

What Were They Thinking?  
By  
Kenneth W. Hutchins  
Safety Consultant, Industrial Truck Safety

A major company cuts the training budget at one of its locations by forty percent, less than a year later a major incident occurs and the company is placed in the position of setting aside 1.2 billion dollars to settle the lawsuits that follow.

A general contractor on a construction site places an untrained laborer on a forklift and the laborer strikes a power pole. The end result? Forty million dollars in damage, including a 250 unit apartment complex and a post office burning down.

What were they thinking?

Probably the same thing most people are thinking. What are the odds of it happening here. We seem to be willing to take a risk with our business assets, our personal fortune, and worse yet, the lives of our employees.

Why is it that American businesses are always trying to be reactive instead of proactive.

It is not unusual that a company will call for training after an incident has occurred, trying to practice damage control instead of trying to control damages.

It is time for companies to get ahead of the curve instead of following the incidents into the courtroom.

Well trained personnel are safer personnel, no matter what the subject.

Most employees just by their very nature want to feel involved, want to be informed, and want to know that they are valuable to the company.

If you allow them to become part of the answer, they will jump at the chance.

If you feel that the training budget is expendable, think how successful you would be if you were expected to perform your job without benefit of base information, research, or communication.

Many times we expect our employees to know without being informed. We tell them to do, without telling them why.

We rattle on citing company policies, procedures, and government regulations. We talk endlessly about how valuable there are to us as a company.

Then we fail to tell them why the policy, procedure, or regulation is important.

I know of a town that for over a hundred years had a law that made it illegal to have a water puddle in the yard of a private home. The home owner could be fined if the puddle was not eliminated in twenty four hours.

Sounds nuts, doesn't it. That is unless you know where and **why**. The location would be in southwest Louisiana, and the why would be mosquitoes. Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water. Get rid of the puddles, lower the number of mosquitoes. Now it makes perfect sense.

Explain to you employees why something is important. Then watch as they make safety in your business a priority.

Author and keynote speaker Kenneth Hutchins has over 30 years experience in the Security Industry serving as a Law Enforcement Specialist with both military and civilian agencies in addition to Loss Prevention Management with some of America's largest retailers. Mr. Hutchins' expertise in security and entertaining presentations have made him a sought after keynote speaker in the private sector. Author of "Stealing Back Your Profits" a guide for small and mid-size business and of multiple safety programs Mr. Hutchins teaches at several community colleges around Texas. Mr. Hutchins is the founder and President of Industrial Truck Safety. Mr. Hutchins also serves as the Operations Manager of Bedrock Electronic Security Technology (BEST) a division of EMCS, Inc guiding the convergence of Physical Security with Information Technology (I.T.) Services and Telecommunications Services offered by BEST and its sister company Bedrock Services.