A Framework for Cultural Transformation

By Kevin Cunningham

Executive vice president of the new risk-management-based insurance program for the crane industry at Redstone Heavy Iron, Atlanta. He can be reached at kcunningham @redstoneins.com.
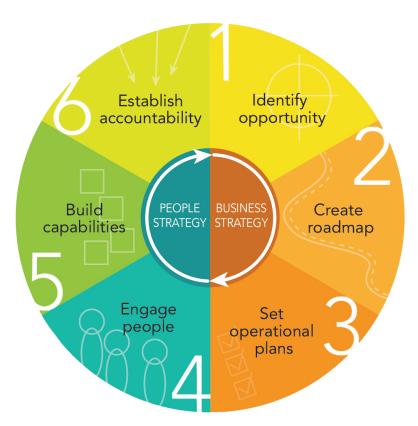
In this third installment, we illustrate how crane company owners can integrate the defined habits in the last article with proven cultural principles to continuously improve safety and productivity in daily operations.

According to Dr. W. Edwards Deming, founder of the highly successful Total Quality Management Process: *"Total Quality Management is not something that can be done once then forgotten. It's not a management 'phase' that will end after the problem has been corrected. Real improvements must occur frequently and continually in order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty."*

Integration Model

The identification of certain *Business Strategy* elements and *People Strategy* elements when integrated with high performance habits can establish the framework for cultural transformation to improve safety and productivity in daily crane operations.

The Integration Model elements (1-2-3) noted below would be considered *Business Strategy* items, and elements (4-5-6) would be considered *People Strategy* items. This framework can be customized to each crane project to successfully bridge the gap between the project plan and getting the work done safely and efficiently on time and within budget.

While every crane project environment presents a unique set of challenges, the full-team commitment to an agile, systematic approach to a *crane culture of excellence* can measurably improve productivity and safety results.

Business Strategy Combined with People Strategy

These *Business Strategy* and *People Strategy* elements are designed by one of the foremost authorities in crane safety — Crane Industry Services (CIS).

According to CIS, integration of *Business Strategy* elements and *People Strategy* elements in a continuous cycle can result in project leaders and crane workforce members gaining a clear, measurable, short- and long-term roadmap to achieve continuous improvement in safety and productivity. (See CIS cycle chart on next page.)

The Crane Industry Services approach to achieving excellence in crane safety identifies six elements:

Business Strategy Elements

1. **Identify Opportunity:** Define the challenges and opportunities presented by each crane project environment, and assess the organization's readiness to address them.
2. **Create Road Map:** Crane project stakeholders create a plan that aligns capabilities and culture with opportunity. Next, they develop work plans that the supervisors and crews can implement and count on.
3. **Set Metrics:** Create a set of metrics for each crane project goal and timeline, and make them accessible to multiple levels of project management: foreman, operation project managers/leaders, and corporate managers.

People Strategy Elements

4. **Engage Crews:** Create the conditions that harness the supervisors' and crane crews' energy and ownership in the plans.
5. **Build Capabilities:** Equip leaders to set realistic goals for crafts essential to the project, safety compliance, and skill development.

INTEGRATION MODEL	HABITS	CULTURE
BUSINESS STRATEGY	Seek Clarity ⟷	Identify Opportunity to Improve
	Generate Energy ⟷	Create Roadmap for Execution
	Raise Necessity ⟷	Operational Plans with Situational Awareness
PEOPLE STRATEGY	Measure Performance ⟷	Accountability for Course Correction
	Develop Influence ⟷	Engage your People
	Demonstrate Courage ⟷	Build Workforce Capabilities

Source: Crane Industry Services

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6. Establish Accountability: Call upon the strategic and work plans to guide communications, decision making, resource allocation, measurement, and course correction.

According to Crane Industry Services CEO, Debbie Dickinson, "Projects can lose clarity on the journey from the customer's plans, to project managers, operators, and grounds crew.

"Accountability is ongoing and evident at multiple stages of work," she added. "It has a beginning, multiple checkpoints, and direct, clear communications from workers to those in charge and vice versa. Safe operations culminate from definitions of successful work – what needs to be done, by when, by whom, on what timeline, within what budget and perhaps most importantly, in what manner?"

Continuous Safety/ Productivity Improvement

In order to effectively integrate high performance habits with safe culture principles, the research suggests taking a holistic approach to long-term success that views continuous improvement in all aspects of an organization's process — and not as a short-term goal. This process aims to radically transform the organization through progressive changes in the attitudes, practices, structures, and systems.

A crane culture of excellence model transcends the basic quality and safety approach, as it involves everyone in the organization and encompasses every function: administration, communications, field operations, operators, equipment maintenance, delivery, setup, dismantlement, planning, and training.

Transformation Requirements

Upon completion of integrating the habits with cultural elements to lay the foundation for establishing plans to improve safety and productivity, taking the following next steps can enhance your transformation efforts:

a) *Commitment* and direct involvement of the highest-level executives in setting quality goals and policies, allocation of resources, and actively monitoring results.

b) *Realization* that transforming an organization means fundamental changes in the basic beliefs and practices, and that transformation is everyone's job.

c) *Building* quality into every facet of crane operations right from the beginning — every day.

d) *Understanding* of the changing needs of the internal and external customers, and stakeholders, and satisfying them in a cost-effective manner.

e) *Instituting* leadership in place of mere supervision so that every individual performs in the best possible manner to improve productivity and safety in your crane operations.

f) *Eliminating* barriers between your people and departments so they work as a team to achieve the common objective for improving productivity and safety.

g) *Executing* flexible programs for workforce training and education, and providing meaningful measures of performance that guide the self-improvement efforts of everyone involved in your crane operations.

Conclusion

Safety is as critical to a crane company's success as productivity and quality.

There are many benefits to transforming safety and productivity in any crane company.

Some are obvious — reducing accidents and injuries, reducing the risk of lawsuits, or minimizing the cost of non-compliance and reputational damage.

But transforming your culture can bring other benefits, such as improved company reputation, an added differentiator in the bidding process, or even an advantage in recruitment and employee loyalty — all of which should improve safety and productivity.

In conclusion, we will continue to research and develop new concepts to assist the crane industry in finding ways to achieve a crane culture of excellence. ◼