

Case Study.

DuBay Polymer GmbH.
Germany.
Chemicals.

How to maintain risk awareness and avoid complacency with a first-rate safety performance

DuBay Polymer GmbH is a joint venture between LANXESS and DuPont that manufactures polyester for technical applications in a world-scale plant. When the plant in Hamm-Uentrop began operating in December 2003, it undertook a contractual obligation to maintain DuPont safety standards. Safety is a thriving, integral part of company culture which is apparent in the site's safety record. The main risks for employees are fire and explosion hazards, handling of hazardous materials and potential dust explosions.

First Phase

DuBay feared that its outstanding safety achievements might create a false sense of security and lead employees to become less risk aware. "As terrible as it sounds, an accident is a good trigger for raising risk awareness. Without such triggers there is a danger of complacency," Friedrich Müller, operations manager at DuBay Polymer GmbH, explains.

DuBay wanted to continue to improve its safety performance and ensure employees did not relax their vigilance. Without any incidents in years, there was a danger that employees lacked the impulse to focus on safety and keep it front of mind. The key question for DuBay leadership was how to effect a change in mindset and sensitise people to existing and new risks. DuBay had previously worked with dss+ and sought advice on changing safety behaviour in the long-term.



Assignment

Increase and maintain high risk awareness to continuously improve an already excellent safety performance.



Offering

dss+ Safety Perception Survey™ & dss+ Risk Factor™



Impact

DuBay goal of 3,000 days without an incident achieved shortly after program completion.

Greater awareness of risk.

Trained all 103 DuBay employees in dss+ Risk Factor.

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"We have a very participation-oriented organisation with a flat hierarchy. Employees are invited to contribute on an ongoing basis. That only works if everyone gets involved. Safety is a great vehicle to achieve engagement and reinvigorate company culture," says Mr. Müller.

Over six weeks in 2019, dss+ conducted a Risk Perception Survey to measure risk management in DuBay's safety culture. Completed by 85% of DuBay employees, the survey results provided an insight into differences in risk awareness by area, function and time with the company. The dss+ Risk Factor™ programme next focused on helping people to decode their decision-making process and trigger a change in awareness, thus helping them to reduce risky decisions and protect themselves and others better.

By early March 2020, dss+ had trained all 103 DuBay employees from business leaders and managers to employees in the five modules of the dss+ Risk Factor – retrospectively, good preparation for dealing with the new challenges posed by the COVID pandemic: unexpectedly early and extended shut-downs of production units, reduced working hours, and the need for effective infection control.

"There is a tendency for new risks to blot out existing hazards," Mr Müller says. "We used the dss+ Risk Factor to prevent people from lowering their guard and becoming less alert to risk."

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FRIEDRICH MÜLLER, OPERATIONS MANAGER, DUBAY POLYMER GMBH

dss+

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