup>

How often you present to them depends on your organization's culture. You might incorporate this review into other high level meetings. You can also keep leadership aware of successes through quarterly reports or intranet communications. At the very least, the annual budget cycle may offer an opportunity to report on progress.

These reviews are also a time for you to get input from leadership. You may want to ask questions such as: <sup>[28]</sup>

- Is the integrated approach working as intended?
- Do you see it as relevant and effective or do we need to make changes?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly assigned and working well?
- Is it achieving the desired outcomes?
- How else can we improve?



## Continual Improvement

Continual improvement is the Act phase of the PDSA cycle. After you present your results and review the feedback you receive, you can reflect on what you’ve learned. If you were successful, does that mean your initiative’s over? Hardly! An integrated initiative to create positive working conditions is an ongoing process. Whether you achieved your objectives or not, there’s still more to do.

If you started with a small rollout, now might be the time to spread the initiative throughout your organization or at least to a different department. Some areas or sites will be easier to change than others, and you’ll learn constantly along the way. There’s nearly always more working conditions to change, tactics to try, and policies to improve.

If your effort didn’t go as planned, do you know what stood in your way or what went wrong? If not, seek more input on what happened and what you could try next. You might need to alter your tactics or try some new ones. Or, maybe you need to build more support for your efforts.

Initiatives often don’t go exactly as you’d hoped, and that’s why the PDSA cycle is so valuable—it’s a process of incremental improvement that’s meant to be repeated. Once you’ve figured out some changes to make, try it again. The PDSA cycle operates on a continuous basis, with multiple feedback loops and corrections—it’s rarely linear.

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[See this chapter’s Tools and Resources](#) for selected continual improvement references.

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## Putting It All Together: Evaluation, Improvement, and Safer Health Care Workers

In *From the Field* stories in previous chapters, we looked at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center’s Live Well/Work Well initiative, launched in 2009 with the vision of achieving the healthiest workforce possible. In those chapters, we focused on the initiative’s programming, tactics, and measures. Here, we consider the evaluation and continual improvement aspects of their approach.

### Identifying At-Risk Departments

Each year, Dartmouth-Hitchcock sets a goal to reduce the number of departments with high injury rates without compromising incident reporting integrity. They use an online Employee Report of Injury (EROI) system that encourages employees to report:

- On-the-job employee injuries and illnesses in “Ouch Reports”
- Near-miss incidents in “Yikes Reports”

The Environmental Health Services (EHS) department uses this and other data to identify at-risk departments, which have rates of work-related injuries, illnesses, and near misses that exceed the OSHA average for hospitals. EHS then asks these departments if they’d like to partner on an integrated approach.

## Evidence-Informed Improvements

Data gathering is a key part of their efforts. Incidents reported in the EROI system trigger EHS-led reviews to understand what in the work environment and work organization may have led to the injury.

At-risk departments review incidents on a quarterly basis. They work together with EHS to:

- Conduct investigations to identify risk levels and root causes of incidents
- Perform exposure assessments—using tools like job hazard analyses and exposure surveys—to identify, evaluate, and control employee exposures to chemical, physical, and biological hazards
- Improve the reporting of incidents
- Provide rate-based injury data to better compare outcomes

After at least a year of working with EHS to reduce injuries, at-risk departments can request an independent follow-up audit. Meanwhile, the at-risk department's director, in collaboration with the department's OSH-Wellness Committee, regularly reviews and rates how effective the changes have been in reducing injuries. Then, they make any needed improvements.

## A Safer, More Engaged Workplace

Dartmouth-Hitchcock started with the goal to have the healthiest workforce possible. They set clear objectives, drew up action plans, and continually made evidence-informed improvements. And their ongoing efforts continue to yield positive impacts for their employees and their organization, including fewer injuries, reduced personal health risk factors, and lower costs.

## Final Thoughts on Evaluation and Continual Improvement

Evaluation and continual improvement are key steps in an integrated effort. When you monitor and analyze data about your objectives, working conditions, and tactics, you gain critical information that helps you measure success and improve your approach. You also get concrete evidence that shows others why the initiative is so valuable and to guide decision-making and resource allocation. And, if your approach doesn't go as planned, evaluation gives you a basis to make changes that keep you moving forward.

Organizations vary in their capacity for evaluation, so gear your efforts appropriately. To streamline evaluation and continual improvement processes, it helps to:

- Focus on changes to your goals, objectives, and working conditions
- Make evaluation part of program delivery (see Chapter 4)
- Consider adding safety, health, and well-being into your existing continual improvement processes

## CHAPTER CHECKLIST

**As you evaluate and continually improve your initiative:**

- ☒ Keep in mind the key characteristics of an integrated approach
- ☒ Use various methods to gather evaluation data
- ☒ Focus on evaluating the objectives, working conditions, and tactics in your action plan
- ☒ Form a diverse team to help with evaluation
- ☒ Compare changes over time with baseline assessments
- ☒ Adapt how often you evaluate based on your objectives and capacity
- ☒ Communicate your findings regularly and ask for feedback
- ☒ Let your evaluation results guide your continual improvement efforts

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# Tools & Resources

These tools and resources provide more in-depth resources to the accompanying guidelines.

# Tools & Resources

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## Roles and Responsibilities

### Top Leadership

Top Leaders' support and action are critical to the success of integrated approaches to worker safety, health, and well-being. Leaders can:

- **Set the tone and vision** for organizations and communicate with all employees about it.
- **Create a vision statement** that aligns worker safety and health with organizational goals and business objectives—this shows that worker well-being is integral to business success.
- **Communicate the organization's commitment to creating working conditions** that protect and promote employee safety and health. They can set expectations that all stakeholders, including vendors and suppliers, follow this commitment.
- **Improve working conditions** by institutionalizing policies, procedures, and guidelines that promote and protect worker safety, health and well-being.
- **Stress the importance of collaboration** between all stakeholders, from directors to frontline employees. They can build support among executives and high-level managers responsible for safety, health and well-being. They can ask directors and other managers to do the same with their employees and employee representatives.
- **Hold staff accountable** for implementing an integrated approach by motivating management to embrace their vision.
- **Allocate resources**— people, space, equipment, budgets, committees, training and benefits. They can also appoint someone to champion the effort as part of their job description.
- **Assure confidentiality** of all employee data. If employees don't trust management, they won't openly share personal information and concerns about the workplace. Trust is critical and fragile. Leaders can communicate to all stakeholders why information is collected and that no one will see individual-level data.
- **Lead by example**—Leaders can model safe and healthy practices. For example, leaders who provide employees with excellent salaries and flexible schedules, wear a hard hat or safety glasses when appropriate, and participate in staff events send strong messages to employees.

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## The Champion

While many people may be involved in your initiative, it is important to have a respected and empowered point-person to lead the effort. We call this person the champion. Depending on the size of your organization and the scope of your initiative, the champion may take on any number of roles.

