



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.



RAY BROWN

CEO
ESCO GROUP
MARION, IA

ESCO Group is a versatile company that provides electrical construction, electrical engineering, plant automation, arc flash analysis and electrical safety training services to a wide variety of commercial and industrial clients, primarily within the food and beverage, manufacturing, agriculture, and municipal markets. By empowering people, providing exceptional services and delivering on promises, ESCO, which has 225 employees, is known for responsible and reliable support and excellent, custom-made solutions.



Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who "gets it." What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?

My journey and first experiences began more than 45 years ago being the youngest brother of five boys and learning to have the keen instinct to look out for each other. That family-oriented instinct continues today in my CEO role in that I want to look out for our employees.

I started at ESCO shortly after our founder and CEO at the time, Wayne Engle, was one of the very first in the electrical industry to recognize the impact of safety by hiring our first ESCO safety director. This was unprecedented at the time, and set the stage for ESCO to become the safety learning organization it is today.

In my earlier years, I reported to our second CEO, Dave Engle, who was my mentor for more than 20 years until his passing just a few years ago. Dave had the same commitment

to safety as Wayne did. Dave put me in charge of our Risk Management Platform and 15 years ago we made the decision to invest in ourselves in joining a self-insured captive called the Heartland Group. At the time we felt we were an extremely proactive, safety-minded company making a great investment. That turned out to be completely false. What we found out is that our company – although very safety conscious – was simply getting lucky. Unfortunately, that luck ran out with a series of very serious accidents, including shutting down some industrial processes and sadly, losing one of our own family members in an electrocution accident that was completely avoidable. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of Chris and his family – that constant reminder will always be with me and will influence my decisions regarding safety for our employees.

Since then, we have completely rebuilt our safety leadership, focusing on learning and not complacency. Today, we have empowered three full-time, exceptional safety directors who focus on creating a learning safety environment and who make a difference for ESCO every day. Today, ESCO tracks certifications and training, and we share near misses and best practices. We try to engineer the risk out of task and activities before the task or activity begins. One thing is certain: Accidents will happen, but we can never become complacent. We must always keep learning and we must always look out for one another.



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

How do you instill a sense of safety in employees on an ongoing basis?

Our safety professionals do a great job in keeping it fresh. Safety is about learning and making connections to what is most important in our lives – generally our families. Currently we are promoting our "Get Awkward" Safety Program. This program is asking our employees to think of safety by putting a picture of a loved one in their safety helmet or doing/saying something unique before we start our day – either individually or as a team. We are doing things that may seem awkward to allow us to refocus before we begin working. Like anything, we must continue to reinvent ourselves, and this program is about learning, connecting and growing.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Implemented a top-down "learning organization" concept that increased employee safety involvement
- Travels with the ESCO Group Safety Department and attends crew and team safety meetings on a regular basis to ensure all employees are receiving the same message
- Employs a "do the right thing" approach and invests in the latest technology



TIMOTHY J. GASSMANN

PRESIDENT
MILLHISER SMITH
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA

Millhiser Smith is a full-service risk management and insurance agency that has been around since 1928. Our specialty is reducing risk and providing insurance solutions for our commercial and personal lines clients throughout the eastern Iowa area. We employ 39 workers.



Why is safety a core value at your organization?

Because safety is what we instill in our clients, it needs to be paramount within our organization. We train all of our employees with regard to any safety issues and emphasize that when any employee is off-site, others in the agency should know of their whereabouts. We do annual testing of our Emergency Action Plan to make sure it is solid and employees understand it. All of our employees are knowledgeable on OSHA topics to not only keep them safe, but also to be able to communicate with our clients on relevant safety issues.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established a mission not to control loss, but to prevent the loss from ever occurring
- Implemented the Millhiser Smith Risk Improvement Team, which supplies safety and injury prevention services to commercial clients and non-clients of the organization.

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

Over the last 25 years, I have seen the financial impact that workplace injuries have on businesses. It has forced us to become more proactive in our analysis of safety standards instead of being reactive, which is common in the insurance environment. Maintaining proactive measures helps our clients improve their bottom line by reducing their overall cost of insurance.

What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?

Our biggest obstacle is safety complacency. Because we do not work in a high-hazard industry, sometimes we forget about the everyday situations we are in. Things like fleet safety and ergonomics need to be at the forefront of our minds in our daily working environment. Another obstacle is sometimes working with our clients. They are busy running their business, making sure sales are up, producing new clients, etc. It is very easy for them to focus on those important aspects of the business, but through our proprietary Millhiser Smith DISCOVERisk Process we get them to focus on the safety aspects as well.



