



# HOW TO GET EXECUTIVE BUY-IN FOR YOUR WORKPLACE SAFETY PROGRAM





Over the past couple of years, COVID-19 has elevated the importance of workplace safety initiatives in many organizations – providing compliance professionals with unprecedented access to the C-suite as they work in tandem to create realistic, compliant strategies to keep employees safe and healthy.

So now that we have the attention of executive leaders, how can we utilize it to strengthen our overall environmental, health, and safety (EHS) initiatives?

Getting and maintaining executive buy-in and support for your organization's EHS program is one of the most critical components in building a mature, scalable, and efficient compliance program. Following, find a list of the things that you can do right now to get your organization's C-suite more invested – and enthusiastic – about your EHS program.

# 1. COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF YOUR EHS PROGRAM

Communication is the key to success when navigating the C-suite as a safety professional. By effectively communicating the value of your EHS program, you will be able to garner attention and respect –opening the door to more in-depth partnerships across your organization.

To balance the needs of your C-suite with the needs of your EHS program, you need only look at what each group is responsible for to see overlap. The C-suite sets your organization's strategic vision –and then prepares managers and employees to functionally support this goal. Your EHS program enables these efforts by increasing overall efficiency, improving employee outcomes, and enabling employees to get their jobs done safely.

Both the C-suite and your EHS program have a vested interest in creating an effective workplace safety program that reduces the risk of employee injury and death and ensures that employees in your organization understand how to mitigate risk while on the job. Why is this important?

According to a study from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Office of Regulatory Analysis: “Evidence suggests companies that implement effective safety and health can expect reductions of 20% or greater in their injury and illness rates and a \$4-6 return for every \$1 invested.”

Building a culture of safety is the right thing to do, and it's good for business. It saves time. It improves productivity. And, when organizations demonstrate that the overall well-being of their employees and work environments is important, employees become more motivated, engaged, and invested.

EHS professionals play a pivotal role in building a culture of safety, and communicating this value is of utmost importance as you take steps to showcase the profitability potential and cultural importance of EHS compliance.





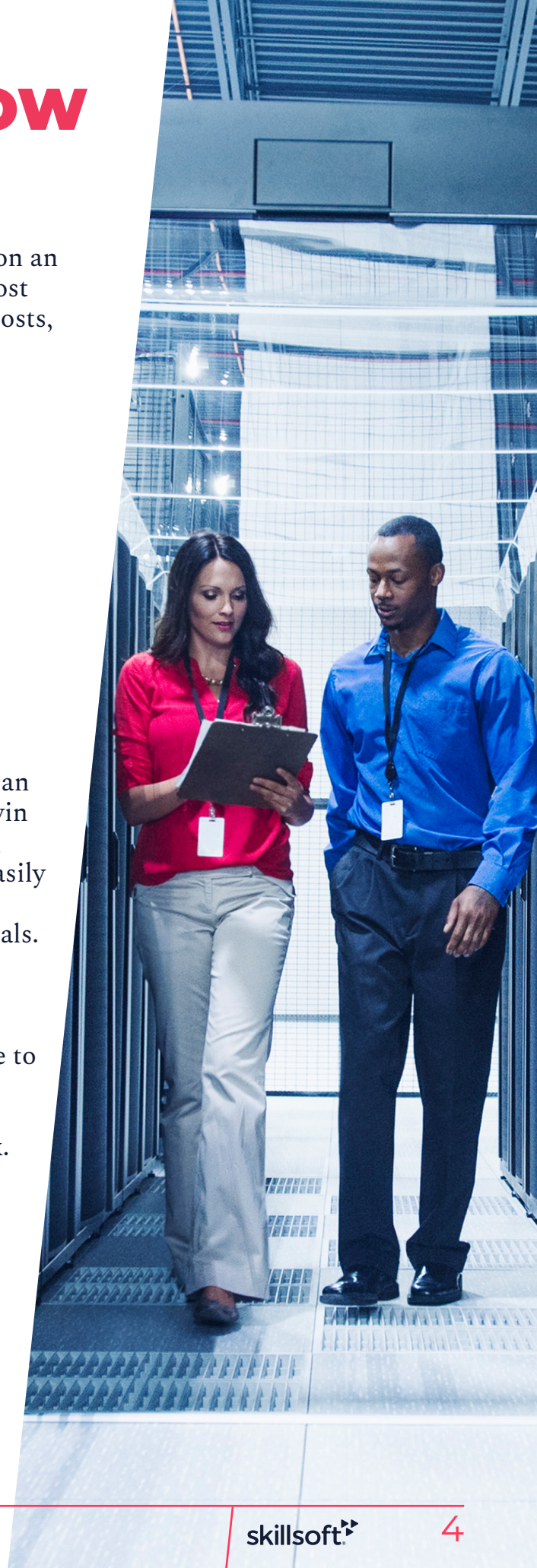
## 2. USE DATA TO SHOW BUSINESS RESULTS

Workplace injuries and illnesses have a major impact on an organization's bottom line. In fact, employers pay almost \$1 billion per week for direct workers' compensation costs, alone. Not to mention indirect costs such as:

- Training replacement employees
- Accident investigation and implementation of corrective measures
- Lost productivity
- Repairs of damaged equipment and property
- Costs associated with lower employee morale and absenteeism

By illustrating the financial risks and opportunities of an effective EHS program at your organization, you can win over the C-suite and gain their respect. But remember, metrics are data points. They can be manipulated or easily misinterpreted, so you need to be able to offer relevant insights and context that map back to your business goals.

Your reason for sharing data with the C-suite might be to give them a high-level overview of the overall trends in your EHS program. Or maybe it is to drive change in work processes that you have identified as high-risk. Determining why you are sharing data will help you to figure out how to share it in a way that can help you elicit change.



### 3. IDENTIFY AN INTERNAL CHAMPION

Has your C-suite been slow to support your workplace safety initiatives? One way to make quick progress is to identify an internal EHS champion.

Internal EHS champions serve as a link between management and workers, and they are a key component of any successful safety program. An internal EHS champion is a role model within your workforce who promotes safety by strictly adhering to your organization's health and safety requirements

#### These individuals:

- Help to keep your workforce motivated by advocating a positive approach to workplace health and safety
- Contribute insightful ideas to help your organization improve its level of safety, and encourage their colleagues to do the same
- Demonstrate, on a personal level, through their actions and their day-to-day attitude that they sincerely care about the health and safety of their colleagues
- Aid the establishment of a positive safety-oriented workplace environment
- Understand the workplace hazards that exist, and how to mitigate these potential risks
- Help the management team put in place effective and intuitive health and safety policies

In an organization with a strong safety culture, every employee feels a responsibility to identify unsafe behaviors and situations, and speak up to help correct them. If your organization isn't quite "there" yet, working with an internal EHS champion is a great way to model the behavior you're looking to achieve.







At the end of the day, safety is not someone else's problem in your organization. It is the responsibility of both EHS professionals, the C-suite, managers, and individual contributors. It needs to be taken into consideration with the overall goals of your organization because it has the potential to save you from huge financial, public relations, or quality failures. Not to mention, it can save lives.

Curious about how to improve your EHS program? [Contact Skillsoft today.](#)

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