

VISION ZERO – what else?

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Abstract

Every one of us has the fundamental right to life and physical integrity. However, the dramatic numbers of accidents at work and on the roads show that all over the world, we still have a long way to go when it comes to this basic humanitarian requirement. The purpose of this paper is to present a promising prevention strategy known as the VISION ZERO strategy. VISION ZERO reflects a fundamental attitude based on the idea that every accident at work or on the roads can be prevented if the right measures are put in place in good time. The same goes for occupational illnesses, and there is a particular focus on preventing accidents that lead to fatalities or permanent damage to health.

Beginning with the historical origins of the strategy, its fundamental principles are explained. The prevention strategy of the German social accident insurance institution for the raw materials and chemical industry (BG RCI) is used as an example to show how a strategy can be designed and put into practice.

I am pleased to say that VISION ZERO is becoming more and more widely known and used around the world. A lot of this is thanks to the work of the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The heads of government of the seven most advanced industrial nations, known as the G7, also announced their commitment to VISION ZERO and their global responsibility at their annual meeting in 2015 in Elmau.

How it all began

In 1799, Éleuthère Irénée du Pont de Nemours (1771 - 1834) set sail for the United States, where he settled in Wilmington, Delaware, not far from Philadelphia. In July 1802 he invested 36,000 dollars to set up a gunpowder factory on the banks of the Brandywine River, employing 18 staff. Du Pont's gunpowder was used to blast the way for roads and railways, and quickly acquired a key role in the establishment and expansion of the new nation. Very soon, du Pont found to his cost that producing gunpowder is not the safest of activities. On 19 March 1818 an explosion destroyed a large part of the powder works. 36 people were killed, including friends of du Pont. The existence of his factory was in jeopardy, not least due to vociferous protests from the elders and townspeople of Wilmington. Their unwillingness to put up with such a dangerous factory became one of the first ever citizens' initiatives.

Du Pont considered this, and as a consequence of the accident he established a new philosophy of safety in what we would now call his corporate culture. He insisted that his production managers live on the company site, close to the powder mills – it seems like a drastic measure today, but it was effective. Of course, they were now directly affected, which made them aware of their responsibility to ensure safety at

the plant. He also laid down the first safety regulations and invested in safer products and safe production technology. This is why Du Pont is regarded as the father of the ground breaking safety philosophy which we now know as the VISION ZERO strategy.

What does VISION ZERO mean?

VISION ZERO is about nothing less than our life and health – the most valuable thing that we have. But not only that: it's also about the success of enterprises, efficient production, and motivated, productive employees. Although it is sometimes also called a vision or a philosophy, VISION ZERO is in fact a strategy for more efficient prevention that is based on results and characterised by values. This strategy, which has become known as VISION ZERO in the past few decades, has its origins on different continents and in different eras, but as we have seen, it ultimately goes back to the chemical industry.

The belief that every accident is preventable has proved to be an efficient driver and incentive for prevention ever since its origins at Du Pont. Even today, the company is still considered a world leader in ensuring the health and safety of its employees. One very important part of this safety culture has always been to create working conditions where people can make mistakes without risking injury or death. VISION ZERO is thus based on four principles.

The first principle: Life is not negotiable.

Nothing is so important that it can be weighed up against human life. The right to life and physical integrity is central to the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany – and VISION ZERO demands nothing less. But first let's look where we stand with this fundamental right. Every year the DGUV registers around 850,000 reportable accidents at work in Germany, in other words, accidents that result in more than three days off work. Nearly 500 employees die in accidents at work each year in Germany, and around 3400 fatal accidents happen every year on the country's roads. Internationally, the ILO estimates that there are around 360,000 fatal accidents at work and more than 1.95 million deaths caused by illnesses resulting from poor working conditions and exposure to carcinogenic or otherwise harmful materials and substances. So how far have we really progressed when it comes to this basic human right?

