

-- Speaker 0 00:00:00 When we were out with people on the factory floor and we're pointing out things and where we're looking at everything they're doing wrong with telling them what to do. We're creating that psychological reactance where people say I was going to do it anyway. I know what to do out here. I'm out here every minute of the day. I know my job better than you do. And now you fly in here and you know, they call it the seagull, uh, approach, right? That the seagull flies in shits all over everybody and then flies away again. Right now that's typical of what happens when a manager comes into the factory floor, they'd come in, they see everything that's wrong. We pointed all out, tell them what to do, right? And then they go again. And this is the worst possible way to insert your, to, to have a relationship with your frontline employees,  
Speaker 1 00:00:57 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast.

Speaker 2 00:01:02 Welcome to make it right. I'm Janet Eastman. And this is part two of my conversation with manufacturing leadership advisor, Kevin Snook, about how to walk the factory floor in 2021, he says the key is listening. So when you do listen, um, I feel like, and honestly, we all have an impression. We ask a question, I think probably back here, there's something playing on. I know what the answer is going to be on or what the answer is going to be. So you kinda have to watch how you listen, because for the most part, you're probably listening for the answer you're expecting and missing some of the goal that's actually being spoken

Speaker 0 00:01:42 Well. And that's why things haven't got better in the past, right? So if you are, if you do actually say, as a leader, I am responsible for the condition of my factory floor. For example, then you must have been doing something wrong in the past. If the condition doesn't meet your expectations, if you take responsibility for it, you are responsible for it. Right now, the question is, as a leader, are you, self-aware enough to be able to say, yes, there's a level of something in me that needs to change in order to be able to change this situation. And so then you go in there and you say, okay, let me try something a little bit different this time. Let me try to ask that question in a different way. Let me really try to listen. Maybe let's take people off of that, that area, where everything was noisy and busy at an old go, go, go at the moment and spend 20 minutes with somebody in the, in the canteen, over a cup of coffee and see if I can figure out exactly what's going on and what I'm missing.

Speaker 0 00:02:45 And so that, that level of vulnerability to be able to say, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm messing up in some way here, um, because it's not the way that I would expect it to be, what, what am I missing? What's happening out there that I'm not aware of at the moment. And this must be somewhere that you need help. And, um, and as I said, that help can come in training, uh, tools, uh, some money for new equipment. Um, you know, the change in the environment. There's a whole range of things that it could be. But if we think we know all the answers, there's no point in going out there anyway, because nothing's going to change,

Speaker 2 00:03:24 Right? You talked a little bit earlier about behaviors. So when you're the leader or the plant manager, whoever walking the factory floor, what behaviors should you be looking for? Because they indicate how you are doing as a leader, right? So what behaviors should you be looking for?

Speaker 0 00:03:43 Oh, that's really good. And this is, this is one that, um, I think each organization needs to have some kind of exercise where they do do that themselves. I've just done this work with, with one of my clients actually. And we started talking as a leadership team. What behaviors would we love to have in the factory? Right? Specifically, let's write them down, right? It's like, well, we want people to be honest, we want it to be database. We want them to feel like they can say whatever they need to say. We want them to feel open and supported. And you know, so there was, we wrote down a whole bunch of these different behaviors that, that each of the leadership team members would love to be around in a factory that's functioning really well. And then we said, well, okay, based on these, let's have our team members rank them.

Speaker 0 00:04:37 And we have thi --

-- ngs that are important, things that are very important or things that are absolutely essential. So there's none of these, none of these are not important, right? If you said, let's say I'm taking responsibility for your actions, okay, that's a behavior, right? Somebody is either trying to blame or push it off to somebody else, or they're taking responsibility for their actions. So let's say it's one of the behaviors. It's either going to be important, really important or essential, right. It's not going to be, nobody's going to say it's not important. And so, and then let's rank them because we want to end up with like that 20% that we think are essential and then let's look at what they are. And that's kind of what we're looking for when we go out on the production floor right now, when we did this and everybody ranked those behaviors and they put that, that numbers one, two, three, what do you think?

