

Are Government Alliances a Threat to Workplace Safety ?

Evaluation of a Governmental Voluntary Partnership Program

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Major goal of evaluation should be to influence decision-making or policy formulation through the provision of empirically-driven feedback.

- Background
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions

Study Purpose

- Examine the evaluation process of a OSHA governmental partnership program
- Examine management and labor's perceptions of program effectiveness
- Determine what organizational factors contributed to an effective safety program
- Null hypothesis: No difference in perceptions of program effectiveness between management and labor.

Background

- The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is sponsored by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and its mission is to recognize effective safety and health programs and to develop cooperative relationships between government and industry to prevent and reduce occupational fatalities, injuries.
- Merit
- Star
- Sharps
- VPP growth from 11 in 1982 to 1291 in 2007 (federal sites only)

Methodology

- VPP sets performance based criteria for employee involvement, management commitment, hazard identification, hazard abatement, and training.
- Employee interviews (n=25)
- Document review
- OSHA form 33 questionnaire (n=48)

Questionnaire

1. Accidents are investigated for root causes.
2. Effective safety and health rules and work practices are in place.
3. Personal protective equipment is effectively used.
4. Employees receive appropriate safety and health training.
5. Managers and employees both comply with safety and health regulations.
6. Top management policy establishes clear priority for safety and health.
7. Managers personally follow safety and health rules.
8. Top management values employee involvement and participation in safety and health issues.
9. Top management is involved in the planning and evaluation of safety and health performance.
10. Individuals with assigned safety and health responsibilities have the necessary knowledge, skills, and timely information to perform their duties.
11. Managers support fair and effective policies that promote safety and health performance.
12. Change analysis is performed whenever a change in facilities, equipment, materials, or processes occurs.

Evaluation

- An assessment of a company's safety program is completed by the Federal Inspector and consists of fifty-eight evaluated attributes in three areas: operational component (hazard anticipation and detection, hazard prevention and control), managerial component attributes (planning and evaluation, administration, supervision, and safety and health training attributes) and finally managerial leadership component attributes (management leadership attributes, employee participation). It employs an ordinal scale using four rating values (0 no, needs major improvement, 2 yes, needs minor improvement, 3 yes, does occur, 4 NA not applicable, No not evaluated).

Results

• Year	Hours Worked	TCI
• 1999	218753	4.57
• 2000	212661	2.8
• 2001	254561	2.4
• 2002	296582	2.0
• 2003	342258	1.5

Occupational injury and illness incidence rate trends 1999-2003

Explanation:

$\frac{\# \text{ Recordable} \times 200,000}{\text{Hours worked in calendar year}} = \text{TCIR}$

Experience modification rate (EMR)

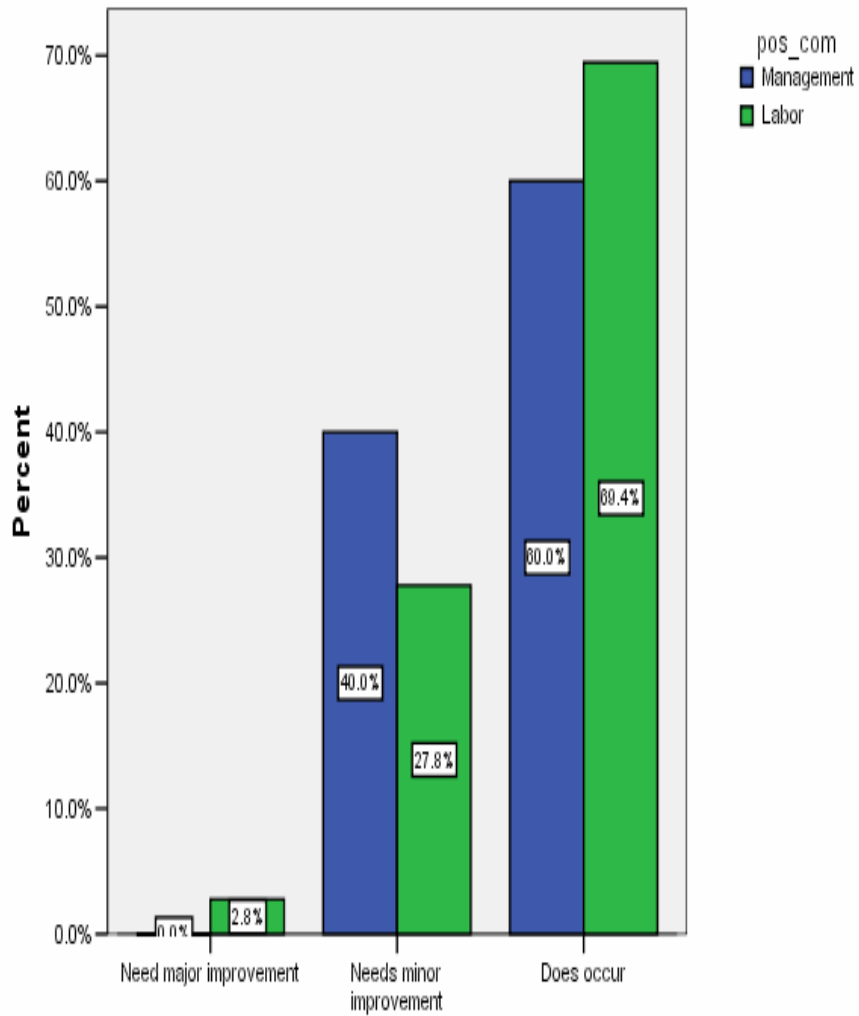
Year	Rate
• 1997	1.06
• 1998	.98
• 1999	.78
• 2000	.71
• 2001.	.82
• 2002	.74
• 2003	.82
• 2004	.69