Protecting this right is everyone's duty – government bodies, accident insurers, as well as companies, managers and employees. Walter Eichendorf, President of the German Road Safety Council (DVR), recently raised an interesting thought experiment. He asked us the following: "Let's imagine E.I. du Pont travelled from 1802 to the present and assume the motor car had not been invented. Now along comes du Pont and tells politicians, the media and the public in Germany that having perfected gunpowder manufacturing, he has now invented a brand new technology which will revolutionise personal mobility using motorised, individually steerable vehicles. However, introducing this technology will bring with it a new kind of accident, namely road accidents. He estimates that on average there would be ten fatalities a day. Now obviously, this technology would never be introduced and the inventor's proposal would provoke condemnation and even outrage. Surely no-one would want to be responsible for introducing a technology that cost ten lives every day! Politicians, society and the media would be united in rejecting it." Naturally, this

is a made-up example – because even du Pont could not have imagined what long-term consequences his invention would have. However, it does show the kind of compromises we have to make in order to preserve the basic right to life and physical integrity.

The second principle: People make mistakes.

VISION ZERO is based on the established fact that mistakes at work and on the roads can never be completely avoided. Studies of sensorimotor activity have shown how limited our capability is to perceive information from the environment, process it and compare it to memorised information. It is evident that the sheer quantity and density of information means that human error is the rule rather than the exception. As well as this, people make mistakes due to emotional, motivational and stress-related processes.

That's why it would not be surprising if research into accidents on the roads and at work confirmed that the main causes of accidents can be found in human error, in other words in the conduct of employees. But this is precisely the wrong way of thinking, because if humans, with all the motor skills, coordination, perception and information processing skills that evolution has given them, are still often unable to cope with the demands of the modern workplace or roads, then we can't blame them if they make mistakes. As well as this, the preventive effect of a management culture where the company executives and management are aware of their responsibilities and act accordingly is something which is often neglected. A closer examination of the causes of accidents will almost always show that life-saving safety regulations were either deliberately ignored or that the system does not even allow the work to be performed safely. In both cases, timely intervention would have prevented the accident.

However, this also means that with almost all traffic accidents and a large number of accidents at work, we can expect to find human error at numerous places in the chain of events that led to the accident. Even so, VISION ZERO insists that mistakes must never cost lives.

The third principle: The ability to cope with physical and mental pressure is crucial.

Precisely because we accept that people will make mistakes, we must ensure that when accidents do happen, they do not cause serious injury. "Everybody gets there safe and sound" was how the German Road Safety Council (DVR) put it when it opted for the VISION ZERO strategy, thus committing itself to the development of design principles for vehicles and infrastructure that minimise injuries, including assistance and safety systems (such as airbags).

At the workplace, this becomes even more important when we consider that in the Industry 4.0 world, for example, humans and (seemingly) intelligent machines will work side-by-side at many workplaces without protective barriers.

The fourth principle: Situational prevention comes first

Road users and workers cannot create safe working conditions or traffic systems by themselves. This means we have to think further: the workplace and traffic systems must be adapted to suit human beings, not the other way around. In traditional occupational health and safety, we call this giving priority to situational prevention.

However, it does not absolve individuals from their own responsibility. On the contrary, everyone must be aware of the risks to themselves and others as a result of what they do and what they fail to do. In Sweden, they call this “shared responsibility”. Individuals are responsible for obeying laws and regulations, while system designers must ensure that the system as a whole is safe. System designers are primarily entrepreneurs, managers, machinery manufacturers, planners and authorities.

Critics sometimes claim that VISION ZERO is unrealistic. But there is a clear answer to that. Who wants to tell a person who has suffered permanent injury from an accident that the tragedy was unavoidable and more or less expected? If you want to achieve the best that is possible, you have to aim for what seems impossible. And there are success stories. In aviation and rail transport, VISION ZERO has long been the gold standard and its aims have largely been achieved. And in the rare event of a serious air crash or train accident, politicians, the media and the public demand investigations so that such accidents never happen again. In contrast, the smaller disasters that occur every day at work and on the roads barely merit a footnote.

But when critics resort to the cost argument, it’s usually enough to point out the 30 billion euros of damage caused by road accidents each year to the German economy. Damage caused by accidents at work will be at least as much, because payouts by accident insurers alone come to around 10 billion euros each year.

VISION ZERO has only just arrived in Europe ...

In Europe, the idea of “zero accidents” did not gain ground in the development of political strategies for road safety until the 1990s. In Sweden, where the risks of the chemical industry were intensively discussed after the Seveso and Bhopal disasters, and a complete ban on the industry was briefly considered, the ministry of transport officially incorporated the basic tenets of the zero-accident philosophy into the field of road safety, coining the name “VISION ZERO”. According to a publication by the Swedish central office for road traffic, “Vision Zero is the vision of a future where no-one is killed on the roads or so seriously injured that they sustain lifelong injury.”

