

Why Do I Have to Do This?  
By  
Kenneth W. Hutchins  
Safety Consultant, Industrial Truck Safety

Sixteen years of instructing and it still amazes me how many employers don't have a clue. They want the quick and simple fix. Our company conducts forklift instructor training programs at several community colleges as well as on-site for our client companies.

Repeatedly I see individuals being volunteered by their company to be the "safety guy or gal", even if this person has no desire to be placed in that position.

If you feel this type of "selection by delegation" is alright, let me ask you a question. Have you held the meeting yet? You know, the meeting, the one where you gathered all of your employees together and advised them that one of them is going to "take one for the team".

This is what you are advocating by placing an individual who has no commitment, no passion, no drive, no desire, no energy, and no empathy for what they are about to do.

Think about the position you are about to place this individual in. Think about the skill set they will need. Think about the end result you want.

This person will, according to OSHA need the skills, knowledge, and ability to teach adult students.

First the position. This means they will have to have an outgoing personality to attract and hold the participant's attention during training, they will have to think on their feet to answer questions during the training, they will constantly have to alter their methods according to the group they are speaking to at the time.

Second the knowledge. They will have to absorb and retain a great amount of information during their initial instructor training program. They will have to add to this knowledge as time passes to improve their ability as a speaker, teacher, and authority on the subject.

Third the ability. This category covers more than the willingness to do the job. Are they given the support by management to get the job done? Are they given even a small budget to produce the materials to complete their tasks? Are they given time to develop their program, their materials, and their personal skills so that they can function at their best.

For many company owners, managers, and supervisors, simply placing someone in this position seems to complete the process.

Not so!

Talk to your accountant, ask how your company will fare if you lose ten thousand dollars, how about one hundred thousand, or five million! These amounts are out of line you say? No.

This is entirely possible if one of your employees is involved in an accident. Doesn't it make sense to do all you can in an efficient cost effective manner to avoid these pitfalls?

Quit saving pennies to spend dollars. Realize that safety programs if properly designed, implemented, and presented by properly trained instructors can save your company thousands, tens of thousands, or even millions of dollars.

If the person placed in this position does not want it, how much time, effort, and care will be spent in saving your company from accidents, medical cost, damage to equipment, OSHA fines, and lawsuits?

Penny wise, pound foolish is appropriate to this subject. Many companies trying to save small amounts of money without realizing that large amounts can be lost because proper thought was not given to the issue at hand.

Let's hope your thought process is solid.