

VISION ZERO

Positive Leadership – Key to Vision Zero



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Positive Leadership – Key to Vision Zero

“Take leadership – demonstrate commitment”

This first golden rule of Vision Zero sums it up: if you truly want to promote a culture of prevention including safety, health and wellbeing in your company, you have to start with yourself – and with your leadership attitude.

In many organizations, traditionally the focus is mainly on technology, processes and regulations. They are already highly developed. However, no matter how safely machines are designed, it is how they are used that counts.

Whether risks are addressed, rules are followed or simply ticked off, whether a culture of prevention becomes an internal attitude or remains a “must” – all this is shaped not by systems, but by people. And people means leaders – and workers need clear leadership.

Where are you currently with your company and your team, and where do you want to go? Perhaps you are asking yourself (consciously or unconsciously) the following questions:

- To what extent can I lead positively in my area – or do I primarily expect obedience and compliance with rules?
- Are risks really discussed openly in our company – or do many people prefer to keep quiet to avoid getting into trouble?
- Are we able to communicate prevention rules in such a way that they are understood and seen as meaningful – or do we often only experience formal compliance?
- Do my employees see the culture of prevention as a personal responsibility – or more as a compulsory exercise imposed from above?
- Is success in the culture of prevention made visible?
- How can I promote Positive Leadership and a culture of participation if my own manager does not exemplify these values – or even rejects them?

If you recognize that there is *room for improvement* in these areas, then this guide is just what you need – to further develop your own leadership skills and support your managers in empowering employees at all levels in the best possible way.

Positive Leadership: what leadership needs today?

Good leadership in the context of Vision Zero does not mean stricter control but rather enabling greater trust. It is not about simply avoiding mistakes, but about nurturing potential. And it is not just about enforcing rules, but about creating a culture of prevention with meaning, making safety, health and wellbeing tangible and promoting participation.

Positive Leadership describes this altered view of leadership. It is not directed against existing structures but complements them where systems reach their limits. The focus is no longer on the question: “How do I prevent misconduct?” but rather: “What do people need to act responsibly and preventively?”

This changes the perspective. Away from deficit-oriented thinking and towards an attitude that recognizes strengths, enables social dialogue and builds trust. Positive Leadership focuses on effectiveness rather than control, on development rather than mere fulfilment.

The PERMA model describes five basic psychological needs that are important for motivation, wellbeing and responsible behaviour wherever people work:

- POSITIVE EMOTIONS promote emotional stability and openness.
- ENGAGEMENT arises when people can use their strengths.
- RELATIONSHIPS – trusting relationships – enable honest communication.
- MEANING provides orientation and strengthens a sense of responsibility.
- ACCOMPLISHMENT makes progress visible and motivates participation.

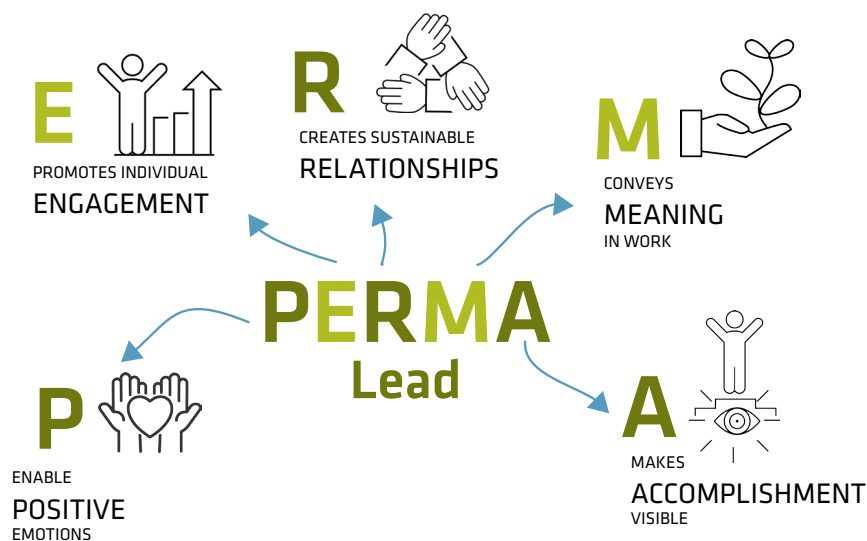
These factors are not effective on their own – they can be specifically strengthened through leadership. This is exactly where the PERMA-Lead model comes in.