After the turn of the millennium, the new VISION ZERO strategy was taken up in numerous other countries, including Denmark, Norway, Finland, Switzerland and the UK. And the VISION ZERO wave keeps on rolling: On the occasion of the "Forum Sécurité-Santé", March 2016, Luxembourg announced to adapt the VISION ZERO prevention strategy. Employee’s representatives and the Minister of Labor signed the agreement in the presence of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg

Outside Europe, the pioneers in implementing the VISION ZERO strategy for occupational health and safety include Singapore, New Zealand, Korea, Australia and Canada.

... and now Germany

Since late 2007 the German Road Safety Council (DVR) has strongly publicised VISION ZERO and promoted the new strategy. The positive response has been very pleasing. In October 2008, the conference of transport ministers of the federal states declared: “The conference of transport ministers regards VISION ZERO as a suitable

basis to serve the long-term quality aims for road safety.” Since then, the EU Commission has made a clear commitment to VISION ZERO in its white paper for a single European transport area.

The German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) first made a clear commitment in 2008 by incorporating VISION ZERO in its principles for prevention. On 28 November 2008, the representatives of workers and employers unanimously agreed at the general meeting of the DGUV on a policy paper, whose reason for existing was contained in its title: “Prevention pays!” The new policy paper deals with the workplace, as well as educational institutions. The introduction sends a clear message: “Workplaces and educational institutions must be designed using all suitable means to prevent accidents at work, at school or on the way to and from work or school, as well as occupational illnesses and work-related health risks (VISION ZERO).“

VISION ZERO. Zero accidents – healthy working! The BG RCI strategy

A good practical example of systematic implementation of the VISION ZERO strategy by an accident insurer is the prevention initiative of the German social accident insurance institution for the raw materials and chemical industry (BG RCI). During the reorganisation of the prevention section following the merger of six different liability insurance associations to form the BG RCI, not only was a new organisational form required, but a strategic discussion took place on the principle that the form of the organisation must reflect the strategic objectives.

After intensive discussions, the company representatives on the board of the BG RCI and at its representatives’ meeting agreed that occupational illnesses and accidents at work or on the roads are neither random nor unavoidable events, but have causes. “If we all work to eliminate these causes, then accidents and occupational illnesses can be prevented”, says the joint statement of the employers and employees. They consequently agreed to make the VISION ZERO strategy a guideline for action at the BG RCI. In mid-2014 the senior management committees decided on the prevention strategy “VISION ZERO. Zero accidents – healthy working!” to ring in a new era for prevention. There was agreement that risks at work cannot be completely eliminated. This is why VISION ZERO does not mean “zero risks” – but that suitable measures must be taken to reduce and control risks so that they do not cause injuries or illnesses.

In his opening speech at an information event on VISION ZERO for the employers’ associations on 4 November 2015 in Berlin, the chairman of the BG RCI board, Hans Paul Frey, explained why a new approach was needed: “Because of our statutory duty of prevention, but above all out of personal conviction, we are committed to ensuring safe working conditions at our member companies and continuing to reduce the risks of accident and illness. The success of our prevention activities in the past has always been based on the shared commitment of all those involved – the employers and their staff, the employers’ associations, the staff councils and the trades unions. Together we have reduced the number of accidents and occupational illnesses, and there is a high standard of occupational health and safety at our member companies. Some people might ask why we don’t just carry on as before. In response to this, here are some figures:

- ⇒ Every year 78% of our expenses, that's around 1000 million euros, are spent on medical care, rehabilitation and pensions.
- ⇒ In 2014, 94,000 people were receiving pensions from the BG RCI.
- ⇒ These people received pensions totalling 64 million euros every month.
- ⇒ Every year, there are around 65,000 accidents – which means that one in twenty people insured with us suffers an accident at work or travelling there.
- ⇒ Every year, 840 people from our companies are so severely injured that they suffer the effects for the rest of their lives.
- ⇒ Every year, 20 people from our companies die in accidents at work.

