

Newmont Mining Improves Workplace Safety by Influencing Employee Behavior



CLIENT: NEWMONT

Founded in 1921 and publicly traded since 1925, Newmont Mining Corporation is a leading gold and copper producer with significant assets or operations in the United States, Australia, Peru, Indonesia, Ghana, and New Zealand. In 2007, the company became the first gold company selected to be part of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. Newmont's industry-leading performance is reflected through high standards in environmental management, health, and safety for its employees and by creating value and opportunity for host communities and shareholders.



Industry: Mining

THE CHALLENGE

Workplace safety has always been a value for global mining leader Newmont Mining Corporation. The company utilizes many proven safety practices such as investigating incidents and taking corrective actions, creating proactive safety standards for management, and providing standard safety and technical training. As a result, the company achieved an enviable Total Recordable Accident Frequency Rate (TRAFR), the industry measurement of safety incidents that occur on the job per number of hours worked.

Still, the company continued to experience fatalities and serious injuries. Newmont's board of directors requested that the executive leadership team develop a plan to work toward eliminating fatalities and serious injuries in the workplace.

This directive led to the creation of a Safety Task Force, which developed six recommendations. First among the recommendations was to focus on Safety Leadership Behaviors.¹ This meant company leaders had to figure out how to change behaviors to ensure that choosing safer behaviors became part of the company's culture.

THE SOLUTION

Newmont was introduced to the Influencer model when Al Switzler, cofounder of Crucial Learning and bestselling author, spoke at Newmont's 2010 Global Leadership Meeting in Australia. After more discussions with members of the Safety Task Force, Newmont decided to pilot the Applied Influencer approach at three locations to see how it would work in a mining environment and in the various cultures where Newmont operated.

These pilot programs proved Influencer would work for Newmont. The company kicked off the rollout, which they branded "Vital Behaviors," by certifying a handful of employees in the two-day Influencer course. These certified trainers were tasked with leading the Applied Influencer sessions in different regions around the world including North America, Indonesia, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. To date, Newmont has led approximately eighty Applied Influencer workshops globally.

As part of the Applied Influencer process, which is a process for senior teams and based on the behavior change process taught in Influencer to achieve specific

enterprise objectives, stories were collected from employees at each worksite.

“These stories came right from those who know what happens in the field and the risks or situations that could lead to fatalities or serious injuries,” says Terry Terranova, a Global Director for Change Management at Newmont who helped implement the Applied Influencer approach.

“Employees were also asked to identify the three fellow workers they listen to the most. We tabulated the results, and the top ten to twenty people who were listed most often by their peers were identified as the ‘opinion leaders.’ We invited these opinion leaders to the two-day Vital Behaviors Workshop.”

At the workshop, the opinion leaders spent the first day reading through the employee stories in order to identify the status quo behaviors that were putting employees at risk. They then developed a list of three to four vital behaviors that, if chosen over the status quo behaviors, would help keep employees safe.

In the second day, the opinion leaders worked with the Six Sources of Influence to identify ways their worksite could motivate and enable all employees to choose the vital behaviors—especially in crucial moments. The vital behaviors and the five to six strategies for each of the Six Sources of Influence were then put together in a playbook.

The workshop ended with the site leadership team—including the site general manager—coming to the workshop where the opinion leaders presented the playbook. During this time, any ideas or influence strategies that management could not support could be removed or modified. In addition, this portion of the workshop allowed management to commit to helping the opinion leaders, who would form the Vital Behaviors Implementation Team, execute their strategies and measure results.

In total, the Opinion Leader teams identified more than 330 Vital Behaviors specific to their individual worksites and functions. Having these employees uncover their own vital behaviors ensured they had ownership over the process. Of the 330 vital behaviors, common themes surfaced, such as ensuring proper risk assessments were conducted, complying with all procedures, and not taking shortcuts when tempted. However, the behavior that showed up most frequently was speaking up to address an unsafe act or condition.

“Around the globe, our employees said that if they would speak up to each other and their supervisors, their worksite would be safer,” said Terranova.

