

What to Look for in a Safety Consultant

A GUIDE



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Purpose of Safety

Over the years, workplace safety has become synonymous with OSHA compliance. Many companies focus on the fines and penalties they could face if “caught” out of compliance. But this mindset is risky. Viewing compliance as something to achieve only when convenient creates unnecessary risks and undermines the continuous effort required to maintain or exceed safety standards.

What if there was a better approach—one that not only ensures compliance but also brings broader benefits to your organization? Compliance with safety regulations is merely the minimum requirement, a baseline. Even OSHA emphasizes that compliance is the floor, not the ceiling.

We seem to have lost sight of the primary goal of safety: protecting human resources and safeguarding company assets. The purpose of the OSH Act is to “assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the Nation safe and healthful working conditions, and to preserve human resources.” Congress passed this act recognizing that work-related injuries and illnesses not only pose a human and moral issue but also create significant economic consequences. These consequences include lost production, wage loss, medical expenses, and disability compensation payments.

Why is safety’s contribution to the organization important, and why should you prioritize it? The answer is simple: avoidance alone is not a sustainable motivator, and safety is often mistakenly viewed as just an expense. The real challenge is shifting this mindset. How do we change the perception of safety from a cost to a critical investment in your company’s success?

Safety and its Effect on Organizational Success

To understand how safety contributes to an organization’s success, we must first recognize that safety is a process—a system embedded within daily operations. For safety to be

effective, it must be woven into the fabric of the company's culture; it's how things are done, not just a set of rules. While this is easy to say, it's much harder to achieve.

The most successful and profitable companies treat safety as a core component of their operations, not an afterthought. It directly supports continuous process improvement. To reduce the costs and risks tied to workplace injuries and illnesses, safety and health must be managed just as rigorously as any other function. In the same way you plan, organize, and control your production process, you should plan, organize, and control your safety process.

Key Facets of a Safety Process

- **Purpose** – Beyond meeting OSHA regulations, implementing a safety process shows a commitment to protecting employees, minimizing accidents, and enhancing operational performance.
- **Cost vs. Benefit** – While there are upfront expenses, the return on investment (ROI) comes in the form of fewer accidents, lower insurance premiums, increased productivity, and higher employee satisfaction.
- **Integration** – Safety must be embedded into daily operations, becoming a core part of the organization's functions, just like production or logistics, to ensure long-term success.
- **Metrics** – Safety's impact can be tracked through key indicators such as reduced injury rates, audit performance, and contributions to overall efficiency, productivity, and profit growth.
- **Competitiveness** – A strong safety culture not only reduces costs but can also position your organization as an industry leader, providing a competitive advantage by enhancing reputation and attracting top talent.
- **Barriers** – Overcoming obstacles such as resistance from employees or management is crucial. This can be achieved through strong leadership, clear communication, and aligning safety goals with broader business objectives.

- **What's in it for Me?** – A well-executed safety program benefits everyone by creating a safer work environment, reducing personal risks, and offering opportunities for growth and leadership within the company.

Benefits of a Safety Culture

Building a safety culture in an agricultural business goes beyond compliance and preventing accidents. It embeds safety into daily operations, creating an environment where everyone, from management to workers, prioritizes well-being. This brings significant long-term benefit, including:

- *Employee Satisfaction & Retention:* Workers stay longer with businesses that prioritize their safety, reducing turnover costs.
- *Improved Efficiency:* Safe practices lead to smoother operations with less downtime.
- *Enhanced Reputation:* Businesses known for safety attract top talent and enjoy goodwill in their communities.
- *Legal Protection:* Fewer injuries reduce the risk of lawsuits and regulatory fines.

Establishing a Safety Culture

Building a culture of safety requires leadership commitment. Regular training, open communication, and recognition of safe practices can make safety a priority across all levels of the business.