And now I ask you: are we satisfied with that? Shall we accept that? I'm sure we all agree: no – we've got to do better. Accidents don't just happen – they have causes. We must be able to continue reducing the number of accidents and illnesses at work!"

The seven targets of VISION ZERO

As part of what is currently a 10-year initiative, the BG RCI has set seven specific targets for its VISION ZERO strategy to be met by 2024, and for the first time there are not only qualitative targets, but also quantitative ones.

Target 1: Reducing the risk of accidents at work by 30% by 2014

Target 2: Reducing the number of new pensions from accidents at work by 50%

Target 3: Reducing fatal accidents at work by at least 50%

Target 4: Reducing occupational illnesses

Target 5: Increasing the number of companies with zero accidents

Target 6: Aligning prevention services more closely to actual needs

Target 7: Increasing the use of prevention services

For the 4th target, preventive measures must be taken to reduce the number of new confirmed and compensated cases of occupational illness due to exposure at the workplace.

To achieve these ambitious targets by 2024, the BG RCI intends to implement a total of 10 measures, or more precisely, collections of measures. These are the screws we need to tighten, so to speak:

Measure 1: Better analyses to identify priorities

A results-based approach requires a more detailed look at the accident statistics. More thoroughgoing analysis will mean that it can be identified in more detail where it is worth investing in prevention. Special factors, new risks and current developments must also be taken into account. A pooled analysis of all fatal accidents at work in the past 10 years is currently taking place.

Measure 2: The customer's needs are decisive

To better identify what member companies need and to communicate more directly, the BG RCI is currently carrying out its first customer survey on prevention services as regards demand and quality. More surveys will follow at regular intervals.

Measure 3: Better-quality prevention services

Based on responses from clients and analysis of accidents and occupational illnesses, the BG RCI intends to systemise, optimise and update its range of prevention products, and where necessary to expand it, or slim it down if there is

clearly little demand for certain offers. This will help companies select the right services.

Measure 4: Setting the right priorities

The priorities for future prevention work are identified by analysing accidents and occupational illnesses, responses from clients and new risks that arise. It is already clear that the topics of health at work and avoiding or reducing mental stress at work will become increasingly important. To achieve progress as regards accidents on the way to and from work, a joint project with the DVR has been initiated to prevent accidents en route.

Measure 5: Special assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises

Investigations have revealed a tendency that the smaller the company, the greater the risk of accidents. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are also more likely to have deficits when it comes to the internal organisation of occupational health and safety. This means the VISION ZERO strategy should set a priority here.

Measure 6: Developing skills and expertise

The requirements for prevention are always changing – and naturally, the prevention experts of the accident insurers must always be aware of the latest developments. This is why another focus is on ensuring that consultants have an up-to-date combination of qualifications and develop their expertise, which means specific training on current topics and developments.

Measure 7: Being present at the workplace

Paperwork can wait. Ultimately, prevention can only succeed if consultants visit the workplace and show where improvements can be made. In future, the different potential risks in different industries and companies must be taken into account when deciding how often to visit.

Measure 8: Targeted qualification

Training those responsible at the workplace is an effective way to develop companies' expertise in prevention. The BG RCI is currently increasing its seminar capacities in response to the great demand. As well as this, the seminars will be more closely connected to other prevention services, and there will be additional seminars on VISION ZERO. Particular focus will be placed on training managers.

Measure 9: Improving communication

Successful prevention is impossible without an effective flow of information. This is why communication with member companies and those on the ground must be more intensive, faster and more focussed. In particular, electronic communication channels must be expanded.

Measure 10: Extending partnerships – acquiring multipliers

To make sure VISION ZERO is practised everywhere, the BG RCI relies on partnerships with companies and stakeholders. Cooperation agreements will be made with employers' associations, trades unions, internal interest groups and other multipliers to agree on shared objectives and activities.

VISION ZERO goes global – the ISSA gets on board

The International Social Security Association (ISSA) sets itself the task of ensuring social security for employees on the international stage. This includes every aspect of social security, from pension insurance to health insurance to accident insurance. It advises its 340 members in 157 countries on all matters regarding the sustainability of social security systems. In the field of accident insurance there are 13 international sections which are aligned to different industries and deal with the prevention of

accidents at work. Its aim is to develop practical prevention solutions for the benefit of companies, managers and employees alike.