Speaker 0 00:05:32 And we ended up with five really strong, essential behaviors that we wanted to be looking out for recognizing and rewarding people on because we want more of the behaviors that we want. Now, what was really interesting to me in that exercise. And I didn't think about this before we set up the exercise is we weren't looking for what we didn't want to see. So we weren't saying, uh, we wanna, we w we don't want, we don't want anybody behaving unsafely, or we, we don't want anybody who's lying, or I want to, I, you know, I want to catch people when they're doing this negative behavior. We didn't, we didn't even consider that. What we said is if we're looking at a factory that we would really love to be a part of what kind of behaviors would we see, and let's encourage more of them and let's identify them and see them recognize, reward people and build more of those.

Speaker 0 00:06:32 And so it actually ended up as a really positive exercise, but that had everybody involved so that when you are involved in coming up with things like this, you're also becoming sensitized to them as well. Right? So you're becoming more aware of what the meanings are. You becoming sensitized to it, you're starting to open your eyes in a different way to what's happening. And, uh, and so it, it, it works out as a really good exercise and they, they are now a big part of the corporate behaviors. Not only do we look for on the factory floor, but we also look for in the hiring process

Speaker 2 00:07:07 And all of this stuff that you're talking about, your able to do on a zoom call, right? This is, this isn't happening. Face-to-face anymore. This is all happening, just like you and I are doing this podcast right now.

Speaker 0 00:07:21 Yeah. And there are some additional tools that people can have, like, um, I think during this age, we need to have more video in factories. Okay. So a lot, I do understand the concerns of factory owners, business owners, plant managers, uh, feeling, uh, feeling cautious about people taking videos in their facility, right? Because they don't want the secrets or the issues or whatever, to go out to a wider audience. So, um, being cognizant of that and saying, okay, are we, we have to find a way to manage that from a security point of view so that people are comfortable with it. There's still really good ways of sharing information and sharing videos that we can learn from. Um, and of course we're bringing in different sort of, uh, techniques, our like different virtual reality or augmented reality, um, you know, goggles and things like that, where you can see things in a different way. There's, there's lots of simple ways, and it can be photographs either. You know, you don't hang on to have to go to video. It could be photographs of the equipment, photographs of the maintenance room, photographs of the, of the campaign team. And we'll start to pick up things around, you know, what, what are we doing right here and what helped you need to be able to elevate the standards.

Speaker 2 00:08:45 Right. Okay. So when, uh, when a CEO does a factory tour and we talked about in those past podcasts, but what w what should they be walking out with? And we talked about that they should have this to-do list, right. To do list of all the things that they can be doing to help the workers in the factory, move their careers and their PR their progress forward. Is it still the same? Is that the end goal of a meeting or any of these things for the CEO?

Speaker 0 00:09:18 --

-- Yeah. It's whether, whether it's a meeting or a factory tour, the idea is to make a decision. And, um, and if you've got a good set of eyes on you, when you're out on a factory tour, even if you're looking at a video of a factory floor, uh, or a factory tour, you can, you, you're going to pick a hundred things that could be improved. And if you have good conversations with the people out there, you could probably pick a thousand things that, that could be improved. What we then need to do is we need to categorize them. We need to prioritize them. And so there are certain things that with the right operating strategy or the right strategy behind them, you're going to be able to have an effect on a number of those different issues. And so let's say, as you were walking the factory floor, you saw six different safety violations.

Speaker 0 00:10:11 Somebody reaching beyond the plane of a guard, somebody riding on a pallet truck, somebody else working at height without some kind of thing. And you address each one of those when you were there, because whatever you walk past becomes your standard. Okay. So you cannot walk past a safety violation and think that you would tackle it later, right? Uh, as a, as a leader in the company, you are responsible to, to know what they are and to address them at the point. But there's a cyst. There's obviously a systemic issue behind that. Right? So if I walked off and I had six safety violations that I'd seen, um, there would be something that in the, in the systems that is broken and I want to be talking to the right people to figure out what do we need to do differently to help you with the systems so that they're more effective.

Speaker 0 00:11:06 And then if we've got, let's say we've got, you know, a hundred items that we've seen. We've got six different categories of items, and frankly, we need to prioritize them because we can't work on everything. And so the next step is how do we prioritize and what, what's the prioritization matrix that we put together to be able to say, yep, this is absolutely essential. We need to do this. Now we can plan this in over the next three months. Maybe this one can wait till, you know, till the end of the year, you know, that's, that's the kind of process we need to go through, but you're absolutely right. It's about finding areas that, that the business needs support to do things better, and then figuring out what's the right systemic solutions to those problems.