Shaping Positive Leadership in concrete terms

PERMA-Lead transfers these five elements to strengthen your leadership behaviour. It makes it clear that Positive Leadership can specifically create conditions under which safety, health, wellbeing and motivation can develop sustainably.

You can establish Positive Leadership with PERMA-Lead as a pragmatic hands-on tool in your company and use it yourself. It helps you to create conditions under which people work safely, healthily and with full commitment – regardless of industry or cultural background. It describes exactly what this first golden rule means: “Take leadership”.

This guide takes you through these five elements step by step. Each section shows how you can make a big impact with small, targeted changes in your leadership culture – fully in line with Vision Zero.



Source: Ebner (2019).

How to work with this guide

This guide is aimed directly at you as a manager. It shows how you can actively promote safety, health, wellbeing and motivation through your daily leadership behaviour using Positive Leadership.

This guide answers three questions:

- 1) What are the benefits of implementing Vision Zero with Positive Leadership?**
- 2) Why is it important for a culture of prevention?**
- 3) What can you do in concrete terms?**

You will find a compact self-assessment traffic light checklist for your own Positive Leadership behaviour. This allows you to check where you and your company are already doing well – and where development is possible and necessary.



P

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

ENABLE POSITIVE EMOTIONS – A culture of prevention begins with feelings

Emotions are always present. People do not only act rationally, but also emotionally. They do not make decisions based solely on rules, but also on their current inner state: stress, trust, exhaustion – or joy, clarity and a sense of belonging. This emotional state has a direct influence on behaviour in everyday working life.

Positive emotions represent pleasant emotional states such as joy, pride, gratitude, confidence or serenity. These states are not trivial – they are psychological resources that form the basis for motivation, performance and social openness.

As a manager, you play a key role in determining whether such emotions can arise. Through your attitude, your language and your interaction with people, you set the tone – consciously or unconsciously. In doing so, you influence how your employees feel.

Why is this important for the culture of prevention?

Positive emotions have been proven to expand the scope of thought and action. They increase receptivity, promote more flexible thinking, make people more communicative and improve their ability to deal with the unexpected. In practice, this means that people who feel emotionally secure recognise hazards earlier, address uncertainties more quickly and participate more actively in prevention processes.¹

The opposite is just as relevant: in a climate of fear, uncertainty or chronic tension, the likelihood of errors increases and risks are more likely. People withdraw, do not address problems and avoid responsibility. Emotional instability can increase risk, especially in safety-critical areas.

In concrete terms, this means: Positive emotions...

- strengthen attention and concentration;
- reduce stress and improve error handling;
- increase willingness to comply with safety rules;
- promote openness, feedback and willingness to learn;
- strengthen trust – in oneself, in the team and in leadership.²³

Emotional safety is therefore not a “soft” addition to physical safety – it is its foundation.



What can you do in concrete terms?

Positive emotions do not arise on their own. They require specific conditions – and role models. As a manager, you can provide many small but effective stimuli in everyday life to strengthen emotional stability:

- Start the day on a positive note. A short sentence of appreciation or some good news gives energy.
- Talk about what is going well. Not to cover up problems, but to highlight sources of strength.
- Allow humour. Lightness relaxes – even in challenging situations.
- Make success visible. Even small steps forward deserve attention.
- Remain approachable. Your emotional clarity gives the team stability, especially when incidents occur.
- Show appreciation. Be honest, specific and regular – this strengthens self-esteem and a sense of belonging.
- Use language consciously. Formulate in a solution-oriented way instead of focusing on problems.

Positive Leadership means providing emotional prevention – not just physical safety. You create a climate in which thinking and sharing responsibility can flourish.

The effect of positive emotions on prevention culture and behaviour





Your key takeaway as a manager

You do not have to establish an “always keep smiling” policy – but you can create conditions that encourage positive emotions. By acknowledging what is going well, ensuring emotional stability and seeing your employees as people, you not only improve the working atmosphere – you also strengthen your teams’ prevention culture behaviour. This makes prevention human – and effective.



Tips from practice



“Don’t always jump straight into the problem – connect with the person first.”

Start meetings with a simple question such as: “What went well?”
This puts the team in a solution-oriented state – before getting into content or challenges.

1. Shift-start “Green Moment” (≤2 minutes).



At the start of each shift, one crew member shares a small positive moment from last shift (e.g. “great handover,” “cleaned walkway prevented a slip”). Supervisor closes with a sincere thank-you naming the behaviour.



Why it works: Fast boost to emotional stability under tough conditions; anchors safe behaviours in pride and recognition; improves attention in hazardous environments.