Accident prevention in mining: a humanitarian duty and an economic necessity

Mining is an area where the situation regarding occupational accidents and illnesses is particularly unsatisfactory. The mining section estimates that the risk of suffering a fatal accident is eight times higher in mining than in other branches of industry. This not only leads to inconceivable human suffering, but also damages businesses and the general economy. In fact, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva estimates that worldwide, around 4% of economic output is lost due to unsafe working conditions, accidents and illnesses, and in some countries up to 10%. Luckily acceptance is growing that it is not only morally right to invest in safety, but also economically necessary. The factors that must be mentioned here include pit closures, breaks in production, quality problems, huge consequential costs of accidents, property damage, acceptance problems, lack of qualified staff and harm to the image of a company or the whole industry. Studies by the ISSA have shown that on average internationally, investment in prevention has a positive effect (return on prevention – ROP) of 2.2, which means every euro invested can potentially generate €2.20.

VISION ZERO. Safe mining worldwide!

With this in mind, in 2012 the mining section of the ISSA decided to launch its new prevention strategy entitled “VISION ZERO. Safe mining worldwide!” and to base all its future prevention services and measures on it. This makes the mining section a pioneer among the 13 prevention sections. The prevention strategy VISION ZERO. Safe mining worldwide! conveys a clear message. It is based on the belief that preventive measures can achieve a working environment, even in mining and the mineral extraction industry, where occupational accidents are a thing of the past and no-one is killed or suffers lifelong injury at work.

VISION ZERO for all ISSA sections

Due to the very positive response to the new strategic approach for the mining industry, the idea of VISION ZERO has since gained even more ground. In June 2015, at a meeting of the ISSA special committee on prevention in South Korea, all sections unanimously decided to join up to the VISION ZERO strategy and the workplace implementation strategies. This brings in a new era of cross-sector co-operation between the ISSA sections which will lead to notable synergies in future. The sections intend to publish a common guide on implementing VISION ZERO in companies, which will be translated into many languages. In addition, electronic versions of the guide will promote its global use. There are also plans to develop and jointly offer a range of worldwide seminars on introducing the VISION ZERO strategy at the workplace.

The VISION ZERO guide to implementation at the workplace

How can VISION ZERO be successfully implemented at the workplace? What can entrepreneurs, managers, staff representatives, foremen or department supervisors do? This question is regularly discussed – not only in Germany but wherever in the world the need for a new approach is understood and accepted.

To provide tips and inspiration about what everyone can do in their own field of responsibility, the BG RCI has developed a VISION ZERO guideline. One thing is clear at first glance: you don't always need to spend a lot of money to improve health and safety at work. Often, all it takes is careful conduct and consistent management, or simply making use of the services offered by the liability insurance association.

In developing the VISION ZERO guideline, plenty of new ground was broken. 700 entrepreneurs, managers and workplace experts were asked in workshops what simple measures they had positive experiences with, and what measures are effective. In addition, 300 prevention experts of the BG RCI were asked what, in their experience, were the most important preconditions for safe and healthy workplaces. Their answers were included in the guideline – so you could say it had 1000 different authors. The aim was to create a lean and manageable instrument, because there are already more than enough thick textbooks and legal documents. The guideline is aimed at entrepreneurs and managers and is broken down into seven groups of topics, known as the golden rules:

- 1 Take Leadership – Demonstrate Commitment
- 2 Identify Hazards – Control Risks
- 3 Define Targets – Develop Programmes
- 4 Ensure a Safe and Healthy System – Be Well Organised!
- 5 Use Safe and Healthy Machines and Equipment
- 6 Improve Qualification – Develop Competence
- 7 Invest in People – Motivate by Participation

For each of these seven golden rules, the guideline contains a brief introduction, followed by simple tips for checking what has already been successfully implemented at the workplace and where there is room for improvement. It provides a quick and easy overview of the status as regards safety at the company, which leads to a prioritised list of measures based on an evaluation of the various questions.

Golden Rule 1: Take Leadership – Demonstrate Commitment! The way you manage is crucial to the success or failure of occupational health and safety.