Champions can:

- **Identify policies and practices** that align with organizational interests and culture.  
For example, a champion at a large hospital in New England made sure to align the integrated initiative's mission directly with the overall hospital's vision. The champion might also research what policies and practices other similar organizations use.
- **Get buy-in from top management.**  
This may include pitching the business case, securing resources, and running a pilot program.
- **Seek on-going support and resource commitment from leadership.**  
Buy-in is a critical first step, but champions need to engage leadership for the long haul. They need to keep the effort front-of-mind by seeking management input on priorities, linking organizational objectives to health and safety efforts, and reporting quick wins and early successes.
- **Convince colleagues and middle management to get onboard.**  
Middle management support is vital to implementing an integrated approach. The champion needs to communicate with them and hear their concerns. This can happen in meetings, as well as in one-on-one visits.
- **Lead collaborative efforts.** Collaboration is a key characteristic of an integrated approach. You need to get lots of people on board to develop appropriate policies and practices for your organization. The champion is often the one to lead these efforts.
- **Manage staff who implement the approach.**  
The champion's involvement with implementation will vary in different organizations, from very hands-on, to more of an oversight role. They may need to show the value of the approach to staff implementing it, provide training, and even take a direct, hands-on role in implementation. They also need to be available to hear and address staff concerns.
- **Communicate results.**  
A key characteristic of an integrated approach is that you constantly measure and evaluate your efforts. The champion makes sure that these results are reported to all company stakeholders. This could mean one-page dashboards for the C-suite, detailed reports to managers about their units, and bulletin board or email communications to employees.
- **Improve continually.**  
The champion tracks progress, determines if policies or practices need to be modified, and evaluates any changes made. Some organizations use their continuous improvement process to evaluate their initiatives.
- **Model safe and healthy practices.**  
Champions represent the initiative for worker safety, health, and well-being. They are role models for the initiative and the organization.

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## Integrated Team

An integrated team can build collaboration and participation throughout the organization. Consider including four types of team members: 1) people responsible for employee safety, health, and well-being; 2) people from different hierarchies in the organization; 3) employee representatives; and 4) subcontractor representatives (if you have subcontracts/vendors). Integrated teams can:

- **Identify goals, objectives and priorities** (See Chapter 3).  
Integrated teams discuss and identify issues or goals that are important to both employers and the workforce. They also develop objectives to help them meet their goals and determine organizational priorities.
- **Contribute to problem solving using a comprehensive and collaborative approach.**  
Including people from different departments and different hierarchies can bring different perspectives to solve employee safety, health, and well-being issues. Team members can identify and prioritize working conditions and brainstorm tactics to address them.
- **Recommend and develop integrated policies, programs, and practices focusing on working conditions** (See Chapters 3-4).  
Working together, team members can recommend and develop the policies and practices that will address the working conditions the organization is addressing.
- **Review and analyze data and information** (See Chapters 3 and 5).  
Team members can also review data to help them in their decision-making, recommendations, and planning.
- **Carry out the plan.**  
All members can assist in achieving the plan. Sometimes this might mean adapting the plan for specific department's needs. For instance, some departments might have employees who work night shifts; team members can make sure that resources are available for them.
- **Incorporate employee input.**  
By including employees and their representatives on the team, their input will be included. Employees know their work and working environment the best and can offer relevant solutions.
- **Recommend resource allocations.**  
Teams can suggest the resources needed to accomplish the plan, providing input for upper management to support the initiative. The team can also suggest ways to streamline resources from different departments to accomplish their aims.
- **Report progress to upper management.**  
Upper management will likely want reports on the initiative's progress, and the team may be asked by the champion to assist.
- **Promote the initiative.**  
Team members can communicate about the initiative to upper management and all levels of employees. Employees may in turn promote the initiative to co-workers.
- **Provide accountability for implementation of the initiative.**  
Depending on the organization, the team or perhaps its members may be held responsible for accomplishing and implementing the initiative's plan.
- **Improve continually.**  
Teams can review operations periodically to assess progress and adapt goals and strategies as necessary.

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## Middle Managers/Supervisors

Middle managers/supervisors communicate and implement policies and practices. They also can represent workers' needs and interests to the champion and top leadership. Middle management can:

- **Set positive working conditions.**  
Managers can set reasonable schedules and job demands. They can check in with employees to gauge workload levels and reassign tasks if necessary.
- **Nurture supportive working environments and relationships.**  
Supervisors can help build a supportive work environment by modeling and expecting respectful behavior from everyone in the department or unit. They can be caring and supportive about employees' work and non-work lives.
- **Encourage employee participation in worker safety, health, and well-being.**  
By design, systems-wide approaches need worker input and participation. Supervisors can encourage and allow their employees to participate in efforts to improve their safety, health, and well-being.
- **Communicate and support worker needs and interests.**  
Middle managers and supervisors can communicate and support worker needs and interests up the chain of command.
- **Influence employee safety and health practices.**  
Middle managers and supervisors are role models for employee safety and health practices. They can set positive and normative practices for the department/unit.

## Employees

Employees can provide important input to an integrated approach to safety, health, and well-being. They know the work the best and have a role to play in the positive functioning of the worksite and supporting co-workers. Employees can:

- **Participate in teams.**  
Employees can join teams to plan, implement, and evaluate the initiative.
- **Provide input and solutions.**  
Since employees know their work the best, they can provide input and come up with solutions on how to improve policies and practices. Some organizations do this by encouraging employees input into quality improvement ideas and solutions.
- **Report hazards, injuries, and illnesses.**  
Employees should be able to participate in keeping the workplace safe and healthy without fear of retaliation for reporting. Some organizations use electronic reporting systems, but other types of reporting systems can be used, too.
- **Contribute to a psychologically safe and healthy environment.**  
Employees can help make the worksite better by respecting and supporting their co-workers.
- **Model safe and healthy practices.**  
Employees can model safe and healthy practices both at work and outside of work.

## Employee Representatives and Unions

Employee representatives and unions can play a critical role in implementing an integrated approach. They can:

- **Participate in teams.**  
Help plan, implement, and support the initiative to improve working conditions.
- **Collaborate.**  
Participate in interdisciplinary collaborations and activities.
- **Support employees.**  
Support employee efforts to improve their safety, health, and well-being by creating a safe and respectful environment.
- **Represent employee needs and interests.**  
Communicate with employees, managers, champion, and leadership about employee needs and interests.

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## Overcoming Resistance

From top leadership to frontline workers, it takes time for people to absorb and understand a new way of doing their work. An integrated approach may push people to change and act outside their comfort zones, so it's fair to expect some skepticism or resistance. And when asking people to work across functions, power struggles or turf battles might arise.

To overcome resistance, you can try some of these ideas:

- Ask questions to understand where the resistance comes from. This might help you see how to address concerns more effectively.
  - For instance, are people afraid it will mean more work? You can tell them that companies have found that the collaborative approach can streamline efforts and make them more efficient.
- Identify and engage key supporters and opinion leaders—ask them to talk with their colleagues.
- Run a small initiative to get a few quick wins. Then, go back to your skeptics and share the positive results with a compelling story.
- Figure out how to tell different company stakeholders what's in it for them. People like to know how an integrated approach will affect them.
  - A CEO might be interested in how the approach can be used to attract and retain talented employees.
  - Managers might be interested to know that healthy and safe employees will be more productive and absent less.
  - Employees will feel valued when asked for their input on their work, safety, and health.



- Bring in outside voices, such as consultants or people from organizations who have used an integrated approach, to share their experiences. They might be able to provide a different perspective and a sense of objectivity that's easier to hear.
- Try again! Maybe the initial timing wasn't right. For instance, trying to roll out a new initiative during the busiest season for production or during a company merger might not be the right time to build collaboration.