2. “Kudos & Learnings Board” (at the Gemba)



Set up a board with two columns: “Kudos”⁴ (short, specific thank-you for safe behaviour) and “Made Easier” (small changes that reduced effort or risk). Every shift, add at least one note. In the daily huddle, read out the top two.



Why it works: It makes small safety wins visible (including “nothing happened” shifts), supports a calm, cooperative climate, and ties positive feelings to concrete safe practices.

Traffic light checklist: POSITIVE EMOTIONS – Enable positive emotions

How to use (60 seconds per week):

1. Rate each statement.
2. Add one evidence note (a name, example, or metric).
3. Choose one ○ ○ ○ and write a micro-step you will do before a set date (e.g. “Add 30-sec check-in to Monday toolbox talk – by 18 Nov”).

○ **Already well implemented**
 ○ **Room for improvement**
 ○ **Action required**

Statement	Rating	Evidence/ notes	Next micro- step (by...)
I open shifts/meetings with a short positive check-in or acknowledgement.	○ ○ ○		
I allow humour and lightness without trivializing risks or incidents.	○ ○ ○		
I give specific appreciation weekly (who/what impact) - not only for top performance.	○ ○ ○		
I spot signs of emotional strain early (e.g. after an incident) and address them 1:1.	○ ○ ○		
I reflect on my own emotional state under pressure and adjust when needed.	○ ○ ○		
I make small wins visible (e.g. accident-free week, clean handover) and mark them.	○ ○ ○		
I acknowledge positive trends promptly (e.g. improved housekeeping, better PPE use).	○ ○ ○		
I keep my language constructive when raising problems or non-compliance.	○ ○ ○		
I have a current pulse in my team mood (how people feel today/this week).	○ ○ ○		
I share one positive observation from my own day/work each week.	○ ○ ○		

E

NGAGEMENT

Promoting individual ENGAGEMENT – culture of prevention through a focus on strengths

Committed employees are more attentive, responsible and proactive – especially in prevention-related situations. They recognize risks early on, respond in a considered manner and take responsibility without always needing clear instructions.⁵ However, commitment cannot be demanded or commanded. It arises when people feel that they can make a difference and are allowed to do so.⁶

Engagement is the feeling of being fully motivated and focused on the task at hand. It describes a state of genuine connection with the task: focused, interested, competent, self-effective. This state arises when people are allowed to use their strengths.

The key here is to focus on strengths. They are not just what someone is good at, but what they enjoy doing and complete with energy. This can be assertiveness, but also diligence, perseverance or a keen eye for detail. Engagement arises when people are allowed to use their individual strengths in an environment that is familiar to them and gives them space.