Every entrepreneur and manager is responsible for safety at the company. The quality of management not only determines how health and safety is practised at the workplace, but also how attractive, successful and fit for the future a company is. Management requires honest communication and a clear style of leadership. Signs of good management include reliability, attentiveness, open communication, praise and consistency. Entrepreneurs and managers set an example; they establish rules which they make sure everyone knows and complies with. If managers themselves do not keep to the rules, this is taken as a license to follow suit. Therefore, any breaches of rules must be addressed immediately – turning a blind eye can be fatal! What managers do, tolerate and promote sets the standard for all employees.

Golden Rule 2: Identify Hazards – Control Risks! The key tool for systematically recognising risks in good time and taking measures to counteract them is the hazard assessment. Accidents, injuries and narrow escapes must also be analysed.

The hazard assessment is not a bureaucratic monster, but helps you identify hazards and risks before they lead to accidents and loss of production. The aim is to assess the potential risk and then define and document the necessary safety measures. This is why this tool is now used all over the world. A well-designed hazard assessment is an excellent tool for carrying out practical on-site training with your assistance. The BG RCI keeps instructions, templates and samples and provides advice on request. You should not forget to continue evaluating accidents, injuries and narrow escapes in order to identify priorities and potential improvements.

Golden Rule 3: Define Targets – Develop Programmes! Successful occupational health and safety takes effort. It requires clear targets and specific stages of implementation, which you must set out in a programme.

Occupational health and safety has many facets. It is impossible to deal with everything at once. This is why it is a good idea to define specific OHS targets and try to implement them in the medium term, for example as a 3-year programme. There are several ways to do this in a targeted and planned manner: Either you decide to continually reduce the number of accidents or you focus on particular topics, such as operation of machinery, use of forklift trucks, personal protective equipment or reducing exposure to dust. When your employees see that you are personally concerned for their health and safety and are doing something about it at the company, success won't be long in coming. You should also regularly announce when targets are met.

Golden Rule 4: Ensure a Safe and Healthy System – Be Well Organised! It is a good idea to organise health and safety at your company with a system. It's not difficult and it pays off.

A well-organised OHS system benefits every company, because there are fewer disruptions, breaks in production and quality problems. So make sure you have an effective OHS organisation – it's well worth it! In Germany there are 15 elements that must be considered for an effective and legally compliant OHS organisation. These are compiled in a simple check called the GDA ORGACheck (GDA stands for the joint German OHS strategy) – we highly recommend it! It is also very suitable if you want to check the quality of OHS at companies you collaborate with. If you are more ambitious, you can install an OHS management system. The liability insurance associations offer advice, audits and certification for members free of charge. Those who pass the audit receive the renowned "Sicher mit System" quality seal from the liability insurance association, as well as plenty of good publicity.

Golden Rule 5: Use Safe and Healthy Machines and Equipment! This is the big one: safe production plants, machinery and workplaces are crucial for avoiding accidents at work. The effects on health are also important.

In occupational health and safety, the TOP principle is used (**T**echnical – **O**rganisational – **P**ersonal). It means that technical measures take precedence. That's why it is important to keep machinery, systems, equipment and workplaces up-to-date in terms of safety engineering and to eliminate and minimise harmful effects on health. Naturally, it is not always possible to use the latest technology – in which case old systems must be upgraded. It is often useful to tell the purchasing department that safety comes first, and all equipment must be supplied with safety

systems. Remember that most accidents happen during troubleshooting, maintenance, repairs or servicing – often because safety devices do not work or are deliberately disabled. It is the manager's job to stop this.

Golden Rule 6: Improve Qualification – Develop Competence! Invest in training and skills for your employees and make sure that the necessary knowledge is available at every workplace.

When accidents occur, people often wonder how they could have happened. Technical systems and production machinery are becoming increasingly faster and more powerful, but also more complex and susceptible to malfunctions. This makes it all the more important to systematically ensure that the person at the workplace is the right one for the task. The first thing to do is carefully describe the qualification requirements for each job at your company. Then, the correct personnel must be chosen. And finally, in-house qualification and training courses must be held to teach the required knowledge. Because knowledge becomes outdated ever more quickly these days, it has to be regularly refreshed. And don't forget: you also have to learn how to manage!

Golden Rule 7: Invest in People – Motivate by Participation! Motivate your workforce by involving them in all matters concerning health and safety at work. It's an investment that pays off.