**Web Resource:** [Check NIOSH's Total Worker Health initiative for more ideas on getting buy-in for an integrated approach.](#)

## Business Case Tips

### Communicating your business case

To make your pitch, consider the following tips, partly drawn from the Harvard Business Review Guide to Building your Business Case<sup>[1]</sup>:

- Know your audience: Who has decision-making authority? What are their interests and what do they care most about? What's in it for them?
- Build the case:
  - What are the pain points for your organization and leaders? Who can give you organizational and executive insight?
  - What alternatives exist to accomplish your goal? How will an integrated approach be the solution? Use Chapter 1, and talking points and the slide deck in these Tools & Resources to describe an integrated approach solution.
  - Find out how and when your organization typically presents business cases. Is there a time of year when initiatives are considered?
- Who are your allies? Consider bringing them to the meeting.
- Identify the outcome you want to get out of the presentation. The pitch may contain different information if this is an initial meeting than if you are trying to get approval for a budget.
- Use relevant stories, data, or information to show how an integrated approach satisfies an organizational need.
- Make realistic estimates of what it will take to implement an integrated approach. Start with a small or limited initiative first.
- Do a practice run with colleagues to get their input and support.
- Identify obstacles to getting support and how you will address them.
- Present your case to leadership. If you get the go ahead, secure their commitment for staff and financial resources. If not, make sure you understand their objections so you can build a stronger case next time.

## For the health care sector

A model for making the case that health care organizations sometimes use is the SBAR—a brief document that outlines the:

**S**ituation

**B**ackground

**A**ssessment

**R**ecommendation

See <http://www.ihl.org/resources/pages/tools/sbartoolkit.aspx>

## Talking Points about an Integrated Approach

The talking points below can be used as a guide to summarize an integrated approach, emphasize why it is important, and explain to staff what your organization is doing. They might be used by the implementation leader or champion to build organizational support. See Chapter 1 of the Guidelines for more information and see the Tools and Resources for Chapter 4 for sample talking points that can be customized and used during implementation. These talking points can be adapted as needed to fit your audience and your workplace.

### What is it?

*It's a comprehensive, management systems approach to worker safety, health, and well-being that's shaped by employee input and participation and focuses on working conditions.*

An effective integrated approach is based on six key characteristics:

- 1. Leadership commitment.** Leadership shows its commitment to making worker safety, health, and well-being a clear priority for the entire organization.
- 2. Participation.** Stakeholders at every level of the organization, including organized labor, help plan and carry out efforts to protect and promote worker safety and health.
- 3. Policies, programs, and practices focused on positive working conditions.** The organization enhances worker safety, health, and well-being with policies and practices that improve working conditions.
- 4. Comprehensive and collaborative strategies.** Employees from across the organization work together to develop comprehensive health and safety initiatives.
- 5. Adherence.** The organization adheres to federal and state regulations, as well as ethical norms, that advance worker safety, health, and well-being.
- 6. Data-driven change.** Regular evaluation guides an organization's priority setting, decision making, and continuous improvement of worker safety, health, and well-being initiatives.

## So what?

### What makes it valuable?

*A growing body of research shows that an integrated approach can lead to healthier and safer employees, as well as improved operating and financial outcomes.*

Creating a culture of safety and health can reduce risk and allow employees and organizations to thrive.

Companies already using this approach found that it:

- Improves market performance <sup>[2]</sup>
- Boosts productivity and worker satisfaction <sup>[3]</sup>
- Leads to safer workplaces and improved health behaviors <sup>[4-8]</sup>
- Reduces absenteeism and turnover <sup>[3, 9]</sup>
- Creates stronger health and safety programs <sup>[10]</sup>
- Increases employee participation <sup>[11]</sup>

## Now what?

*Employees will want to know what the organization is doing and how it will impact them.*

State two or three concrete steps your workplace is taking to implement an integrated approach.

Examples might include:

- Building support for using an integrated approach and listening to concerns different people might have.
- Appointing an implementation leader to steer the initiative. A main job is to keep employees informed of what's happening and to make sure their feedback is heard and addressed.
- Establishing a committee to implement an integrated approach that brings together different departments within your organization. This will help address employee health, safety, and well-being in a coordinated way.
- Conducting a survey and talking to employees and supervisors to learn what is needed in your workplace to improve health, safety, and well-being.
- Using an integrated approach to design health, safety, and well-being policies and programs that focus on working conditions and address important issues in your workplace. These might include: slips, trips, and falls; sedentary work; improving supervisor support of employees; and absenteeism.

## Slides

The link below provides a slide deck to be used by an organizational leader, such as a champion, to present to worksite decision-makers when considering an integrated approach. The slides provide information to describe:

- What an integrated approach is
- How it is different from what you already do
- What its benefits are
- What you have to do

[Click here for the slide deck](#)

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# Tools & Resources

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For more information and tools to help you through the planning process, please click on the following links.

## 1. Quality Improvement Processes

- [Six Sigma](#) aims to improve quality and cost efficiency with data-based techniques for process improvement
- [LEAN](#) offers a framework that optimizes process flow and minimizes/eliminates waste to improve quality and increase value
- [Model for Improvement](#) helps you define clear goals for improvement, then test and implement changes with Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles
- [SWOT \(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats\)](#) offers a structured planning method to identify key internal and external factors important to accomplishing an objective
- [Kaizen](#) gives you a practice for continuous improvement based on data collection, root cause analysis, teamwork, and process refinement

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## 2. Root Cause Analysis

[5 Whys](#) is the root cause analysis component of Six Sigma. It is also used within Kaizen and LEAN manufacturing (see links above under 1. Quality Improvement Processes).

The [Model for Improvement](#) contains an appendix full of different tools for improvement such as flow diagrams, cause and effect diagrams, driver diagrams, and tree diagrams.<sup>[1]</sup>

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## 3. Guidance on Working with Vendors <sup>[2]</sup>

Vendors can play a variety of roles that are integral to planning, implementing and evaluating an integrated approach. A few of these roles are listed below. Consider expenses for vendors when you are determining and allocating resources.

### Who are vendors and what attributes do they have?

Vendors are for-profit and not-for-profit service providers of occupational safety and health (OSH), worksite health promotion, and employee benefits, including insurance plans. Many organizations rely on external vendors to conduct their workplace and worker assessments, as well as to provide programming to the workplace and to employees. There are large numbers of worksite health promotion, health insurance, workers' compensation, and OSH vendors in the US today.



Using a vendor may be beneficial in several ways, including the following:

- **Vendors' product(s) and services are their business.** An organization's primary focus is probably not centered on conducting worker and workplace health assessments and programs. Hiring a vendor allows an organization to focus on its primary product or service.
- **Vendors have expertise and knowledge that the organization might lack about worker and workplace health.** As a result, hiring vendors may reduce the amount of time and money spent compared to trying to conduct assessments and programs in-house.
- **Vendors provide extra help implementing an integrated approach.** While organizations may have internal OSH-related staff (e.g. safety managers), worksite health promotion staff, and evaluators, they all probably have busy jobs, and incorporating new programs and evaluations into their current tasks may be difficult.

## What are key factors to consider when hiring a vendor?

- **Customer service:** How well will the vendor support organizational efforts—including those needed for an integrated approach?
- **Experience:** Does the vendor have extensive experience in the topics required? Make sure that vendors are appropriately qualified and staff trained.
- **Confidentiality and liability:** What procedures are in place to protect employee and employer information? What is the vendor's liability policy?
- **Satisfaction (participant and customer):** Will the vendor share customer (including individual employee) satisfaction information?
- **Metrics and evaluation:** What does the vendor provide in terms of evaluation and how often? Will the vendor work with others if integrated information is requested?
- **Account management:** It may be helpful to assess the extent of the account manager's involvement with the project and what resources s/he has available.

## What roles can vendors play?

### *Vendors can help with evaluation*

If outside vendors collect and analyze data, they might provide the client with aggregate information and can assist with evaluation. It may be useful to bring these vendors and/or evaluation teams together in a meeting to discuss the organization's goals in collecting and reporting on data. That way each will know the organization's expectations and the vendors' roles in contributing to the planning process. It may also reduce duplicative efforts.