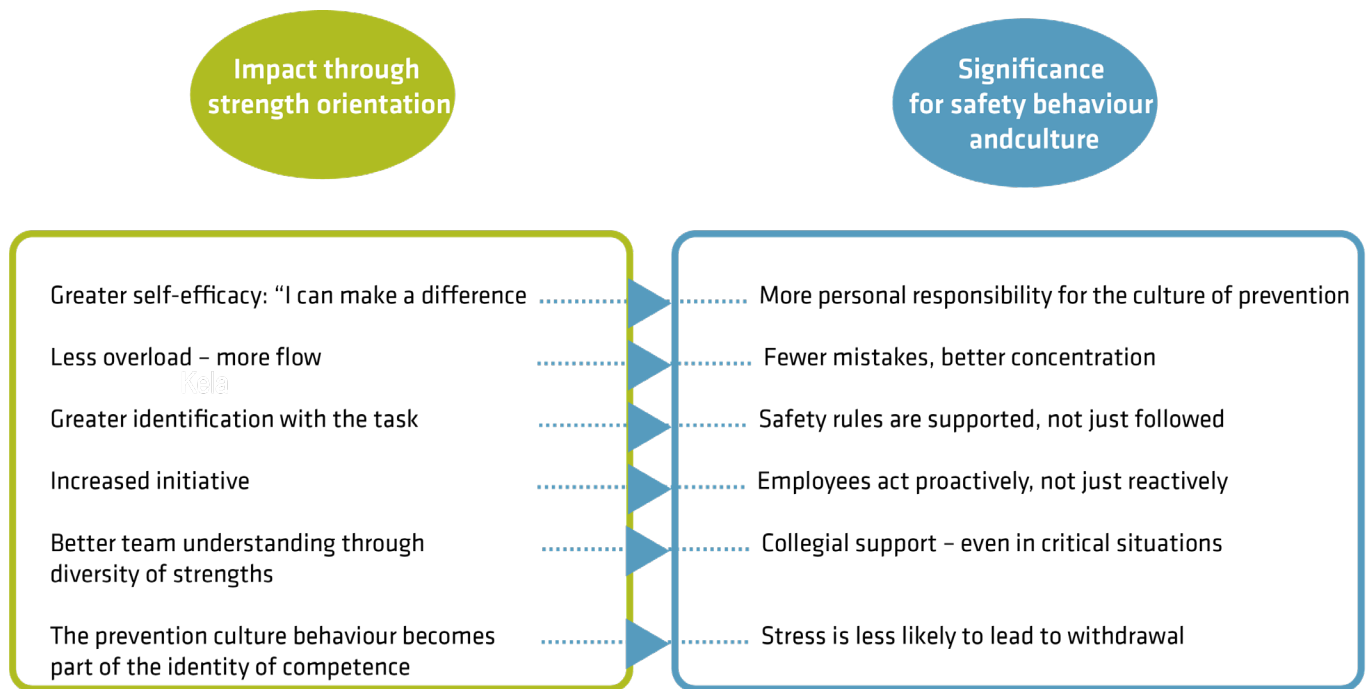
What strengths look like in practice

Strengths are energy-giving patterns of behaviour that show up under pressure –e.g. prudence (planning ahead), self-regulation (sticking to procedures), teamwork (early coordination), and honesty (reporting near-misses). For Vision Zero, these strengths reduce shortcuts, stabilize behaviour in high-risk moments, and enable peer monitoring and speaking-up. As a manager, look and listen for these cues in daily work and briefings– then name them explicitly and align tasks so people can use them where risk is highest.

Why is this important for a culture of prevention?

When employees take on tasks that match their strengths, they are more focused, less stressed and emotionally more stable. They feel more secure – both internally and in their actions. Those who feel competent remain calmer even in stressful situations, make clearer decisions and recognize hazards more quickly. This self-confidence acts as an inner safety net. Where commitment is possible, the likelihood of errors decreases – and the willingness to actively take on responsibility increases.

The impact of strength-based leadership on the prevention culture behaviour



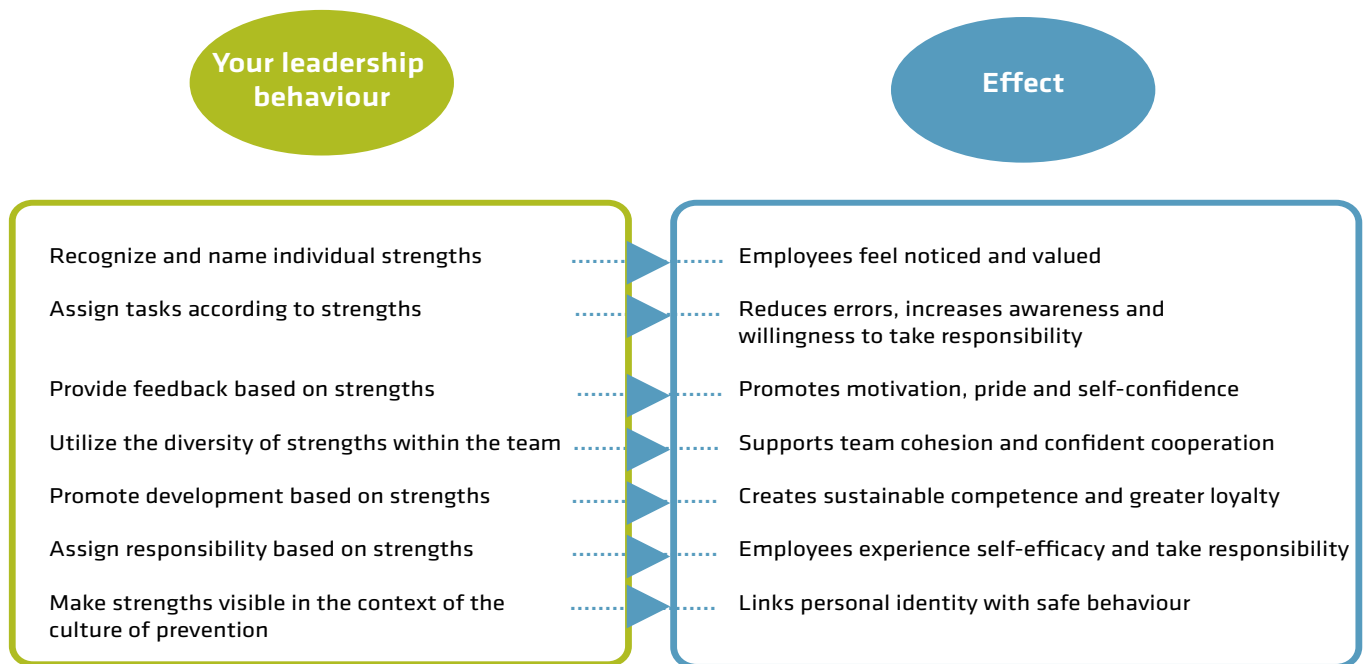
What can you do in concrete terms?

