



Safety+Health

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Labor-law experts weigh in
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2017 CEOs WHO "GET IT"



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2017 CEOs Who "GET IT"



A CULTURE OF SAFETY AND WELL-BEING is one that takes time, dedication, a thoughtful approach and a CEO who "gets it." The 2017 CEOs Who "Get It" are leaders who not only understand how to run a great business, but also know deep down that safety is paramount for their employees, their clients and their families.

Whether running a construction services company like Raymond Brown, an electric cooperative like Joe Slater or managing safety for the U.S. Air Force like Maj. Gen. Andrew Mueller, safety cannot be an afterthought. Doing a job right means doing it safely – every time – and safety starts at the top. The best leaders lead by example, and so we salute the 2017 CEOs Who "Get It" for going above and beyond in creating a culture of safety by focusing on what matters most.

I hope that reading the Q&As with our 2017 CEOs Who "Get It" will not only inspire you, but also give you an added appreciation for what passion for safety is all about. We can all learn best practices from each other, and it's one way we can get to our goal of eliminating preventable deaths in our lifetime. I believe if every employee had a CEO who "gets it" in every industry, we would be a lot closer to that goal.

Congratulations to our 2017 honorees and thank you for your dedication.



DEBORAH A.P. HERSMAN

PRESIDENT AND CEO
NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Does *your* CEO 'get it'?

The National Safety Council looks to recognize leaders whose actions demonstrate a personal commitment to worker safety and health. It doesn't matter if your organization has 50 employees or 50,000. If you believe your CEO should be recognized, submit a form telling us why at www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/ceos.



RYAN NILES

CEO
NILES INDUSTRIAL COATINGS LLC
FENTON, MI

Niles Industrial Coatings LLC is a contractor organization with 275 employees. It specializes in industrial painting, linings, sandblasting, lead abatement and fireproofing. Niles strives to build a highly qualified team of dedicated professionals who embrace a culture focused on creating value for its customers.

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Why is safety a core value at your organization?

Here at Niles, we say safety isn't one thing – it's everything. We start and end every meeting with safety. Our first and most important asset is our people. One model that we follow every day is "CTH – Care, Trust, Help." We have to take the time to CARE about one another; if we do that, we develop TRUST and once we have trust, we can HELP one another. That is intertwined with our strong culture of safety and is something that has continuously been a core value in our company. It is a key component to our success.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Regularly checks and conducts safety audits on project sites
- Meets weekly with the employees located at the largest project site to discuss safety concerns and to stress safety is the top priority
- Invests in safety training from the top down, including continued safety training for safety professionals

I would say that safety is something that was originally instilled in me by my father. One thing about my father I am fond of sharing, when he would hire a new employee he would visit them on a jobsite and ask "What's your job?" The employee's first response would usually be "I am a painter." My father would say, "No, no you're not. First, you are a safety person, then you are a painter." He is one of the main reasons why safety is one of our main core values. Safety starts even before any task. It is involved at every level of what we do.

Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who "gets it."

I was very fortunate growing up in the business, seeing how important safety was to my father. He tells a story from the late '80s about the development of our safety program. They hired a consultant to put the program together and when it was completed they had a beautiful safety manual. Later on, during an audit, the safety manager came in and told them that they had a beautiful safety manual, but asked if they actually cared to physically and mentally follow it. He told them they seem more like book publishers than anything. This really disturbed my father and made him realize that the values were not lined up and they were just checking the boxes. That was when our culture started to change.



Read the full Q&A
at <http://sh-mag/2idjoGP>.

Safety has always been a deep part of our culture. I have a responsibility to take it to the next level. I take that responsibility very seriously. I have always said that I don't want to be a company that just checks the box for safety. I want to make sure everything we do adds value and uses people's time wisely; people should be learning and growing. If we are not an organization that is growing in size, knowledge and experience, then we aren't doing it right.

How does your organization measure safety?

We track near misses at a very detailed level. Many companies often say "don't sweat the small stuff." We have the opposite mindset – if we spend time on the little stuff, the big stuff is less likely to happen. Therefore, we spend a lot of energy on the little things. For example, safety glasses, driving, cell phone policy ... those types of things help us avoid the larger concerns that could potentially happen. We track the statistics and all of the standard performance indicators like most companies, but we really strive to go deeper and look at daily safety performance at every level.

Where we see room for improvement is getting the employees exposed to our culture as soon as possible. Often, when a new employee is hired, they will be sent through training, but until they attend one of our retreats or educational events, they do not truly experience our culture and the true family environment that is our company. We need to improve on how we integrate new employees into our culture.