

MAKING SAFETY COUNT

ABOUT CASCADES TISSUE GROUP. At Cascades Tissue Group's Rockingham, NC manufacturing facility, employees produce paper tissue, towels and napkins for the "away-from-home" market. The company has around 130 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. Heavy industrial work environment like this, by its very nature, poses risks to its employees. Management wanted to take every opportunity recognize and eliminate risks on the facility floor.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Cascades has partnered with NC State Industry Expansion Solutions (IES), part of the MEP National Network, to design and enact repeatable safety procedures that employees will both remember and be empowered to apply during daily operations. Hands-on exercises like role playing and reenactments, where employees can apply their safety knowledge to imagined hazard situations, have been instrumental in creating knowledge that sticks. Cascades also uses "secret shoppers"—employees who intentionally simulate mistakes that could result in accidents—on the facility floor.

"We want one employee to be able to talk to another if he is doing something improperly, something that could cause him to get hurt," says Lee. "Maybe they have their safety glasses on their head, and they need to take a minute to put them over their eyes. We see if people speak up, and if they actually do then there's some reward for them." Lee admits that he was at first skeptical of the effectiveness of such a program. He didn't really believe that a simple framed certificate and a prime parking spot for the "Safety Employee of the Month" would be powerful enough motivators to affect the safety culture at Cascades. Now, he is pleased to admit that he was mistaken.

"To my surprise, it's been a big hit in our mill. The employees will actually take their certificate home and show it to their family, hang it on the wall. The parking spot, they brag about. I think that's part of human nature."

-Mickey Lee, Plant Manager

RESULTS



74% employee engagement rate, well above the national average



No reportable injury in **755** days

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