Document review

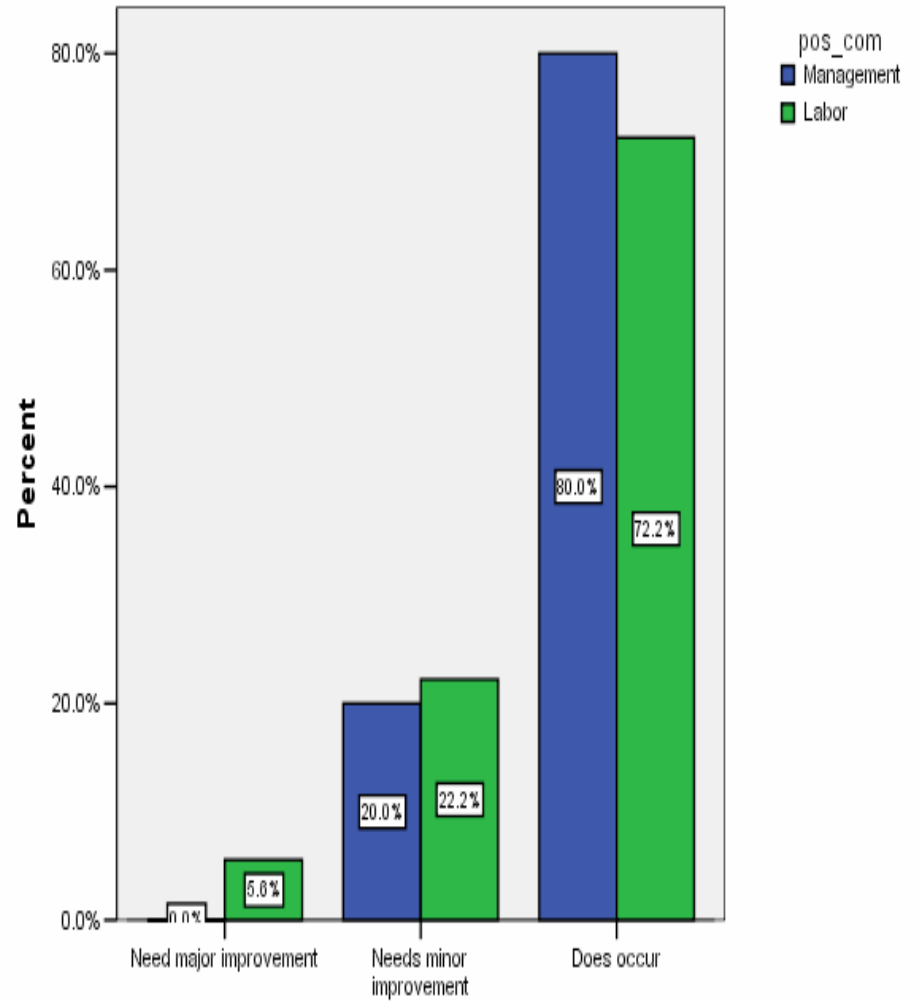
- Company injury and illness data
- Vision and Mission statements
- Policy on reporting injury
- Safety performance incentive
- Discipline policy
- Education and training records
- Experience modification rate (EMR)
- Expectations and Accountability
- Metrics/Evaluation

