

A Culture of Coercion, Are We Helping or Hurting?

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Asking our clients about their frustrations is something we do often. Why? Because **frustrations are simply the inability to change or achieve the results that we want.**

Let's face it, **life is about achieving results – in fact we'd argue that happiness is entirely dependent on it.** The more we're capable of achieving the results that we want, the happier (and more successful) we are.

The key to getting any result is behavior – that is **influencing behavior.** This begs the question: How good are we at influencing behavior?

A common practice in many circles is the use of **coercion.** That is, **the practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.** We usually don't apply this technique in a purposeful sense, but when we look around we see it everywhere. Safety culture is filled with examples of initiatives started with the best of intentions, only to become a "do it or else" flavor of the month. Target zero, days without an incident, director's visits, safety observations...the list goes on.

We suggest the best way to determine whether or not an initiative has become coercive is to ask the following question: *Would my employees agree they are following safety procedures because they genuinely want to, or because they feel like they have to?* If it's a have to situation, chances are they are working in an environment of coercion.

We use coercion because it works short term, it's easy to apply, and we're biased. Any parent can attest to the "do it or else" technique when it comes to getting the kids to "behave". The problems with this technique are that it requires consistent policing, creates poor relationships among people, and encourages dishonesty.

The goal of any working environment is to create one where people are doing what's necessary to achieve results because they *genuinely want to, not because they feel like they have to.* This requires an understanding of behavior and environment. To learn more, or watch videos on BMT visit <http://www.harkera.com>



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