As a manager, you cannot generate commitment – but you can encourage it in a targeted manner. The first step is to recognize and identify strengths. When people feel that they are being noticed, their motivation grows. If you tailor tasks to individual abilities, give strengths-based feedback and enable development, you will create a culture in which people identify with what they do.

Strengths that protect people (for a quick scan)

e.g. Prudence · Self-Regulation · Perseverance · Judgment · Teamwork · Leadership · Humility · Honesty · Social Intelligence · Love of Learning

Strengths spotting: Use them as observation labels in walk-arounds and briefings.



Your key takeaway as a manager

Commitment arises where people feel effective. Not through orders – but through trust. Strength-based leadership means looking at where employees thrive – beyond performance indicators. Those who place trust in others activate personal responsibility. Those who enable development make the culture of prevention a shared concern.

This attitude is not a “nice-to-have” – it is a key safety factor. People who feel noticed and needed get involved – with their heads, hearts and hands.



Tips from practice

“Strengths are often recognized in everyday life – not in employee questionnaires.”

Pay attention to who finds certain tasks easy. This is a good indication of strength. This is where commitment grows – and this is exactly where a culture of prevention begins.

1. Strengths Handover, 5-minute variant



Context: Shift change underground or at the pit face.

How: In the handover, each supervisor names one task-critical strength in the incoming crew (“Kai’s eye for detail on belt checks; Amira’s calm in alarms”) and assigns the matching micro-responsibility for that shift.

Script: “Today’s criticals: belt junctions 3/7 and gas checks. Kai, your precision—please own J-3. Amira, you lead the alarm drill recap.”



Why it works: When tasks are closely matched to people’s strengths, there are fewer mistakes, accountability becomes clearer, and personal ownership increases.

Signal to track (weekly): Number of handover-assigned strengths vs. generic assignments; near-miss rate at those assets.

2. Two-Strengths Pairing



Context: High-tempo line or cell.

How: During the most critical 30-minute windows (for example during changeovers or start-up), schedule two operators whose strengths complement each other. One person might be especially strong in detail focus (spotting small deviations, following checklists precisely), while the other is strong in anticipation and planning (thinking ahead, seeing possible risks before they appear). Together, they catch more errors early, make safer decisions, and keep the process stable.

Script: “Changeover in 10. Sara, your meticulous setup; Tom, your forward scanning—work as a pair. Sara checks tolerances; Tom preps next batch & verifies guards.”



Why it works: Complementarity reduces cognitive overload and catches edge cases.

Signal to track (per changeover): Setup time variance and first-pass yield; note pairs used.

Traffic light checklist: ENGAGEMENT – Promoting individual Engagement through strengths

How to use (60 seconds per week):

1. Rate each statement.
2. Add one evidence note (a name, example, or metric).
3. Choose one ○ ○ ○ and write a micro-step you will do before a set date (e.g. “Add 30-sec check-in to Monday toolbox talk – by 18 Nov”).

○ **Already well implemented**
 ○ **Room for improvement**
 ○ **Action required**

Statement	Rating	Evidence/ Next micro-step (by...)
I know the individual strengths of my employees – and I refer to them specifically.	○ ○ ○	
I give strengths-based feedback (“That’s one of your strengths – thank you for that impact”).	○ ○ ○	
I assign prevention-related tasks according to strengths (e.g. checks, briefings, mentoring).	○ ○ ○	
I encourage development along strengths, not only correcting deficits.	○ ○ ○	
I discuss with the team how our strengths support the culture of prevention in daily work.	○ ○ ○	
I factor strengths into task assignment and shift allocation.	○ ○ ○	
I create safe practice spaces to try new tasks and grow strengths.	○ ○ ○	
I run team formats where strengths are deliberately applied (e.g. strengths pair-ups).	○ ○ ○	
I promote self-organized work based on individual strengths.	○ ○ ○	
I onboard new employees so they can use their strengths early.	○ ○ ○	

Creating sustainable RELATIONSHIPS – Trust fosters a culture of prevention

A culture of prevention is not purely a technical or organizational matter – it arises from social interaction. When people feel seen, heard and taken seriously, they act more attentively, responsibly and with foresight.⁷ Trust within a team is an invisible but effective protective factor.