Better Business Through Safety

Workplace safety is not an option; it is a necessity. By advancing a comprehensive safety program, businesses protect their most valuable assets: their employees. Moreover, the financial return on investment, including cost savings from fewer injuries, reduced insurance premiums, and enhanced productivity, far outweighs the initial investment. In today's competitive corporate landscape, a safety culture sets businesses apart as responsible, efficient, and forward-thinking.

What to Look for in a Safety Consultant

When selecting a safety consultant, it's important to ensure they provide a wide range of services that address the specific risks and needs within your specific industry. Here's a breakdown of the services to look for when partnering with a consultant:

RISK ASSESSMENT & HAZARD IDENTIFICATION. Identifying potential hazards is the foundation of any effective safety program and should include:

- *Site Inspections:* On-site inspections help pinpoint specific risks unique to your operation, providing the information needed to create targeted safety interventions.
- *Job Safety Analysis (JSA):* Many accidents occur during routine tasks, especially when workers become complacent. JSAs help ensure that every task is evaluated for safety risks.
- *Environmental & Physical Risks:* Environmental conditions, including weather and terrain, can change rapidly and unpredictably in agriculture. Anticipating these risks ensures that your workforce is better prepared to handle them safely.

SAFETY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. Developing a tailored safety program ensures that the safety processes fit your specific operations. These include:

- *Customized Safety Plans:* Every business is different, and a one-size-fits-all approach won't address the specific risks of your operation. Necessary plans include the Injury & Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP), Emergency Action Plan and many more. Creating a customized plan increases the effectiveness of safety protocols while meeting regulatory requirements.
- *Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):* Clear, accessible SOPs ensure that all workers know exactly how to perform their tasks safely, reducing accidents and ensuring legal compliance. Required SOP's include but are not limited to: lockout/tagout procedures, hazard communication, emergency action plans, bloodborne pathogens, respiratory protection, hearing conservation, fall protection, equipment maintenance and more.

TRAINING & EDUCATION. A critical component of any safety program is proper worker education, including:

- *On-Site Training:* Training ensures that workers not only understand safety procedures but also how to apply them in real-world situations. Regular, hands-on training is especially important in high-risk environments.
- *Workshops & Seminars:* Conducting educational sessions on safety topics, including ergonomics, first aid, chemical safety and fire prevention provides in-depth knowledge that can help prevent a wide range of accidents, from repetitive strain injuries to chemical spills.
- *Qualification Programs:* Offering qualification in safety standards ensures that your operation meets legal safety requirements, enhances knowledge and skills, and ensures a commitment to safety.

COMPLIANCE & REGULATORY ASSISTANCE. Safety regulations in agriculture can be complex, involving multiple agencies.

- *Regulatory Guidance:* Ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, such as OSHA, EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), and other safety standards. Non-compliance can lead to significant fines, legal action, and operational shutdowns. Staying up to date with regulations helps prevent these risks.
- *Recordkeeping & Documentation:* Proper documentation of safety protocols, employee training, equipment maintenance, and any incidents is crucial for regulatory audits and insurance purposes, helping to protect your business and demonstrate compliance.
- *Audit Preparation:* Preparing for external audits by conducting internal reviews of your safety practices helps ensure that your operation passes inspections by regulatory bodies and can prevent costly fines or operational delays due to non-compliance.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING. Preparing for emergencies, from natural disasters to accidents, is crucial for every organization and should include:

- *Emergency Action Plans (EAP):* Development of emergency procedures for handling severe injuries, fires, chemical spills, or natural disasters helps save lives and minimize damage, ensuring everyone knows their role in an emergency.
- *Crisis Management Training:* Training staff and management to respond effectively during emergencies prepares your team to act quickly and efficiently in a crisis.