One advantage of having an outside evaluator is that there may be less bias in the results. External evaluators have less investment in the outcomes and can be more objective than internal staff might be.

Another important reason to have outside evaluators/vendors conduct and lead the assessment process is to provide anonymity and reduce employee concerns about confidentiality. For example, vendors could be hired to conduct focus groups of all levels of employees to identify concerns or receive feedback

on programs and practices. Employees might be more frank with an external vendor, especially when confidentiality is assured. In addition, employees, who might be hesitant about replying to a survey conducted by their employer, might be more likely to respond if they are assured that the vendor will not share their individual results with management.

### *Vendors can help with employee and management reports*

#### Employee

When looking at an example of a vendor's employee report, consider the following:

- Are the recommendations in it current with scientific literature? Ask the vendor how often they update the science in their assessment and program.
- Is the tone of the report and the feedback material appropriate for organizational goals and the motivation of employees?
- Do the recommendations to employees align with resources available to them at the worksite or in the community? Is the organization willing to include additional resources for employees that are included as recommendations?
- Is the report visually appealing?
- Is the reading level and language appropriate for employees?

#### Management

Ask to see a sample report from the vendor and consider the following:

- Does the vendor have a process for eliminating any identifying information in the aggregate report?
- Are the measures used and presented by the vendor aligned with organizational goals?
- Will the aggregate report compare the organization's results with national, state, or industry figures?
- Can a cohort of employees who remain at the organization be tracked so that results show the impact of programs on existing employees over time?
- When and how will the reports be presented to management? Will there be a chance for review and editing before the final version is delivered?

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## 4. Data Collection Methods and Measurement Tools

### Tools for assessing an integrated approach

- [Workplace Integrated Safety and Health \(WISH\) Assessment](#) from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Center for Work, Health, and Well-Being is a tool to check the level of integration of your health and safety efforts.

- [Dimensions of Corporate Integration Tool](#) from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Center for Work, Health, and Well-Being provides tools that when used together help you assess an integrated approach at your organization.
- American College of Occupational Medicine and GlaxoSmithKline's Corporate Health Achievement Award  
General information : <http://sa.chaa.org/>  
Assessment: <http://sa.chaa.org/download/complete%20self-assessment.pdf>
- NIOSH's Total Worker Health® planning, assessment, and evaluation tools  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/tools.html>

## Tools, methods, and resources for assessing working conditions and policies, programs, and practices

- Involve workers through **hazard risk mapping**. In this assessment process workers identify environmental, organizational, and psychosocial factors of their work and worksite by placing them on a map of their worksite. Find some mapping examples in these references.<sup>[4-6]</sup>
- **Risk assessments & job hazard analyses** are processes that help organizations identify hazards and evaluate the risks associated with hazards in different jobs and throughout the workplace.<sup>[7]</sup> A fact sheet that lays out the process is available here:  
<http://www.pshsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/job-hazard-analysis-riskassessment.pdf>
- Here is a link to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Safety and Health Audit tool [https://www.osha.gov/shpguidelines/docs/SHP\\_Audit\\_Tool.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/shpguidelines/docs/SHP_Audit_Tool.pdf). It covers seven core components to a robust health and safety program. You could compare your organization's policies, programs, and practices to these components.
  - Management and leadership
  - Worker participation
  - Hazard identification and assessment
  - Hazard prevention and control
  - Education and training
  - Program evaluation and improvement
  - Communication and coordination for host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies
 Recommended practices for these core components are available here: <https://www.osha.gov/shpguidelines/management-leadership.html>
- NIOSH's Organization of Work Management Tools for Research and Practice:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/workorg/>

## Review of Policies, Programs, and Practices

As part of the Planning process, you may want to review current policies, programs and practices that directly or indirectly relate to the health, safety, and well-being of your employees. This process allows you to identify what's in place, what needs updating or improving, and gaps that can be addressed as part of your integrated approach.

*Below are two approaches to assessing policies, programs and practices.*

### A. Getting Started with Assessing Policies, Programs and Practices

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has developed a **Self-Assessment of Defining Elements of Total Worker Health®** that can provide a starting point in your review of current workplace initiatives [[www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/pdfs/fundamentalsworksheets.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/pdfs/fundamentalsworksheets.pdf)]. **Total Worker Health® is defined as policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.**

We have adapted the NIOSH assessment to include the key characteristics of an integrated approach described in the Guidelines. The table below is useful if you're just getting started with an integrated approach and want to gauge how integrated your organization is.

- In the "Where we are now/What we do well" column, summarize current practices relative to each key characteristic.
- In the "Where we want to be/What must be improved" column, consider how your organization's existing programs, policies, and practices could be adjusted or expanded.
- Both steps may require collecting data from employees and managers, to truly understand what is in place and what additional policy issues need to be addressed.

Table 7. Sample organizational assessment for an integrated approach

Characteristic of an Integrated Approach	Where are we now/ What we do well	Information Sources
<b>Leadership Commitment.</b> Leadership makes worker safety, health, and well-being a clear priority for the entire organization. They drive accountability and provide the necessary resources and environment to create positive working conditions.		

Characteristic of an Integrated Approach	Where are we now/ What we do well	Information Sources
<b>Participation.</b> Stakeholders at every level of an organization, including organized labor, help plan and carry out efforts to protect and promote worker safety and health.		
<b>Policies, programs, and practices focused on positive working conditions.</b> The organization enhances worker safety, health, and well-being with policies and practices that improve working conditions.		
<b>Comprehensive and collaborative strategies.</b> Employees from across the organization work together to develop comprehensive health and safety initiatives.		
<b>Adherence.</b> The organization adheres to federal and state regulations, as well as ethical norms, that advance worker safety, health, and well-being.		
<b>Data-driven change.</b> Regular evaluation guides an organization's priority setting, decision making, and continuous improvement of worker safety, health, and well-being initiatives.		

## B. Assessing Policies, Programs and Practices through the Lens of an Integrated Approach

To evaluate current policies, programs and practices, consider the key characteristics of an effective integrated approach and what your organization has in place formally (written and disseminated) and informally (done on an ad hoc or informal basis).

*Below is a sample completed template that provides examples of formal and informal policies and practices related to key characteristics of an integrated approach.*

**Table 8. Sample completed template of sample worksite policies and practices supporting an integrated approach**

Characteristic	Description	Formal Policies	Informal Practices
<b>Leadership Commitment</b>	Leadership makes worker safety, health, and well-being a clear priority for the entire organization. Leaders drive accountability and provide the necessary resources and environment to create positive working conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker health and safety are part of the organization's business objectives</li> <li>• The organization dedicates a portion of the budget to making improvements in working conditions that impact worker health, safety &amp; well-being</li> <li>• Promotion of worker, health, safety &amp; well-being is part of a manager's job description</li> <li>• New employee orientation and annual employee education informs employees about the importance the organization places on worker health, safety and well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top leaders lead by example and participate in programs, policies and practices that promote worker health, safety, and well-being (e.g., taking a break during the work day, using ergonomically correct desk space/equipment)</li> <li>• Top leaders encourage managers and employees to use work time to participate in programs (e.g., an integrated team focused on improving working conditions)</li> <li>• Leaders regularly communicate to employees to let them know how they are addressing worker health, safety and well-being</li> </ul>