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

How do you instill a sense of safety in employees on an ongoing basis?

We provide quarterly safety training to all of our employees on different OSHA topics. We provide pertinent safety information through fliers, emails or toolbox talks on a weekly basis. The agency has embarked on building a culture of success through organizational values – which includes everyday safety – to help our employees and our clients become healthier, safer and more profitable.

How does your organization measure safety? What are the leading indicators that show you how safe your organization is, and where do you see room for improvement?

Through the ongoing efforts of our Risk Improvement Team, we help our clients prevent and reduce workplace injuries through relevant, customized onsite safety training, OSHA compliance and other loss-control activities. When an injury does occur, we work diligently to reduce the impact of it to the client's bottom line through accident investigation, root cause analysis, return-to-work programming and claims management. We then use indicators to measure effectiveness through incident rate (TRIR and DART) benchmarking and experience modification rating for workers' compensation insurance, among others. The insurance environment is constantly changing. Challenges that we need to continually keep abreast of include new exposures at client facilities and changes made by regulatory agencies such as OSHA.



LARRY HOGAN

**PRESIDENT
H+M INDUSTRIAL EPC
PASADENA, TX**

H+M Industrial EPC provides industrial design and design/build services to the chemical, petrochemical, and oil and gas industries. The company has serviced the Texas Gulf Coast for more than 25 years. H+M Industrial EPC employs 225 workers.



Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who “gets it.” What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?

My personal journey to becoming a safety champion is continuously evolving every day. While I was formally trained in the engineering/design/construction profession, my knowledge of the safety profession was less extensive. This as a profession has grown on me, and I had to learn through my own observations and experiences throughout the years. In experiencing so many things and learning from many people over the 36 years I have worked in the industrial sector, I discovered a truth: Doing something safely requires much more than knowing the basics of how to do something – it requires a knowledge about the items and people encountered, a mindful attitude toward the task at hand, and vigilance of yourself and your surroundings that does not waver. Twenty-five years ago, it wasn’t uncommon for companies to go out and look at a job simply from a competitive cost-focused standpoint. Today, we do not bid on any job without considering if the job can be executed safely and our plan for ensuring it is executed safely.

What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?

Growth and the costs associated with it. It wasn’t long ago when H+M did not have a full-time HSE representative, much less a department of three to four safety professionals. It was a pretty big jump to go from a small budget to a budget that covered an entire department, including the equipment and supplies.



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

To overcome this initial shock, we had to change our mindset and come to terms as to what the real costs would be if someone gets hurt or we have multiple safety incidents because we did not provide the necessary funding to cover the safety budget.

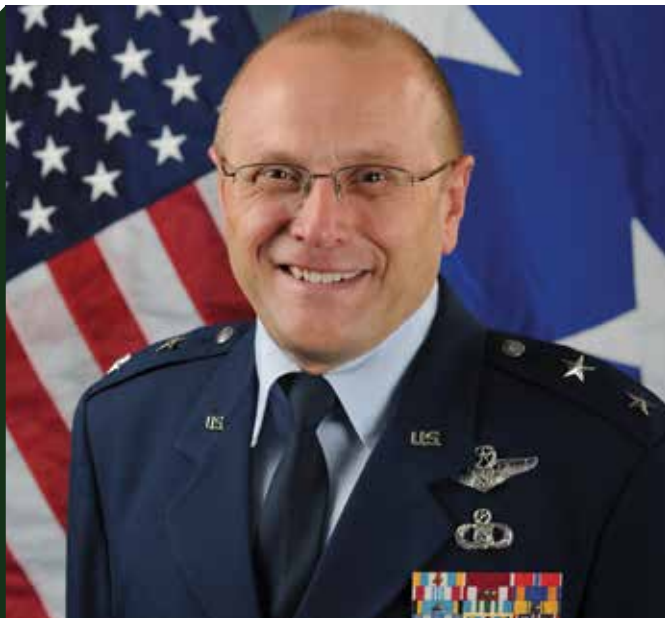
Over the course of several years, we have successfully changed our culture by truly putting safety first.

We do understand that there are associated costs to work safely, but they are required regardless of what it takes, and the cost is so much greater if we allow our workers in the field to take on risks they should not be taking. As our business grew, our safety awareness grew, and we began to understand that striving to maintain a healthy and safe workforce was not only the right thing to do because we were good owners, it was also the economically smart thing to do. We must ensure we hold fast to what we learn. It is difficult to draft a cell phone policy or a policy dealing with a particular construction hazard. It is more difficult to hold true to those principles we believe in when “under the gun” to get a project done in adverse conditions or coaxed by our own conscience to let things slide a time or two. It is possible to get away with some things some of the time, but all unsafe things will carry a penalty at some point or another.