“Knowing the right behavior, such as speaking up, and doing it are two different things. That’s where the influence strategies come into play.”

Following the Vital Behaviors Workshop, the opinion leaders created a roadmap for executing the six-source strategies. The teams typically meet with managers or superintendents every four to six weeks to review the roadmap and identify which strategies should be implemented next.

Examples of the strategies opinion leaders identified in each of the Six Sources of Influence include:

Personal Motivation: Every worksite found ways to tap into one of the main drivers of safety—personal relationships. In Africa, for example, the company took family photos and made small, laminated copies employees wear on their lanyards as a poignant reminder of the importance of making safe choices. Most sites also used the power of vicarious experiences by inviting speakers to share personal stories of how injuries or accidents permanently altered their lives.

Personal Ability: Opinion leaders facilitated sessions to help employees learn best practices on speaking up—what to say in difficult conversations and how to respond to challenging interactions.

Social Motivation & Ability: Many sites hosted family days where family members visited the mines and learned about some vital behaviors they could adopt to help keep their loved ones safe, such as ensuring the mine workers in their family got enough sleep and ate healthy meals. Employees also made videos illustrating the benefit and importance of the vital behaviors.

Structural Motivation: Crews recognize fellow employees who demonstrate the vital behaviors by awarding Vital Behavior hard hat stickers, which have become badges of honor.

Structural Ability: One worksite installed safety vending machines stocked with goggles and gloves, making it easier for employees to use the proper protection equipment. Some worksites have allocated time at the end of shifts to allow for housekeeping activities that keep a work area clear of safety hazards, and all worksites displayed signs and posters to remind employees of the vital behaviors they committed to follow.



RESULTS

As a result of the many efforts Newmont has taken to improve safety, including the Vital Behaviors rollout, the company has made quantum leaps in workplace safety. The company's TRAFR declined from 0.69, before the full rollout of Vital Behaviors to 0.47 two years later, a year in which Vital Behaviors, was fully implemented at the majority of work sites. That is a 32 percent reduction! In addition, serious injuries were reduced 73 percent during the same period, meaning sixteen fewer people experienced life-altering injuries.

In addition to this lagging measure, Newmont measures a leading indicator—the extent to which employees proactively follow their vital behaviors. On this measure, regions where Vital Behaviors has been in place for over a year showed employees chose the vital behaviors 50 to 65 percent of the time when the effort began. Since then, the power of the Influencer strategies has increased that rate to 60 to 75 percent.

When asked why Influencer has positively impacted safety at Newmont, Terranova says the approach really turns the usual change management model on its ear. “So often, corporate change is simply handed down from the top, and we think that if executives broadcast it, it will be well received and quickly implemented,” says Terranova. “But employees can make or break a culture. That’s why involving them in the change process and having them lead the effort is the best way to change behavior. Employees are the ones who will enact the change and ensure the new, vital behaviors become part of their culture.”



ABOUT INFLUENCER

Influencer teaches a method for changing ingrained human behavior that goes beyond corporate perks and charismatic personalities. Leaders at every level can achieve better results by learning how to better influence those around them—particularly when they are resistant to change. Drawing on five decades of social-science research, Influencer reveals why people do what they do and teaches a model for influencing behavior. The course is available in both virtual and in-person learning formats.

ABOUT CRUCIAL LEARNING®

Formerly VitalSmarts, Crucial Learning improves the world by helping people improve themselves. We offer courses in the areas of communication, performance, and leadership, focusing on behaviors that have a disproportionate impact on outcomes, called crucial skills. Our award-winning courses and accompanying bestselling books include Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability, Influencer, The Power of Habit, and Getting Things Done. CrucialLearning.com



RESULTS AT A GLANCE

- **Reduced TRAFR from 0.69 to 0.47, a 32% reduction in two years**
- **73% fewer serious injuries two years after the program rollout**
- **After one year, employees proactively followed the vital behaviors up to 75% of the time**

¹ Other recommendations included establishing and executing regional risk management goals and the plans to achieve them, improving the risk management function and incident investigation process, and exploring the role of rewards in helping employees work more safely.

