




SIEMENS MAKES SAFETY PART OF ITS MINDSET

How to embed safety within a company's sustainability values

Siemens China, winner of the 2019 Duty of Care Awards for Sustainability, embedded health and safety into its corporate culture, with very positive results.

Siemens is a global leader in power generation, industrial automation and medical technology. China is Siemens' second largest overseas market, with over 34,000 employees spread across more than 100 offices and many manufacturing facilities.

In 2013, Siemens China rolled out Zero Harm Culture @ Siemens (ZHC@Siemens). As part of a company-wide, global programme, ZHC@Siemens aimed to improve the safety performance of the company and permanently transform the way that both managers and employees think and act in matters of health and safety (EHS). The programme aimed to bring about lasting change, with management acting as role models.

As Yan Zhang, EHS Specialist at Siemens explains:

"Our safety programme is not limited to purely technical protective measures. It focuses strongly on building an active occupational safety culture. It ensures a healthier and safer workplace. It has led to significantly reduced accident rates in China."

Establishing Clear Values

Siemens is committed to the sustainable development of society, and in particular supports Sustainable Development Goals 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing and 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Guaranteeing a workplace environment that is safe for everyone is a key part of the Siemens' approach to sustainability and became part of the company's vision. ZHC@Siemens is a collaboration; all employees are seen as caring for themselves, each other and the environment. This was further defined in these three engaging principles:

- Zero incidents - it is achievable
- Health and safety - no compromises
- We take care of each other

Putting Principles into Practice

Several campaigns were implemented to enhance and sustain a Zero Harm Culture:

- 1. Safety Walks and Talks:** In Siemens China, the management conducts Safety Walks and Talks on a regular and informal basis. These aim to show management's commitment to safety by facilitating safety dialogues with employees. This helps to remove hierarchical barriers and encourages employees to discuss problems, and potential solutions, about safety.
- 2. Safety Moment:** A simple and short talk about a safety issue is provided at the beginning of every daily meeting.
- 3. Safety Essentials:** These are aimed at employees and contractors performing higher-risk activities (e.g. electrical safety, cranes and lifting). Safety Essentials illustrates key requirements and expected behaviours in an easily accessible way.
- 4. ZHC Web-Based Training:** Zero Harm Culture is integrated in mandatory EHS web-based training for all employees. Managers must also complete specific training on ZHC.

Travel Safety is another area where Siemens has been active. All employees are required to complete a risk assessment via a Business Travel Assessment Tool before each trip abroad. The tool provides detailed advice and covers all countries. In addition, detailed web-based training is available on many different aspects of travel safety and security. This includes assistance in pre-trip planning, travel security advisories, and access to an emergency hotline and medical services.

Positive Results

Since its rollout in 2013, ZHC@Siemens has covered over 90% of Siemens' employees in China. The safety performance of the company has significantly improved; the injury rate over the last six years, consistently reduced by 62%, with no fatalities in the last three years. Importantly, the safety culture was enhanced too. Employees are highly engaged and now see health and safety as integral to their daily business.



It Starts from the Top

Embedding safety within a company's sustainability values requires senior management commitment. Not only are all managers heavily involved in these activities, Siemens China's CEO, Lothar Herrmann personally plays an active part.

He has written a personal note on Zero Harm Culture which is sent to all Siemens China employees; he talks about ZHC at the annual business conference for senior managers and at employee townhall meetings; he participates in the Safety Walks and Talks; and there is an annual Siemens China ZHC award for best safety performance.

As Herrmann concludes:

"It's about leading by example, setting clear expectations and holding everyone accountable. I take every opportunity to emphasize that EHS is the most important issue for all staff and business and encourage everyone to speak up for safety, to learn about safety and health. And I ask the management team to do the same. There is nothing more important than human life. We are all accountable for zero harm at Siemens."

Key Elements

Establish worker health and safety as part of a company's values: a clear sustainability goal.

Develop detailed training and assistance to make EHS a part of everyday activities, including business travel; and continue to measure progress.

Ensure managers are role models in their support of health and safety matters, including ongoing and active leadership from the CEO.