Speaker 2 00:11:50 I'm curious about, you talk about the safety issues and, you know, just doing things that are not quite safe. And so I want to go back to the blame situation where like, you're, you're walking the factory floor, you, you see something that is unsafe, a safety kind of violation. How do you approach that as a leader in a way that is not a blame situation, I guess, and I'm thinking just on your behalf, I'm thinking, and tell me if I'm wrong that you, as the leader would say, can I ask you why you're doing that that way, right.

Speaker 0 00:12:28 Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:12:29 You're not supposed to do that.

Speaker 0 00:12:32 Maybe, maybe. And it really depends what you say, right? So, um, if you see somebody reaching beyond the plane of a guardian to moving equipment, then it's a little bit like having a kid walking down the road who steps into the road, right? You, you, you you've, you've got to, you've got to take action quickly, right? So without startling, somebody and making the situation worse, you have to take quick action on that situation. And not all nicey nicey about everything. If people are knowingly breaking a work rule, then that's a disciplinary case, and we have a way to follow that up. Right. And so this is not like, Oh yeah. You know, I, I, I really love you. And I don't want you to chop your fingers off and please don't do that again. Right. It's not that situation is if you know, you shouldn't be gone beyond the plane of the guard, then first of all, do not go beyond the plane that the guard that's you, this will work violation.

Speaker 0 00:13:30 Now the next step is why did you feel like you needed to go beyond the plane with the guard and put your fingers at risk for the sake of cleaning that piece of equipment or whatever you were doing, right? And then you get into a much more valued conversation, which is, well, I didn't want to stop the line because I felt we needed to carry on making product

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-- , or, um, I've done this before and it worked and, and it is really difficult to clean it when the line stopped and whatever, right. You're, you're starting to get some real information about why did that person put themselves at risk and what do we need to do differently from a machine point of view, or from not stopping that now from stopping them, reaching over the guard, putting a higher guard on, but what, what was actually going wrong that created that behavior?

Speaker 0 00:14:21 Now the purpose of discipline is to change the behavior. It's not to, it's not to make the person feel bad, right? This is not a blame game. It's not a, there's no benefit in discipline that makes somebody feel bad. That the purpose of discipline is to change that behavior for the better. So you get more of the behaviors you want and less of the behaviors that you don't want. Right. And so there's always a, I love catching people, doing things right, and quickly helping them understand what they did. Right. And why, because it's a very positive conversation, but there are times when you catch people doing things wrong and you have to have that conversation that changes their behavior. Now, sometimes that takes you down the disciplinary route, and you've got the three strikes and you're out type thing. Right? Yeah. And so there are times when you need to go through that, if there's willful negligence or willful, um, misbehavior, but, but generally it's an adult conversation that says, okay, clearly you're doing that for some reason, let me help understand that reason.

Speaker 0 00:15:29 And let's see whether we can make sure that never happens again. Um, and so, yeah, I, I love the idea of, uh, of one minute reprimands, which comes from, uh, the one minute manager book. And that is around you, you find what's going wrong, you address it quickly. You're very specific on the behaviors that you didn't like, you still let the person know that you like all of them and that you're there to help, but that that's not acceptable. Okay. And then it's done, it's done. It's, it's, it's a, it's one minute. This works really well with kids as well. You don't want to be dragging stuff out over a long period of time and making people feel crappy.

Speaker 2 00:16:13 Yeah. Yeah. Okay. When you go, as the leader, do the factory tour, have the meeting, you've got the problems that are on your plate that, you know, you need to address and that you said you're going to help them with what's the turnaround time. What kind of expectation do you want to leave your employees with about how long it's going to take to get this stuff done? Because if it takes too long, they're going to go. Yeah. Right.

Speaker 0 00:16:42 Yep. Exactly. And so, and this is the same with anything. I always encourage ideas to come up from the factory floor because we that's where the best ideas are going to come from. But frankly, you cannot act on every idea that every person has. And so there has to be that prioritization process that I was talking about. But once you've done that prioritization, the most important thing is that you go back to the source of the idea and you let them know what's going to happen. And even if the answer is, we're not going to do anything about that right now. Okay. So somebody has a great idea. You know, they, they want to have, um, roast chicken every Sunday and the canteen. Right. And you look at that with everything else that we have on the play that we're working on, and you say, well, okay, that's not going to happen.

