

Using Technology to Improve Safety

Information provided to line workers in real-time is one of the best ways to communicate potential safety issues.

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Improving worker safety is an area where technology can have a great impact.

By using workforce-first safety software, Anvl, based in Indianapolis, is helping companies predict and prevent injuries and death. "Safety isn't a competitive advantage but a right that companies owe their workers," said Robin Fleming, CEO of Anvl.

And one way to deliver on this promise of ensuring worker safety is to utilize technology to provide information, in real-time, that helps workers make better decisions. For example, Cummins, the engine manufacturer uses Anvl's technology to better understand the working conditions of its employees in order to provide the tools necessary for employees to be safe while performing their jobs.

"Having technology at the location of the job is essential," says Fleming. "A majority of workers, 80%, make up the 'deskless' workforce, who don't have access to traditional desktop dashboards."

And this deskless workforce is still relying, to a large extent, on paper-based analytics. Moving to digital opens up a new view into data, as more functionality can be included. "Now incoming data can be shared, in real-time, with manager and leaders," explains Fleming. "And line workers can now be connected with each other."

This communication is especially important in high-risk situations where conditions are changing such as emergency maintenance, or where work is being done on heavy equipment such as construction. In situations where workers might be alone at a job site, the software is able to assess the job safety for the worker by asking a series of questions. For example, a worker may be asked if they are trained for this situation. They might be asked to take a photo of the situation and assess their ability to manage the risk. Depending on the answer to that question they might be prompted to contact their supervisor before moving forward.

One of the most important aspects of the implementation of this technology at the job site is that it now offers line workers a voice. Workers can use this technology to report unsafe conditions that might have been noticed before but there wasn't an effective way to report it. This is also true for example in manufacturing where sometimes one shift is unaware of what issues, from a safety perspective, the last shift faced. There might not have been a way to report the current state of the job.

Adapting to Technology

Are workers embracing this technology? Yes, says Fleming. **It only takes 20-40 minutes to train someone** and the technology is not much different than what most of us every day with our smartphones. "Our studies show us that user engagement with the software is very high at over 90%." One reason for high engagement, especially for example in the **construction industry**, is that there is still a lot of paperwork at the site. Using technology in this manner saves a lot of time.

Including technology as a natural part of performing a job, is something that appeals to younger workers who will fill future jobs. Furthermore, many studies have found younger workers prefer a say in how their jobs are performed. Having a way to provide feedback on a real-time basis fills this need.

The ability to provide information at the job level is an important part of driving culture change, says Fleming. "We think about that every day," Fleming comments. "How can we give workers an expanded voice that in turn filters to management so that can both listen and respond."