

Do Safety Differently: A Paradigm Shift in Safety Management with Sidney Dekker



Safety has traditionally been viewed as a matter of following rules and procedures, with the goal of preventing accidents and injuries. However, this approach has often proved to be ineffective, as evidenced by the persistent occurrence of accidents and incidents in various industries.

In response to these shortcomings, renowned safety expert Sidney Dekker has developed a new approach to safety management known as "Do Safety Differently." This paradigm shift challenges traditional safety practices and offers a more effective and sustainable approach to improving safety outcomes.



Do Safety Differently by Sidney Dekker

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Dekker argues that traditional safety management approaches have been too focused on compliance and punishment, and have failed to take into account the complexity of human behavior and the nature of complex systems. He emphasizes the importance of creating a positive safety culture, where people feel comfortable reporting errors and learning from them, and where management is committed to supporting safety.

Key Principles of Do Safety Differently

Dekker's approach to safety management is based on several key principles:

- **Safety is a property of the system, not the individual.** Dekker argues that accidents are not caused by individual errors, but by systemic failures. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the complex interactions between humans, technology, and the environment, and designing systems that are resilient to error.
- **Errors are inevitable.** Dekker recognizes that humans are fallible and will make mistakes. He argues that the goal of safety management should not be to eliminate errors, but to learn from them and create systems that can tolerate errors without causing accidents.
- **A just culture is essential for safety.** Dekker emphasizes the importance of creating a culture where people feel comfortable reporting errors and learning from them, without fear of punishment. He argues that punishment-based safety cultures create a climate of fear and mistrust, which inhibits learning and improvement.
- **Learning is essential for safety improvement.** Dekker believes that the only way to improve safety is to learn from our mistakes. He emphasizes the importance of creating a learning environment where people are encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge, and where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth.

Benefits of Do Safety Differently

Dekker's approach to safety management has been shown to have several benefits, including:

- **Improved safety outcomes.** Studies have shown that organizations that adopt Dekker's approach to safety management experience a reduction in accidents and injuries.

- **Increased employee engagement.** Employees are more likely to be engaged in safety when they feel that their contributions are valued and that they are not afraid to make mistakes.
- **Reduced costs.** By focusing on learning from errors and preventing accidents, organizations can reduce the costs associated with accidents and injuries.
- **Improved reputation.** Organizations that are known for their commitment to safety have a better reputation and are more attractive to customers and investors.

How to Implement Do Safety Differently

Implementing Dekker's approach to safety management can be a challenge, but it is achievable with the right commitment and support. Here are some tips on how to get started:

- **Start by assessing your current safety culture.** Dekker's approach requires a positive safety culture where people feel comfortable reporting errors and learning from them. Assess your current culture and identify areas where you can make improvements.
- **Develop a safety vision and strategy.** Define your safety goals and objectives, and develop a strategy for achieving them. Your strategy should be based on the key principles of Dekker's approach.
- **Involve employees in the safety process.** Employees are the best source of information about safety risks and hazards. Involve them in the safety process and give them a voice in safety decision-making.
- **Create a learning environment.** Encourage employees to share their experiences and knowledge, and create opportunities for them to learn

from errors. Mistakes should be seen as opportunities for growth, not as something to be punished.

- **Be patient and persistent.** Changing a safety culture takes time and effort. Be patient and persistent in your efforts, and don't be discouraged by setbacks. The benefits of Do Safety Differently are worth the investment.

Sidney Dekker's "Do Safety Differently" approach to safety management offers a paradigm shift in how we think about and manage safety. By focusing on the complexity of human behavior, the nature of complex systems, and the importance of learning from errors, Dekker's approach provides a more effective and sustainable way to improve safety outcomes.

If you are looking to improve safety in your organization, I encourage you to explore Dekker's work and consider adopting his principles. By ng so, you can create a positive safety culture, reduce accidents and injuries, and improve the overall well-being of your employees.



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