Characteristic	Description	Formal Policies	Informal Practices
<b>Participation</b>	Stakeholders at every level of an organization help plan and carry out efforts to protect and promote worker safety and health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An integrated team exists including people responsible for employee health, safety and well-being, people from different levels of the organization, and employee representatives, working together to implement practices and policies</li> <li>• Manager and employee surveys are conducted to get feedback on worker health, safety, and well-being initiatives</li> <li>• Open door policy – employees can suggest ideas and report concerns related to health, safety, and well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers talk with employees about health, safety and well-being programs, encouraging their participation on a program-by-program basis; employees encourage each other to participate</li> <li>• Managers check in with employees to get feedback on how policies, programs and practices are impacting their health, safety, and well-being</li> </ul>



Characteristic	Description	Formal Policies	Informal Practices
<b>Policies, programs, and practices focused on positive working conditions</b>	The organization enhances worker safety, health, and well-being with policies and practices that improve working conditions.	<p><b>Physical environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular worksite walk-throughs and ergonomic assessments are conducted and issues (such as workstation design or fall hazards) are addressed</li> <li>Employees have access to an on-site fitness center</li> </ul> <p><b>Work organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisors make sure workers are able to take their entitled breaks during work</li> <li>Supervisors ensure that employees are able to take their sick time, vacation, and parental leave</li> </ul> <p><b>Psychosocial environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisor training is provided; managers are evaluated on their level of support for employees</li> <li>Policies address flexible work hours and alternative work schedules</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers pay attention to work environment and ergonomic issues and make adjustments to the worksite as needed</li> <li>Supervisors encourage employees to use the fitness center during their breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Work organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers do not email employees over the weekends and do not expect responses to emails when someone is on vacation or leave</li> <li>Managers ask employees about their workload, to be sure it's reasonable and that employees can complete job tasks within their shift</li> </ul> <p><b>Psychosocial environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisors recognize the contributions of employees and thank them for their efforts</li> <li>Managers ensure employees feel comfortable asking for flexible work schedules</li> </ul>

Characteristic	Description	Formal Policies	Informal Practices
<b>Comprehensive and collaborative strategies</b>	Employees from across the organization work together to develop comprehensive health and safety initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers are held accountable for implementing best practices through their performance reviews</li> <li>Policies, programs and practices aim to both prevent work-related illness and injury, and also promote worker health, safety and well-being; collaboration across departments is the foundation of these efforts</li> <li>New programs are piloted with employees in different departments and at different levels before being more broadly rolled out</li> <li>Decision-makers consider different approaches to an issue, for example: a focus on respiratory health could include discussion of containing dusts and fumes as well as smoking cessation methods and resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers and employees informally gather co-workers to participate in safety, health and well-being activities, such as tool box talks on how to reduce workplace injury</li> <li>Activities are developed by and offered to employees, with a well-planned rollout strategy</li> <li>Decision-makers prioritize protection and promotion of worker safety and health when selecting vendors and subcontractors</li> </ul>

Characteristic	Description	Formal Policies	Informal Practices
<b>Adherence</b>	The organization adheres to federal and state regulations, as well as ethical norms – such as a respectful workplace – that advance worker safety, health, and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The workplace complies with occupational health, safety, and non-discrimination regulations and laws</li> <li>The workplace has additional policies beyond legal requirements to create a respectful and healthy workplace (e.g., Return-to-Work policies/ Transitional Duty, Long-Term Disability)</li> <li>Wages for the lowest-paid employees seem to be enough to cover basic living expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers do not treat employees differently if they report injuries, illness or a problem at the worksite</li> <li>Co-workers are respectful of each other's cultures, ideas, and beliefs</li> <li>Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are not tolerated</li> </ul>
<b>Data-driven change</b>	Regular evaluation guides an organization's priority setting, decision making and continuous improvement of worker safety, health, and well-being initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yearly employee surveys include questions about health, safety and well-being, are shared with leadership, and inform decision-making</li> <li>Issues surfacing from injury and illness reporting are addressed immediately to resolve any danger to employees, and then aggregate data is analyzed to determine areas needing improvement</li> <li>Data from multiple sources are used to measure the effects of policies and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly town hall meetings with executives include topics related to work, health, and well-being, providing information and encouraging feedback from participants</li> <li>Senior leaders conduct casual check-ins with employees to hear feedback on policies and practices and consider changes based on what they learn</li> <li>If suggested changes are not implemented, management explains why</li> </ul>

## Employee level tools, methods, and resources

A great resource for gathering information from employees is an evaluation manual from NIOSH entitled “Does it really work?”<sup>[9]</sup> The information below about focus groups, employee interviews, and employee observation comes from it. More detailed information and recommendations about these techniques are available here:

[How to Evaluate Safety and Health Changes in the Workplace](#)

- **Focus groups**<sup>[9]</sup>

Focus groups are group interviews on a specific topic run by a moderator. Focus groups can provide in-depth information on a specific topic of interest to the organization. They can also be used to gather information about needs, concerns, and interests of employees and managers at the worksite.

The Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace has guides and tips for running focus groups on workplace safety and health issues.

They are available here:

[https://www.uml.edu/docs/Focus\\_Group\\_Guide\\_ProjD\\_revised2-19-15\\_tcm18-167587.pdf](https://www.uml.edu/docs/Focus_Group_Guide_ProjD_revised2-19-15_tcm18-167587.pdf)

[https://www.uml.edu/docs/FG%20Tips%20sheet\\_RK\\_tcm18-167588.pdf](https://www.uml.edu/docs/FG%20Tips%20sheet_RK_tcm18-167588.pdf)

- **Employee interviews**<sup>[9]</sup>

Individual interviews with employees may produce insight and understanding of existing worksite hazards and injuries. Since employees know the work the best, they can provide input on procedures and practices and offer recommendations for solutions.

Individual interviews are one-on-one, face-to-face discussions where the interviewer asks the same set of questions to one person at a time.

- **Employee observation**<sup>[9]</sup>

Another good way to figure out whether change has occurred is to watch employee practices before and after you have made a health and safety change. You will want to let people know you are watching them and the reasons for it. Mix up the times you observe so you can capture different people and procedures. As part of creating a respectful and positive work environment, get their permission first.

- **Employee level assessments**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Healthy Worksite™ initiative produced the tools below. Check out overall guidance to assessment tools from this initiative:

<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/tools-resources/workplace-health/assessment-tools.html>

- The health and safety climate survey assesses employee perceptions of working conditions and supervisor and co-worker support. [https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/tools-resources/pdfs/nhwp\\_inputs\\_survey.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/tools-resources/pdfs/nhwp_inputs_survey.pdf)
- An employee health assessment that gathers information about employee health status, behaviors, and issues related to worksite health and safety. <https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/tools-resources/pdfs/nhwp-capture-health-assessment-update.pdf>

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## 5. Intervention Ideas Focused on Working Conditions


- [STAR intervention toolkits](#) for office workers and health care workers are both available from the Work, Family and Health Network
- **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Center for Work, Health, and Well-Being** – Scoping review of organizational change strategies for low income service workers *NOTE: This is currently under construction. Check back soon for evidence-based ideas.*


### Sample Tactics and Planning Actions

This table provides sample tactics and planning actions to address working conditions in the physical, work, and psychosocial environment, with a focus on decreasing back pain.