Speaker 0 00:17:35 Right. But yeah, it's a really good idea. Let's go back and let them know that that's not going to happen. Right. And, and you it's, most people, most people are perfectly okay with their idea not being done. They're not okay with our idea not being considered. And so if you show that you went through a process, this is where ended up in our prioritization. These are the key things that we're going to do to make life better for you. That one is not on the, not on the plan right now. I think most people are okay with that.

Speaker 2 00:18:10 And people just like to be heard,

Speaker 0 00:18:13 Well, it's very important that they are heard, right. Because if they're not heard, then, then they'll shut up, but we'll never get good ideas again. And so it really is about not just being heard, but that, that idea of going through a process and then being fed back, --

-- and you may have enough information right. At the time to say, no, we're not going to go work on that. You know, if somebody says, um, we really think we can get a cost reduction on this particular boat. If we go to this new supplier and you've got, you know, 10 other priority things that you're working on to get a cost savings with new suppliers, you may be able to say to them at that point, I see we've got these other 10 things. They're going to give us a bigger bang for the buck. We're not going to be working on that at least for the next year. Then, then you can tell them that straight away, right. You don't have to take that away at work. You through a huge process. The important thing is that they get closure on their idea and they realize that either it is going to be actioned or it's not right.

Speaker 2 00:19:14 So as the leader, what's the, what is the impression that you want to leave when you are done your factory tour, whether it's virtual or it's just a zoom meeting or whatever, what is that impression you want to leave with the people in that meeting?

Speaker 0 00:19:30 I want them to feel like they have been listened to that's the number one thing. The next thing is that they have enough trust that there's going to be some action taken. So I guess that's the two things. Yes. I've been listened to. Yes. I believe that something is going to be done. Right. And that's something, as I said, sometimes it's action. Sometimes it's just feedback that there's not going to be any action, but at least I trust that somebody is going to go through that process and come back to me with an answer. Right.

Speaker 2 00:20:01 So leave us with a couple of key takeaways here, Kevin, um, about, you know, just how to do all this right now. Like you did talk earlier about, you know, have a proxy, have somebody who can go out there and do some of the stuff for you and be your eyes if you need to be. But you know, what are your key takeaways here?

Speaker 0 00:20:23 First of all, don't underestimate the power of an effective factory tour. Make time, make it a priority, make time in your schedule to do it. Either you do it or you have a proxy and then you spend time with that proxy, right? Don't, don't have Tecate there, some pass it on to somebody else all the way through the leadership team is incredibly important that the frontline employees see you there to help. And so, um, make it a priority, schedule it in, um, stick with it. It's always easy to say. Uh, and I know, cause I've been in this situation many times, um, Oh, you know, somebody else or important phone calls come in or, uh, customers come through the door or there's a supplier who needs to see me. Maybe we'll just pass on the factory tour this time. Right? Don't let that happen. Scheduling as an important part of your work, get out there and do it look for things that are positive. Also make sure you're addressing the things that are negative, but do so in a way that you're there with an intention to help. Um, and especially now use videos, use remote techniques, use a proxy if you need to, but get it done,

Speaker 2 00:21:39 Right. Kevin, always fun to talk to you. And I think he left us with some pretty good tips for, for leaders in this time of pandemic and social distancing and closures and whatever. So thanks so much.

Speaker 0 00:21:52 Thank you, Janet.

Speaker 2 00:21:53 Kevin Snook is a manufacturing leadership advisor and you should read his book. It's called Make It Right. Five steps to align your manufacturing business from the frontline to the bottom line. It has I think, nine chapters on how to walk yourself through a process to get your business up and running properly. I'm Janet Eastman. You can find make it right on Twitter and LinkedIn, and you can also find us on iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. And if you want to go back and listen to those really early versions of the factory tour tour, I think their episode 17 and 18 of the make it right podcast. And there is some absolute gold in there from Kevin. Thank you again, Kevin. That's make it right until next time. Thanks for listening.

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