

## **Incentives and Recognition: Those DAWG-gone safety goals**

*by David J. Sarkus, ISHN Technical Editor  
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*Get your folks fired up*



"Willie, I need to run this by you."

"Alright, Joe."

"We just had a meeting about getting everybody more excited and on the same page about our safety goals and I want to show you something we discussed. A good bit of it's wrapped up in this little acronym that highlights some important parts of our future safety goals."

"Let me see," said Willie, taking a look at Joe's handout. "It spells DAWGS. Is this about your Georgia Bulldogs, Joe?"

"You know how I love them Dawgs — even when they're having a bad year like this season," said Joe.

### **An achievable stretch**

"Willie, the first letter, 'D,' stands for Doable. We want everyone to believe that whatever safety-related goals are agreed to — they have to be viewed as doable, as achievable. Some 'pie in the sky goal' that we can't reach means nothing, and people will give up before we get started. People have to stretch for our goals but still feel that they can be reached."

"Like our vision statement for safety?"

"No. A vision is something broader than the specific safety goals I'm talking about here. For example, we have to get more engagement and participation in things like our observations, coaching, and employee-led meetings. And we're not simply talking about avoiding injuries to reach a goal — goals have to be activity-based. Our safety vision statement is doable and we've shown that for more than two years. We can talk about our vision statement a little later — let's try to stay focused on this, OK Willie?"

"Gotcha."

### **Leadership is critical**

"Now here's the second letter, 'A,' which stands for Active Leadership. In the past, our leaders have pushed down various goals. They were barely involved, and then backed out. They kinda gave up their responsibilities to their workers without appropriate visibility to back the goals and provide active, ongoing support like a coach."

"You're right, Joe — that caused a lot of bad feelings!"

"We need our leadership to be present, available, and active if we want to meet our safety goals," reinforced Joe. "They need to be removing obstacles to achieving safety goals."

### **A broader impact**

"Here's a good one, the third letter — the 'W' is for Win-Producing."

"I thought it stood for Willie."

"Not even close," replied Joe, obviously annoyed.

"It means that our safety goals have to show that they're relevant to what we're trying to accomplish — to create win-win type results through safety, throughout our organization. You know, to create a more productive workforce, to positively impact the quality of our work and lives. And I said it before and I'll say it again ..."

Willie interrupted. "Yeah I know, Joe — 'safety's all about productivity improvement,' right?"

"That's right, Willie, and we want to keep showing the kinds of numbers that prove it!"

## **The more the better**

“Here’s the next one Willie, the letter ‘G,’ and it stands for Greater Engagement. We all know that everyone needs to be more involved in safety. Top to bottom — across the board. We need people more directly involved in goal-setting within all of our teams. But moving from committee-based work to team-based safety work is showing pretty good benefits.”

“You’re right, Joe — but it’s not always easy — we’re pulled in a bunch of directions, too!”

“Yeah but it’s worth it, Willie. We have better safety performance than ever and we all know that people need to be engaged mentally, physically and emotionally. And that’s happening more and more.

“I can’t remember the company, but someone once told me about a guy who worked for some big Fortune 200 organization.”

“I thought it was the Fortune 500,” Willie interrupted again.

“Two hundred, 500, just hear me out,” said Joe, annoyed again. “The organization was getting people more involved in teams and in other ways. One particular worker said that he was paid for 45 years to use his body, and his mind could have been used for free but never was used very well. I think we’ve been like that to some extent when it comes to safety. People want to be more involved, we just have to create the right opportunities.”

“I think you’re right, Joe” stated Willie.

## **Creating the future — staying on course**

“The final letter, Willie — the ‘S’ — means Supports the Vision. We touched on this before but we have to make sure that we’re not doing wasted stuff — our goals need to be well aligned. Everything we do needs to support our safety vision statement, especially our safety goals.

“The vision statement helps to create a mental picture and pulls people toward the future state of excellence that we have to keep building upon. Things are getting better, but we can do even more. But again, we’ve got to make sure that we keep doing things that push us closer to the vision and

don't do things that simply waste our time.

"Willie, there's a lot more we shared about with our safety goals but I wanted to know what you thought about DAWGS?"

"Good stuff — keep it up, Joe!"

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