

Stand Out With Excellent On-Site Safety

Konecranes

To really make an impression on current and potential customers, most contractors, manufacturers and industrial service providers recognize the importance of differentiating themselves from the competition. There are plenty of companies out there who can get the job done, and so quality becomes a question of how: how well, how quickly, how ... safely?



Respect On-Site Safety Protocol

Often, a site manager will request additional safety protocols that go above and beyond OSHA and ANSI requirements. It's important to treat those protocols with the same seriousness as the national regulations/standards. "Each environment is different, and you have to trust that the customer knows more about their plant than you do," says Chuck Thompson, Portal Service Manager at Konecranes. "Though the proprietary guidelines might be the smallest or least significant of your compliance concerns, they are also the ones that the customer will notice most, because they went to the trouble of adding them.

"For example, at the paper plant, the customer had asked that all of the contracting teams secure any area in which there was lifting or rigging with danger tape," says

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Thompson. "This is a relatively simple precaution, and it's one that we here at Konecranes use anyways, so we were very surprised when the customer contacted us afterwards to thank us for using the danger tape. Turns out we were one of the few contractors that actually did so for the entire duration of the project."

Listening to requests like this is a simple way to demonstrate that you value the customer's input and pay close attention to their needs.

Focus on the Details

Safety isn't a discipline based on big ideas and major decisions; it's a science of cumulative details. Most safety requirements don't require a massive institutional overhaul or involve one huge push. Instead, safety is about doing all the small things - all the time. "In most situations, 'always' is going to have to be an exaggeration," explains Thompson, "but when it comes to safety, it has to be the norm."

"When we were working at heights in the paper plant, we would always have our harnesses on and our lanyards were always clipped off. Hard hats, reflective vests, steel-toed boots, eye protection - all of these were always on. From an employee perspective, you never know when these precautions could be life-saving, and from a customer satisfaction perspective, you never know when the project manager will come by. By staying vigilant and compliant at all times, you'll reassure both your workers and your customer."

Of course, it's easy to promise that your team will "always" take the necessary precautions in the abstract, but how can you ensure that safety remains a priority once they're on the job?

Culture of Safety

When tight deadlines and demanding work schedules enter the equation, it can be tough to keep workplace safety top of mind. It's important therefore to establish a pervasive culture of safety, so that caution and alertness are second nature to all employees. Emphasizing safety as a team effort, rather than as a strictly individual responsibility, produces the most consistent and comprehensive results.

"No one person is going to be perfectly safe 100 percent of the time, so you really need a team approach for success," says Thompson. "If everybody has safety in mind, and you're always watching out not only for yourself but for one another, then even if something is missed by one individual, the odds are in your favor that someone else is going to see if something is not safe and raise their hand."

He continues: "So while it is an individual effort - 'Yes, I need to be safe for myself' - it is also a group effort. You have to watch out for the team. You have to always be

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mindful of what's going on and look out for the guys on your crew."

In addition, this team culture can't be limited to individual work group. It needs to be a part of your overarching corporate messaging, from the president to the newest apprentice. "In my experience, it's got to be a top-down approach," says Thompson. "If it's important to management, and they demonstrate that it's important to them, then that sends the signal to everyone else."

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