One of your most important management tasks is to motivate your employees, and that includes promoting safe and healthy conduct. Companies that value their employees and actively involve them in health and safety benefit from important resources: their knowledge, capabilities and ideas. If employees are consulted when carrying out a hazard assessment or compiling workplace regulations, they are more willing to follow the rules. Regular participation campaigns or special days devoted to practising and experiencing health and safety can increase motivation. It doesn't cost any money to directly praise good conduct and to ask your employees for ideas, to show interest in difficult tasks at work and to talk about unsafe actions. In this way you can influence the personal attitudes of your employees and motivate them to work more carefully and safely. The aim is also for everyone to look after their colleagues – true to the motto "All for one and one for all!"

Where are we going?

Occupational illnesses and accidents at work or on the roads are neither random nor inevitable – they always have causes. The VISION ZERO strategy grasps this fact and aims to create a working environment where nobody is injured, gets ill or is killed. The strategy is based on the conviction that every accident can be prevented if the right thing is done in good time. The benefits of safe and healthy working are obvious. Successful accident prevention not only prevents human suffering but also protects the most valuable thing we have: our health. Successful prevention also has a positive effect on staff motivation, on the quality of work and products, on the image of the company and on the satisfaction of employees, managers and customers.

VISION ZERO is already well known in the international mining industry and in the member companies of the BG RCI. It is especially praised for its clarity, how easy it is to understand the strategy, and the convincing package of measures comprising the

seven golden rules. The main reason for the continued spread of the strategy and its use by other insurers and all the ISSA sections is that it creates a clear framework and provides an opportunity for all those involved in occupational health and safety to finally speak with one voice when it comes to prevention. This would certainly significantly boost public perception of the message.

For decision-makers – keep it simple!

Another positive effect is that decision-makers at companies, in other words those in charge of occupational health and safety, would be more easily reached with a clear and consistent message and a simple implementation concept than with a deluge of detailed regulations. It could be said that recently we have left the topic of health and safety at work too much in the hands of specialists, and slightly forgotten the CEOs, entrepreneurs and managers. In continuing to implement the VISION ZERO strategy, we should therefore place greater emphasis on the emotional messages regarding the preservation of life and health, and concentrate on implementation tools that are easy to use.

What do major politicians say?

A milestone in the political perception of VISION ZERO and the call for a new culture of prevention was the 20th World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in August 2014 in Frankfurt. Guy Ryder, Director General of the ILO, Errol Frank Stoové, President of the ISSA and Andrea Nahles, the German Minister for Employment, staked a clear and unanimous claim: there is no alternative to the VISION ZERO strategy and a new culture of prevention. Guy Ryder said: “We need a culture of prevention, because this is the only way to achieve the aims of VISION ZERO.”

It is also notable that the world’s seven largest industrial nations turned their attention to decent working conditions for the first time at their summit meeting in the Upper Bavarian town of Elmau in June 2015. In the wake of the latest major catastrophes, such as the factory collapse in Bangladesh which claimed 1127 lives, they talked about acceptable working conditions. Their final communiqué stated: “We support a VISION ZERO fund to be established in cooperation with the ILO.” It continued: “The aim of the fund is to introduce sustainable business practices that help prevent work-related deaths and serious accidents.” We can justifiably claim that VISION ZERO has already ensured that the topic of working conditions is now being addressed by senior politicians.

Let’s make our world better – it’s in our hands

In this context, we recommend reading the paper by Dr. Walter Eichendorf, who has studied the relationship between a culture of prevention and VISION ZERO. As he has announced, the German Social Accident Insurance plans a major campaign from 2017 onwards which will focus on exactly this culture of prevention, without which the aims of VISION ZERO cannot be achieved. The motto of the campaign is “Make the world better” and thus expresses precisely what is crucial to VISION ZERO, namely the conviction that everyone can make a contribution, no matter how small. It’s the sum of our actions which makes the difference.

VISION ZERO - Yes we can!

Establishing the VISION ZERO strategy is an ambitious project. It requires commitment, hard work and cooperation between many people. But one thing is already clear. Ultimately, whether it succeeds or fails depends on committed

entrepreneurs, motivated managers and executives, and vigilant employees at the companies. We must make it clear all over the world that effective prevention is not just a humanitarian duty, but also a sensible investment in a humane future with decent working conditions, and a guarantee for the success of the company. I am personally convinced that VISION ZERO is possible. Yes, we can!

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