PESTICIDE AND CHEMICAL SAFETY. Handling chemicals safely is a major concern in agriculture and in other industries as well. Including:

- *Chemical Handling Training:* Safe use and storage of pesticides, fertilizers, and other hazardous chemicals including the use of PPE, understanding chemical labels, and emergency spill response reduces the risk of harmful exposure or environmental contamination.
- *Environmental Impact Assessments:* Evaluating the impact of chemical use on the environment and suggesting safer alternatives or handling practices helps to mitigate environmental harm, protect workers, reduces regulatory risk and promotes sustainable business practices.

ERGONOMICS & INJURY PREVENTION. Repetitive tasks that can lead to long-term injuries.

- *Ergonomic Assessments:* Analyzing work tasks, equipment, and workstations to identify areas where repetitive strain or poor posture could lead to musculoskeletal injuries reduces injuries, improves worker comfort, reduces downtime from injuries, and enhances productivity.
- *Workplace Modifications:* Recommendations for modifying workstations, tools, or workflows to minimize the physical strain on workers. Simple modifications can have a significant impact on reducing worker fatigue and injury, making the work environment safer and more efficient.

MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT SAFETY. Given the heavy use of machinery in particular industries, focus should be on:

- *Safe Equipment Use:* Training workers on the safe operation, maintenance and emergency shutdown of machinery to help prevent severe injuries or fatalities.
- *Equipment Maintenance Programs:* Developing maintenance schedules and safety checks ensures that machinery remains in safe working condition reduces the risk of equipment malfunctions, which can lead to accidents or costly repairs.

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION & REPORTING. A good safety consultant helps you respond to accidents or near-misses by:

- *Accident Investigations:* Thorough investigation of accidents or near-misses to determine the root cause and to recommend corrective actions to prevent future occurrences.
- *Incident Reporting:* Assistance with proper documentation and reporting of workplace accidents to regulatory bodies is essential for legal compliance and provides valuable insights into potential safety improvements.

HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMS. Workers often face issues related to physical and mental well-being. Services should include:

- *Occupational Health Screenings:* Providing access to health checks, including monitoring for exposure to harmful substances (e.g., pesticides, noise) to catch health issues early, reducing long-term health risks for workers.
- *Stress & Fatigue Management:* Long hours and demanding work can lead to stress and exhaustion. When workers are tired or overwhelmed, they're more likely to make mistakes or get hurt. Supporting worker wellness is a key part of a strong safety culture.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION & INSURANCE CONSULTATION. Businesses can benefit from expert advice on managing insurance and worker's compensation claims.

- *Insurance Risk Assessments:* Assistance in evaluating your operation's risk profile to determine how you can reduce premiums and minimize claims helps to reduce the likelihood of costly workers' compensation claims, directly impacting your bottom line.
- *Claim Management Support:* Helping to navigate workers' compensation claims ensuring that claims are handled efficiently and that costs are minimized, reducing financial strain on the business.

SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP. Sustainable practices must align with safety and long-term business goals.

- *Sustainable Safety Practices:* Guidance on implementing safety measures that align with sustainable business practices, such as reducing pesticide use or adopting eco-friendly machinery helps reduce environmental impact, ensures long-term organizational viability, and often leads to better safety outcomes.
- *Waste Management:* Advising on safe and sustainable disposal of waste including chemicals, containers and organic matter helps to support proper waste management, prevents environmental contamination and ensures compliance with environmental regulations.

When choosing a safety consultant, look for one that can help ensure that your operation is safe, compliant, and efficient, ultimately protecting both your workers and your business.

Boretti, Inc. is that consulting firm. We provide superior workplace safety and environmental services so that businesses gain a competitive advantage. Services include:

- Agricultural Services (Sustainable Ag)
- Business Continuity Planning
- Environmental
- Ergonomics
- Industrial Hygiene Services
- ISO 14001 / 45001

- Mock Inspections
- Product Safety
- Risk Assessment & Analysis
- Safety Management Systems
- Safety Programs
- Site Safety Manager and Support
- Training
- And more!

Let's talk about how Boretti, Inc. can help your business.

Contact Us Today!

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