



Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture

Case Study: Responsibility for Mistakes

As part of the WTP Project's efforts to continue to build a strong Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture (NSQC), case studies have been developed for use in staff meetings. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to read the situation, and then lead their work group in discussion, using the questions provided to engage employees. The purpose is to enable all WTP employees to recognize and put into practice the NSQC focus areas and attributes.

It is important to note that not all possible options are included.

Situation

Melanie is a new supervisor in the Procurement & Subcontracts organization and eager to prove herself. She understands that safety and quality are values on the WTP Project and is committed to upholding both.

Today, Melanie is called into her manager's office. One of the employees Melanie supervises has made a significant mistake in a document that could set back the award of an important subcontract by several weeks. Melanie does not remember seeing the mistake when she checked the document.

Discussion Question: Options

1. What are Melanie's options in this situation?
 - *Melanie could place blame on her employee, telling her manager that the employee must have introduced the mistake after Melanie had checked it. (Negative)*
 - *Melanie could, as the supervisor, accept responsibility for the mistake and assure her manager that she will both check more carefully in the future and follow up with the employee. (Positive)*

Melanie's Decision

After consideration, Melanie accepts responsibility for the mistake, telling her manager that, as the supervisor, she should have checked the document more carefully before it was issued. She also promises to follow up with the employee to develop a plan to avoid future mistakes. Afterwards, Melanie schedules a meeting with her employee.



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Discussion Questions: Contributing to a Strong NSQC

1. In making this decision, what NSQC focus areas and attributes have Melanie employed?

Melanie has employed the clear expectations and accountability attribute, which is part of leadership, as well as the trust attribute, which is part of organizational learning.

2. How do Melanie's actions contribute to a strong NSQC?

By accepting responsibility for the mistake, Melanie contributes to a strong NSQC because she is being accountable for her own actions and those of her employee. She holds her employee accountable and sets clear expectations by setting up a follow-up meeting to develop a plan to prevent a recurrence.

Melanie is also leading by example, setting clear expectations for herself in regards to accountability.

In addition, as a supervisor, she "has her employees' backs." Melanie does not blame her employee for the mistake in her effort to prove herself as a supervisor. This cultivates trust between management and employees.

By accepting responsibility, Melanie also contributes to a strong NSQC because she does not undermine her employee, and by scheduling the meeting with her employee, Melanie follows through on her commitment to her own manager.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What might be some negative outcomes associated with Melanie's other options?
2. What are some other ways we can cultivate clear expectations and accountability on the WTP Project?
3. What are some other ways we can cultivate trust on the WTP Project?

More Information

For more information about the NSQC focus areas and attributes, including how you can demonstrate it on the WTP Project, see <http://wtp.becweb.ibectel.com/Wtp/PROJECT/NSQC/topics.asp>.