Every step is necessary and well worth the wait because I know that it is a step closer to making sure everyone goes home in one piece. What I do affects you, and what you do surely affects me.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Personally performs an EHS audit each quarter and requires the leadership team to conduct quarterly EHS audits
- Launched mandatory monthly corporate and construction EHS meetings to align departmental goals/initiatives and allow open communication to address areas for improvement
- Implemented a Project EHS Checklist to be completed by all project supervisors and reviewed by EHS for every new project
- Invests significant resources and time into the organization’s safety incentive program



MAJ. GEN. ANDREW M. MUELLER

AIR FORCE CHIEF OF SAFETY
HEADQUARTERS U.S. AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, DC

As Air Force Chief of Safety, Maj. Gen. Andrew Mueller also serves as commander of the Air Force Safety Center, located at Kirtland Air Force Base, in Albuquerque, NM. The center's staff has approximately 150 military members, federal civilian employees and contractors who develop, implement, execute and evaluate all Air Force aviation, occupational, weapons, space and system mishap prevention, and nuclear surety programs and policy to preserve Air Force combat capability.

Why is safety a core value in the U.S. Air Force?

Simply put, a strong safety mindset ensures the ability of our Air Force to accomplish the mission. Sound, proactive safety

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Led the way in support of OSHA's National Safety Stand-Down – Prevent Falls in Construction – for back-to-back years
- Fully embraced and implemented the Safety Management System
- Advanced space safety worldwide by interfacing with the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety, a body on the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

practices safeguard the Airmen and protect the resources that comprise the Air Force. Safety is inherent in everything we do to preserve the combat readiness of our Air Force.

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

In many respects, my foundation in safety was built from a safety culture that has existed in the Air Force for 70 years. Watching and learning sound safety practices from experienced aviators at the squadron level instilled in me respect for the hazards associated with aviation and a strong confidence in the procedures and equipment to protect myself and my crew from these hazards. I learned early on that aviation is terribly unforgiving and even the smallest of mistakes can translate into fatal or catastrophic mishaps. Unfortunately, sometimes these lessons came with the price of losing a fellow Airman, something that really strengthens the goal of not letting anyone repeat these fatal mistakes. This early experience instilled in me the importance of a healthy organizational safety culture and has enabled me to become an informed leader in the arena of safety. As I teach and lead the safety programs in the Air Force today, I do so with the goal of not letting Airmen repeat the mistakes that led to mishaps in the past and sustaining the safety culture that fosters open communication about safety with the goal of preventing mishaps across all disciplines in the Air Force.



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

What is the biggest obstacle to safety in the U.S. Air Force, and how do you work to overcome it?

With the high demand for Air Force capabilities worldwide, talented, skilled and enthusiastic Airmen face the challenge of sustaining operational requirements with limited resources. This can make operations susceptible to shortcuts and workarounds – all done with the good intent of meeting the operational demands, but exposing the operation to the very hazards the process or procedure not being followed was designed to prevent. Non-compliance or worse, complacency, needlessly accepts additional risk. If this non-compliance or complacency becomes habit, the individual or organization has now normalized a deviation, making a process, which is actually wrong, appear as normal.

Overcoming this "normalization of a deviation" requires every Airman to accept personal responsibility for the mission and their safety while accomplishing the mission. Within this responsibility is the requirement to use real-time risk management skills, asking "What are the potential consequences of taking shortcuts or using workarounds?" If the potential consequence seems too high, Airmen need to report the problem to ensure risk decisions are made at the right level.



TIM MURRAY

CEO
ALUMINIUM BAHRAIN B.S.C.
ASKAR, KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Aluminium Bahrain B.S.C. (Alba) is one of the leading aluminum smelters in the world. Alba produces more than 960,000 metric tons per annum of the highest-grade aluminum, with products such as standard and T-ingots, extrusion billets, rolling slab and molten aluminum. Alba employs approximately 2,700 people, a majority of which are nationals.



Why is safety a core value at your organization?

At Alba, we believe that a successful safety culture is linked to the financial performance of the company. A good and healthy safety culture impacts the lives of our employees and all other stakeholders of Alba. We want people to focus on safety in every part of their lives, and with that intention, we organize safety campaigns throughout the year. Our campaigns are based on Alba's core safety values or ZERO Accident Principles:

1. Ownership of safety is everyone's responsibility.
2. Working safely is a condition of employment.
3. All work-related injuries and illnesses are preventable.