Table 9. Sample Tactics and Planning Actions for an Integrated Approach

Tactics	Planning Actions
<b>Physical environment</b> 	
Increase correct use of lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to workers and supervisors to find out how to increase correct use of lifts</li> <li>• Talk to workers, supervisors, facility and production designers, and decision-makers to identify ways to encourage lift use and remove any barriers identified in root cause analyses</li> <li>• Plan to train supervisors and employees on correct lift use</li> <li>• Review lift maintenance procedures and if they're being applied correctly</li> <li>• Check on the need for additional lifts, lift repairs, and lift maintenance contracts and protocols. If new allocations need to be made, develop a budget and discuss with the appropriate director.</li> </ul>
Reduce slippery floors, surfaces, and obstructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a procedure, such as a checklist, to follow when there are wet or slippery floors</li> <li>• Create policies and procedures for facilities, purchasing, and safety staff about buying floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> <li>• Train cleaning staff in procedures</li> <li>• Develop procedure, such as taping or bunching cables, to reduce obstructions that could be tripping hazards</li> <li>• Work with facilities to ensure adequate lighting throughout the workplace and campus</li> <li>• Develop procedures to ensure managers are held accountable for housekeeping in their area</li> </ul>

Tactics	Planning Actions
<b>Work environment</b> 	
Reduce time spent in stationary work and improve break practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have departmental supervisors and employees work with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and Human Resources (HR) to develop a job rotation policy</li> <li>• Have supervisors and employees work with HR and OSH to develop a new break proposal</li> <li>• Train supervisors and employees in new policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>• Communicate with all employees about new policies and procedures and why they've been created</li> </ul>
Review and revise return-to-work (RTW) policies as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with HR, OSH, supervisors, and employees to update as necessary RTW policies with procedures for job accommodation</li> <li>• Educate supervisors on how RTW policies benefit them and their unit</li> <li>• Train supervisors on how to encourage employees to see a health care provider when injured and how to show compassion for injuries, recovery, and RTW</li> <li>• Educate employees about RTW options and policies, as well as their role in supporting co-workers returning to work after an injury</li> <li>• Have managers work with employees and health care providers to facilitate, support, and monitor job accommodation requirements over time</li> </ul>
Review and revise as necessary health benefits that support efforts to reduce back injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and revise health and mental health benefits to ensure coverage for visits to health care providers who treat back pain and stress</li> <li>• Explore options to improve coverage with insurance vendors</li> <li>• Present CFO with costs of changes in coverage vs. keeping the status quo</li> <li>• Have Employee Assistance Program (EAP) work with OSH to provide employees with stress reduction resources</li> <li>• Train supervisors to encourage employees to go to health care providers when in pain</li> <li>• Have HR communicate with employees about your organization's benefits related to back pain</li> </ul>

Tactics	Planning Actions
<b>Psychosocial environment</b> 	
Supervisor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with others in the organization, including HR, to create policies impacted by supervisor support, such as flexible scheduling, working remotely, annual leave, and fulfilling home caregiving roles</li> <li>Train supervisors about their role in employee support and how they can provide it</li> </ul>

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## 6. How to Prioritize Ideas

- [CDC's Workplace Health Improvement Plan](#) offers tips for how to effectively prioritize ideas.

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## 7. Sample Template and Completed Action Plan


Provided below is a template for planning an integrated initiative that addresses working conditions. A completed template is also provided with suggested tactics and planning actions to address employee back injuries that are presented in the Guidelines. Please feel free to modify the template for your organization.

Table 10. Sample Action Plan Template

<b>January 20XX-December 20XX</b>	<b>Location(s):</b> <i>Insert location(s)</i>
<b>Completed by:</b> <i>Insert name</i>	<b>Date Plan Completed:</b> <i>Insert current date</i>
<b>Overall goal:</b> <i>Insert</i>	
<b>SMART Objective:</b> <i>Insert</i>	<b>Objective completion date:</b> <i>Insert</i>




Working Conditions	TACTICS and ACTIONS to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
Physical environment 					
Working condition #1	<b>Tactic 1</b>	<b>PPs for Tactic 1</b>			
	Action 1		Title	Date	
	Action 2		Title	Date	
	Action 3		Title	Date	
Working condition #2	<b>Tactic 2</b>	<b>PPs for Tactic 2</b>			
	Action 1		Title	Date	
	Action 2		Title	Date	
Work environment 					
Working condition #1	<b>Tactic 1</b>	<b>PPs for Tactic 1</b>			
	Action 1		Title	Date	
	Action 2		Title	Date	
	Action 3		Title	Date	
Working condition #2	<b>Tactic 2</b>	<b>PPs for Tactic 2</b>			
	Action 1		Title	Date	
	Action 2		Title	Date	
	Action 3		Title	Date	
	Action 4		Title	Date	


Working Conditions	<i>TACTICS and ACTIONS</i> to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
<b>Working condition #3</b>	<b><i>Tactic 3</i></b>	<b>PPs for Tactic 3</b>			
	Action 1		Title	Date	
	Action 2		Title	Date	
	Action 3		Title	Date	
	Action 4		Title	Date	
Psychosocial environment 					
<b>Working condition #1</b>	<b><i>Tactic 1</i></b>	<b>PPs for Tactic 1</b>			
	Action 1		Title	Date	
	Action 2		Title	Date	
	Action 3		Title	Date	
	Action 4		Title	Date	

**Table 11. Sample Partial Action Plan for a manufacturer who wants to reduce back injuries**


<b>January 20XX-December 20XX</b>	<b>Location(s):</b> <i>Manufacturing floor</i>
<b>Completed by:</b> <i>Insert name</i>	<b>Date Plan Completed:</b> <i>April XX, 20XX</i>
<b>Overall goal:</b> <i>Reduce employee injuries</i>	
<b>SMART Objective:</b> <i>Reduce back pain by 20% among employees on manufacturing floor</i>	<b>Objective completion date:</b> <i>December 20XX</i>

*Table continues below.*

Working Conditions	TACTICS and ACTIONS to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
<b>Physical environment</b> 					
<b>Number and availability of lifts for moving objects</b>	<b><i>Increase correct use of lifts</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to workers and supervisors to find out how to increase correct use of lifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a policy to reduce injuries through increased lift use</li> <li>Leadership communicates new policy to all employees</li> </ul>	Safety Manager	31-Jan	<i>Done</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify ways to encourage lift use and remove any barriers identified in root cause analyses by talking to supervisors, workers, facility and production designers, and decision-makers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement production processes that integrate lift policy into key areas of plant Standard Operating Procedures for lift use, inspection, maintenance, and repair using worker &amp; management input</li> </ul>	Safety Manager	31-Jan	<i>Done</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to train supervisors and employees on correct lift use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train employees &amp; supervisors how to use lifts. Offer a refresher course for those already trained</li> </ul>	Safety Manager	15-Mar	<i>Done</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check on the need and available budget for: new lifts, lift repair, lift maintenance contracts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase more lifts and adjust maintenance contracts if supervisors and workers state the need for them</li> </ul>	Safety Manager	6-Jun	<i>Not started</i>

Working Conditions	TACTICS and ACTIONS to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
Work environment 					
<b>Break schedules &amp; practices</b>	<b>Improve break practices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk with supervisors and employees about break taking culture and what current needs and practices are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use policies and practices to create a culture where taking breaks is the norm</li> <li>Ask leadership to communicate to all employees about the importance of breaks in reducing injuries</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	15-Jan	Done
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have supervisors and employees work with HR and OSH to update break policy, if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new break policy</li> <li>Use employee input to provide clean, attractive, and convenient break areas where employees can rest and relax</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	28-Feb	Done
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to train supervisors and employees in break policies, procedures, and practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During supervisor and worker trainings, talk about how breaks increase productivity</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	15-Mar	Under development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop communication plan to tell all employees about break policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with all employees about new break policies &amp; procedures and why they've been created</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	5-Apr	Done