Summary of Significant Statements from Oral Interviews

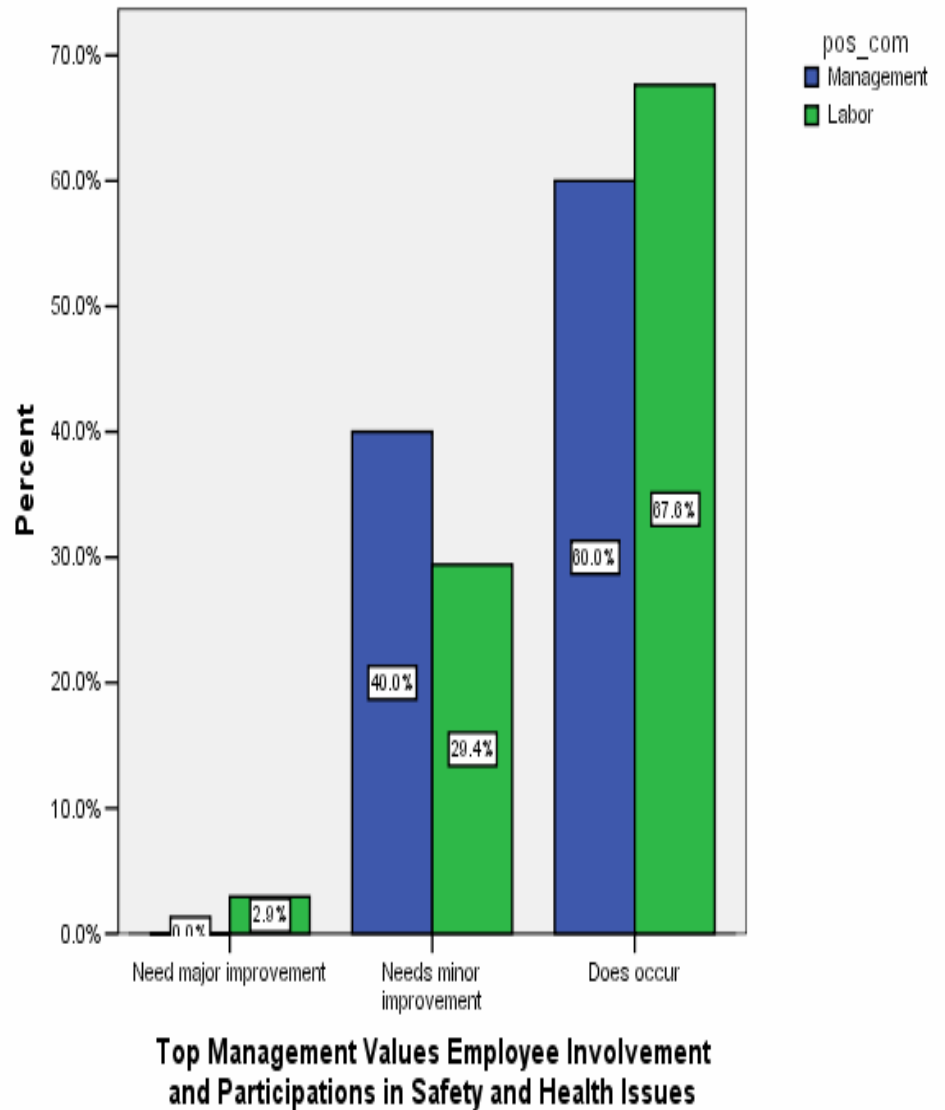
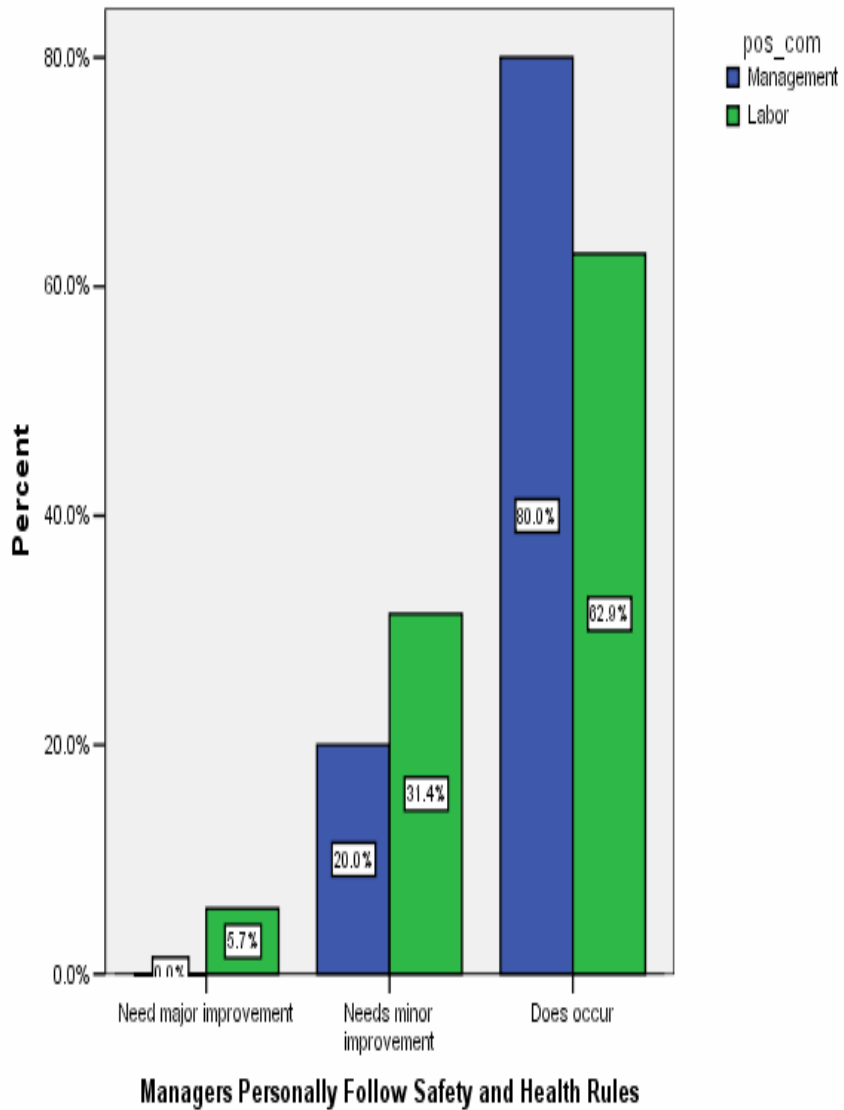
- **What is the mission of your company?** “It is to foster ongoing relationships with clients in providing the best quality service available. We will accomplish this goal through team work, responsiveness, and the innovative use of our resources, while continuing to focus on our employee’s well being through safety and job training. “
- **What changes in your safety and health program have you made/or seen in the past 5 years?** “Leadership has taken a more active role in addressing these issues and making employee safety a value that they will support.“
- **Where there any difficulties in establishing a safety culture? If so, what were they?**
“We were establishing our safety program--employees did not fight it as much. At first they wanted to know if we were for real. Most of the time, they were ready to get on board. They saw that management was ready to put the money up front and they had the old school of thought in the past was just get the job done.”



Managers and Employees Both Comply with Safety and Health Regulations



Top Management Policy Establishes Clear Priority for Safety and Health



- The average VPP worksite has a Days Away Restricted or Transferred (DART) case rate of 52% below the average for its industry. These workplaces typically do not start out with such low rates. Reductions in injuries and illnesses begin when management and labor both commit to the VPP approach to safety and health management and the challenging VPP

Conclusion

- leadership and management commitment created a culture that supported an effective safety and health management system.
 - Management commitment
 - Employee involvement
 - Hazard anticipation
 - Hazard abatement
 - Education and training
 - Program review
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- The ability to examine employee perceptions of program effectiveness has significant meaning to employers. Those perceptions, in turn, appear to influence employee decisions that relate to at-risk behaviors and decisions on the job.

Recommendations

- The findings indicate that methods of inquiry such as in depth-interviews, comprehensive review of current and historical organizational documents, behavioral and worksite observations should be utilized when evaluating programs for effectiveness.
- As a result, **triangulating data** from different points of view the evaluator can identify divergent vantage points on safety performance within an organization and insure transparency and the integrality of the auditing process.