Ownership of safety comes from the heart and attaining zero injuries at the workplace is a journey that requires teamwork. The more support we receive from our people, the more we can embrace the changes and the more we make an impact on our lives. The targeted safety campaigns and messages have had a positive impact on safety and health

at our workplace, which is evident from the reduced lost time injuries, as well as overall safety performance. This has been accomplished only through the extraordinary support of our employees in embracing the change of better safety and health environment.

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

Two months before I was appointed CEO, Alba had its fifth fatality in less than three years. It was a horrifying experience. Our safety performance was not good.

Safety was my biggest concern as the CEO. This was a big challenge to me because I came from a financial background. I had general experience in operations but none in safety specifically. I knew we had to start over with safety, as I refused to let the situation continue as it was.

I feel personally responsible for safety. For many years, we relied on a consultant to help manage our safety. I did not want a consultant's view of safety. I wanted safety to be a daily core function of all our operations and thus, we took over the safety operations from the consultant.

You cannot outsource safety! You have to own it, you have to believe it. That is why our first safety principle, "Ownership of safety is everyone's responsibility," is the most important one. If and only if you believe in something will you do it.

We also introduced colors to our safety principles – white, yellow and pink, which got visual attention from our employees.

You can say we overhauled safety. The whole idea about safety is that it is about the people, our people ... and not a PR exercise.

I would say that my No. 1 achievement as CEO is that we have had no fatalities while I've been CEO. By touching the heart, we can change the mind and that's how I would think of safety. Seeing is believing!



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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Brought safety, health and environment into the CEO group, ensuring direct involvement in all matters related to safety and health
- Identified three safety principles: ownership of safety is everyone's responsibility; working safely is a condition of employment; and all work-related injuries and illnesses are preventable
- Initiated face-to-face campaigns so executives and management meet with shop floor employees as well as contractors about safety being a priority
- Established a near-miss reporting system so potential EHS problems are scanned and detected instead of awaiting an incident



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.



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.

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.



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



JOE SLATER

**PRESIDENT AND CEO
SOUTHERN MARYLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
HUGHESVILLE, MD**

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit electric cooperative that provides electricity to more than 160,000 accounts in southern Maryland. SMECO's mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service while assisting its communities and enhancing the quality of life in southern Maryland. SMECO employs 530 workers.



Why is safety a core value at your organization?

Safety is a core value at SMECO because our success is directly tied to keeping our employees – in particular our linemen – healthy and safe, especially as they perform work in hazardous conditions. It is essential that our employees place the highest value on safety, as there is no room for error while making direct contact with high-voltage electrical lines.

My concern also extends to the dozens of men and women who travel our highways each day to do routine maintenance, inspect our infrastructure, meet with our customers and numerous other daily activities that we can easily take for granted.

Stressing safety for all of our employees has to be an inclusive process to ensure it's part of our culture and not just something that is talked about at monthly meetings and forgotten.

I realize our culture starts with me, and I take every opportunity to be a leader of our safety initiatives. I faithfully

attend our employee safety meetings and present information when warranted to show support for upcoming campaigns. I personally wear-tested an approved flame-resistant company uniform while performing maintenance activities at my home to assess the comfort of the garment, ensuring the company uniform was not only safe and durable, but also comfortable.

Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who "gets it." What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?

I came to work at SMECO, and the utility industry, on July 2, 1979. Later that year, on Oct. 10, our organization suffered the tragic loss of two linemen to electrocution during power restoration efforts following a snowstorm. That preventable loss was due to failure to wear PPE and not following established work practices. Those shortcuts cost two men their lives. For me, it was an experience that forged a "never again" promise and mindset. And we have made good on that pledge.



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

What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?

Driving. In 2016, 24 percent of our total incidents resulted from motor vehicle collisions.

Regardless of our driver preparation, external factors such as other driver inattention, distraction or reckless driving are making our crowded roadways dangerous.

We monitor our vehicle incident rates and I meet personally with all SMECO employees involved in an accident.

I learned long ago that if the CEO pays lip service to a project or cause, then the employees will follow suit. Through my personal commitment and leadership, I provide my fellow co-op employees with the educational materials and other tools to help prevent the preventable.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Attends and presents at employee safety meetings
- Personally wear-tested an approved flame-resistant company uniform while performing maintenance activities at his home to assess the comfort of the garment
- Opened a campus gym, allowing employees to exercise at no cost and at times that are convenient for their schedule
- Opened a campus family health center that allows retirees, employees and family members access to urgent and routine medical care
- Implemented a smoke-free policy for company vehicles and worksites