Working Conditions	<i>TACTICS and ACTIONS</i> to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
<b>Presence of slippery floors</b>	<b><i>Reduce slippery floors</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a procedure, such as a checklist, to follow when there are wet or slippery floors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement procedural checklist for wet or slippery floors</li> </ul>	Safety Manager	15-Jan	<i>Done</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create policies &amp; procedures for facilities, purchasing, and safety staff about buying floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement policy &amp; procedures about buying floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> <li>Facilities, purchasing, and safety staff are trained to buy floor cleaning products that prevent slipperiness</li> </ul>	Facilities, Purchasing, & Safety Managers	31-Jan	<i>Done</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop plan for training cleaning staff in procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train cleaning staff in procedures</li> </ul>	Safety Manager	2-Apr	<i>Done</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop procedures to ensure managers are held accountable for housekeeping in their area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures implemented to ensure managers are held accountable for housekeeping in their area</li> </ul>	Custodial Supervisors	5-May	<i>Not started</i>

Working Conditions	TACTICS and ACTIONS to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
Psychosocial environment 					
Supervisor support	<b>Improve supervisor support of employees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with others in the organization, including HR, to update policies impacted by supervisor support, such as flexible scheduling, working remotely, annual leave, and caregiving roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update work-life policies impacted by supervisor support, such as flexible scheduling, working remotely, annual leave, and caregiving roles</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	30-June	Under development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create/update policies &amp; procedures to prevent abuse, harassment, discrimination, &amp; violence</li> <li>Also create/update policies &amp; procedures to build respect for ideas, values, &amp; beliefs of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement policies and procedures to prevent abuse, harassment, discrimination, &amp; violence</li> <li>Create policies to build respect for the ideas, values, and beliefs of others</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	31-July	Under development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop procedures for holding supervisors accountable for taking actions to support their employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold supervisors accountable for taking actions that support their employees, such as encouraging taking breaks</li> <li>Evaluate supervisors' and directors' success in improving break practices in their area</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	30-Nov.	Not started



Working Conditions	<i>TACTICS and ACTIONS</i> to address them	Policies and Practices (PPs)	Responsibility	Due Date	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a training plan for supervisors about supporting employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train supervisors about their role in employee support and how they can provide it</li> <li>Train management on how to build respect for the ideas, values, and beliefs of others</li> <li>Train management to prevent abuse, harassment, discrimination, and violence</li> </ul>	Human Resources Manager	30-Sept.	<i>Under development</i>

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## References

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# Tools & Resources

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## Sample Communications from Management to Employees

Management communications and support are essential when implementing an integrated approach to safety, health and well-being. Below are two sample communications from management to employees – at the kickoff of an initiative and after an employee health assessment. These are samples; each organization needs to customize their communications to reflect their own mission, vision, and priorities.

If you want more general information about communications planning and successfully marketing program offerings to employees, check out **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Workplace Health Promotion tips, tools and resources** at: [www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/planning/communications.html](http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/planning/communications.html)

### Sample Management Communication to Employees: Kicking Off an Integrated Approach Initiative

*The following management communication to employees, once customized, can be sent by a senior leader at your organization at the beginning of an initiative. It introduces general concepts and explains what will be coming next and how employees can get involved. Customization is necessary because each organization's integrated approach will be unique depending on its goals.*

To: All Employees

From: [Name of Senior Leader]

Subject: An Integrated Approach to Improving Safety, Health, and Well-being

I want to share some exciting news about our initiative to improve the safety, health, and well-being of our employees and our organization.

#### **What is an integrated approach and what does it mean to you?**

An integrated approach is a worksite-wide approach to improve worker safety, health, and well-being that's shaped by employee input and participation and focuses on improving working conditions.

Our emphasis will be on implementing and enhancing policies and practices that support your improved health, safety, and well-being.

- Executive leadership is committed to making our organization the safest, healthiest, and most productive one possible. We understand that our employees are the cornerstone of our organization and will provide resources to ensure the initiative's success.
- We want to involve you throughout the initiative and make changes based on your input. You know your work the best, so we want your thoughts on how to improve working conditions.
- We will be reviewing our safety and health data, policies, and practices to ensure that we provide the best and safest work environment for you to thrive, both professionally and personally.
- We are committed to providing a respectful work environment and will be taking steps to improve management and employee training in this area.

- Our integrated approach team includes people who are responsible for different areas of health, safety, and well-being. It includes managers and some employees. If you're interested in participating, read more below about getting involved!

### **So, what do you need to do?**

Participation is optional, of course, but we encourage you to participate in what will soon be available. Keep an eye out for emails about the initiative's activities and then throughout the year, take advantage of all the great offerings that are rolled out, and encourage your co-workers to participate as well.

If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to send them my way [insert contact information].

### **Are you passionate about this topic?**

I'm looking for a handful of employees who are passionate about this topic and represent multiple departments to be on a committee which will be responsible for developing and rolling out plans this year. Your role would involve attending a monthly meeting and some leg-work in between as we design, plan, implement and evaluate the initiative. If you're interested in being part of this committee, please let me know [insert contact information].

## **Sample Management Communication to Employees: Sharing Assessment Results and Setting Goals**

*The following is a sample communication used to share aggregate findings from a series of health, safety, and well-being assessments. It needs to be edited with data relevant to your organization. Management provides general information about findings from the assessments, followed by specific steps the organization is taking to address them. It's linked to the beginning of the calendar year when many people make resolutions.*

To: All Employees

From: [Name of Senior Leader]

Subject: Sharing Results from Our Assessment of Organizational Safety, Health, and Well-being

What's your New Year's resolution?

Maybe you've set some health and well-being goals for yourself. We have too! We are working to make [name of our organization] a healthier and safer place to work.

As part of this effort, we want to review with you the results of our recent series of Health, Safety and Well-being Assessments.

### **Here is what we found:**

#### **The Health & Safety of Employees:**

- There are opportunities for us to provide employees with more support and education.
- We found that back pain is a common health issue among our employees.

- Not eating enough fruits and vegetables and inadequate sleep may be affecting employee health.
- Having too many job demands that get in the way of following safety rules may affect employee safety and well-being.
- Managers could be more engaged in promoting a healthy and safe workplace.

#### **The Worksite:**

- Our assessments confirmed that we make safety a priority through safety policies and practices.
- The most common risks found were repetitive motions.
- While breaks are taken, there are limited areas at our worksite in which employees feel that they are stepping away from their work.
- We learned that while we have flexible work policies, not all employees feel comfortable requesting alternative work arrangements.

#### **The Organization:**

- More safety planning, and training and evaluating of managers and employees was recommended.
- Our organizational messages support worksite well-being.
- Managers would benefit from supervisor training focused on supporting their employees' as they manage both work and personal responsibilities.
- Involving a combined safety and well-being committee could improve our efforts.

#### **Based on what we've learned, we set some goals:**

- Our combined safety and well-being committee will plan, implement, and evaluate our policies and practices.
- We will be developing organization-wide programs to:
  - reduce employee back pain
  - increase on-site and off-site safety awareness
  - provide comfortable and quiet spaces for employees to use to take their breaks
  - increase manager support of employees' professional development and meeting demands of their personal lives
- We will continue offering you high-quality health, safety, and well-being programs.

**We want to hear your ideas! Tell us how you think we can make [our organization] even better. Contact [insert name & contact information].**

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## Training Resources and Activities

The integrated approach described in the Guidelines is strengthened by training and activities that reinforce messages supportive of employee health, safety, and well-being. This can begin when an employee joins an organization and hears as part of orientation that the leadership of the organization is committed to maintaining the safest and healthiest environment possible – a sample New Employee Orientation piece is included below. Ongoing training is important to reinforce these messages – this section also includes links to multiple on-line and in-person training opportunities.

### A. Introducing an Integrated Approach as Part of New Employee Orientation

*New Employee Orientation at organizations presents an ideal opportunity to introduce employees to a culture of safety, health, and well-being. From the staff who give the orientation presentations, to the materials the employee takes home, every aspect of the orientation can reflect the key characteristics of an integrated approach. It is also critical that employees hear the message from the highest level of the organization—ideally, from one of the company's top administrators or through a videotaped message from the CEO or other top organizational leader (some sample talking points are included below).*

#### Description

People who come to work for the organization may have never worked in a setting using an integrated approach for employee safety, health, and well-being, so it makes sense to introduce this approach at new employee orientations. The organization's champion or an integrated planning team member (See Chapter 2 of Guidelines) can collaborate with Human Resources to develop an outline of key topics, identify a speaker, and develop appropriate hand-outs and educational materials that reflect the organization's integrated and comprehensive approach to worker and worksite safety, health, and well-being. The orientation is a useful venue for communicating with new employees about management's commitment to these issues.

#### Sample organizational leader talking points about an integrated approach

- Executive leadership is committed to making our organization the safest, healthiest, and most productive one possible. We understand that our employees are the cornerstone of our organization and will provide resources to ensure the initiative's success.
- We want to involve you throughout the initiative and make changes based on your input. You know your work the best, so we want your thoughts on how to improve working conditions.
- We will be reviewing our safety and health data, policies, and practices to ensure that we provide the best and safest work environment for you to thrive, both professionally and personally.
- We are committed to providing a respectful work environment and will be taking steps to improve management and employee training in this area.
- Our integrated approach team includes people who are responsible for different areas of health, safety, and well-being. It includes managers and some employees.
- You may not have ever worked in an organization that practices this approach, so here are the basics:
  - Your health, safety, and well-being are important.
  - As an organization, we are responsible for creating and maintaining working conditions that are

supportive of all employees' health, safety, and well-being.

- We will offer as many opportunities as we can for you to get the support and information you need to be safe, healthy, and productive at work and at home.
- We need your input.
  - If you see something that's unsafe, we need to know about it.
  - If you have ideas or problems, we want to hear about them.
  - If you see an opportunity for us to improve health, safety, and well-being, please tell your supervisor. Or you can come talk to me or send me an email at [insert contact information].
  - Your supervisor and our Human Resources department can help you locate organizational resources to support your safety, health, and well-being.
  - Everyone who works here is a critical part of the whole effort. Tell us if you want to participate in committees or events.

## B. Additional Training and Educational Resources

*The resources below include links to best practices for professional and worker training and education about safety, health, and well-being:*

1. **Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health Executive and Continuing Professional Education course** provides participants with the full set of skills needed to integrate occupational health and safety with health promotion programs.  
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/ecpe/programs/work-health-and-well-being/>
2. **Oregon Health & Science University's Healthy Workforce Center Occupational Health Psychology Summer Institute** is a three-day event focused on workforce safety and health issues, featuring experts in occupational health research and practice discussing cutting-edge research, sharing real-world experiences and brainstorming strategies to bring Total Worker Health® into the workplace. Presentations from previous years are available.  
<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/oregon-institute-occupational-health-sciences/oregon-healthy-workforce-center/education-outreach/ohp-summer-institute.cfm>
3. **The STAR Toolkit from the Work, Family & Health Network** contains materials that help workplace teams find ways to reduce work-family conflict and increase productivity by decreasing unnecessary work and increasing employees' control over their time.  
<http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/wfhn/toolkits-achieve-workplace-change>
4. **The Healthy Workforce Participatory Program (HWPP) from the Center for Promoting Health in the New England Workplace** is designed specifically to help employer organizations adopt and implement a Total Worker Health® approach. The HWPP Toolkit was developed to engage employees in designing integrated solutions that address a wide range of work environment, work organization, safety, and employee health issues.  
<https://www.uml.edu/Research/CPH-NEW/Healthy-Work-Participatory-Program/default.aspx>
5. **The Canadian Implementation Guide to the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace** addresses working conditions. Pages 65-68 of the Guide include statements about workplace factors that may assist users in thinking about and starting discussions about



psychological health and safety in their own workplaces.

[https://mentalhealth.apec.org/sites/default/files/Assembling\\_the\\_Pieces\\_An\\_Implementation\\_Guide\\_to\\_the\\_National\\_Standard\\_for\\_Psychological\\_Health\\_and\\_Safety\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace.pdf](https://mentalhealth.apec.org/sites/default/files/Assembling_the_Pieces_An_Implementation_Guide_to_the_National_Standard_for_Psychological_Health_and_Safety_in_the_Workplace.pdf)

6. **Total Worker Health® On-Demand Training** includes a selection of educational webinars providing research findings, trends and tips related to employee safety, health and well-being in the workplace.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/ondemandtraining.html>
7. **CDC Work@Health®** is an employer-based training program, with an aim to improve the organizational health of participating employers and certified trainers, emphasizing strategies to reduce chronic disease and injury risk to employees and improve overall worker productivity.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/workathealth/index.html>
8. **The Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences Health Impacts Safety toolbox and safety meeting guides** have been developed to support organizations integrating workplace safety, health, and well-being.  
<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/oregon-institute-occupational-health-sciences/outreach/impact.cfm>
9. **The Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest Activities and Challenges** include options for employees to encourage participation that can be incorporated into a larger integrated approach initiative.  
<https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/hwcmw/for-the-workplace/twh-activities-challenges/>
10. **The Center for Health, Work & Environment Online Continuing Education courses** provide distance learning opportunities for practicing professionals. Offerings include comprehensive self-paced coursework, discussion boards, and supplemental materials.  
<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/centers/CHWE/training/Online/Pages/default.aspx>
11. **Fundamentals of Integrated Health and Safety, developed by the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health** in partnership with the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL), is a seven-module eLearning course offering strategies and metrics to improve health and safety programming using the concept of Integrated Health and Safety.  
<http://learn.ulehssustainability.com/ihs-course>

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## Evaluation

Please refer to the tools and resources for Chapter 3-Planning for [lists of evaluation and measurement resources](#).

Also, refer to the two documents mentioned in Chapter 5.

For detailed information about how to perform effective evaluations, check out these National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) resources:

- [How to Evaluate Safety and Health Changes in the Workplace](#), pp. 15-26, provides valuable suggestions on how to conduct evaluations, along with examples from different industries.
- [Guide to Evaluating the Effectiveness of Strategies for Prevention of Work Injuries](#) offers an in-depth look at evaluation and its design. This resource may be more appropriate for an organization with sophisticated data analysis capacities.

## Continual improvement

If you are interested in learning more about Plan, Do, Study, Act cycles and how to implement them this book is worth reading. It provides examples from many industries and includes many useful measurement tools.

- Langley, GJ et al. *The Improvement Guide: A practical approach to enhancing organizational performance*. 2nd Edition. 2009, San Francisco, California: John Wiley & Sons.
- The American Society for Quality (ASQ) has lots of resources on continuous improvement, including some on how to choose measures and metrics. See the following webpage to get started: <http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/continuous-improvement/overview/overview.html>
- The Integrated Benefits Institute has a wealth of research-based resources and tools for organizations to consider as they link workforce health and positive organizational outcomes. See the following webpage to get started: <https://ibiweb.org/research-resources/>

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