As a manager, you shape the relationship culture through your daily behaviour: Do you listen or interrupt? Do you accept criticism or reject it? Do you pay attention to each other or look away?

In a trusting atmosphere, openness, commitment and a willingness to take responsibility grow. In a tense or distant environment, on the other hand, withdrawal, silence and uncertainty prevail.

The Relationships dimension is about managers building sustainable, reliable, and respectful relationships. This means more than just sympathy: it is about stable bonds characterized by mutual appreciation and trust. People feel secure in such relationships – especially when they have questions, make mistakes or experience critical situations.

This emotional safety is a prerequisite for dialogue, participation and willingness to change – even when it comes to sensitive issues such as the prevention culture behaviour or mistakes.

Reliability and commitment play a central role here: employees must be able to trust that managers will keep their word and act consistently – not arbitrarily, but predictably and fairly.

Why is this important for the culture of prevention?

In teams with a strong relationship culture, uncertainties are addressed early on because there is no fear of negative consequences.⁸ Things do not just “work”; everyone thinks things through together. Managers are seen as approachable, not as unapproachable authorities. This creates a culture in which prevention is not controlled but supported.

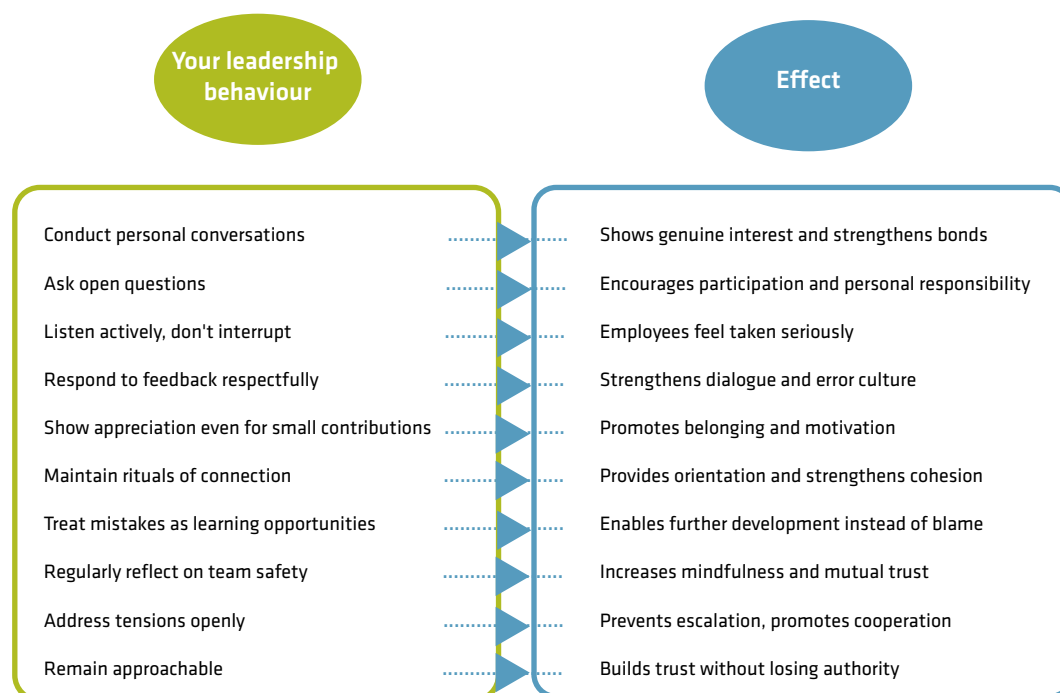
The impact of strong relationships on a culture of prevention

Quality of relationships within the team	Significance for a culture of prevention behaviour
Trust in managers	Risks are reported – without fear
Mutual respect	Colleagues intervene when things get critical
Attentive communication	Conflicts are discussed openly
A shared sense of responsibility	The culture of prevention at work is seen as a team responsibility
Emotional belonging	Rules are supported, not just followed
Appreciation for commitment	Commitment is strengthened – also preventively
Space for open dialogue	Criticism and suggestions for improvement are welcome
Reliable cooperation	Greater confidence in stressful situations
Error-tolerant – “everything is fine” climate	Learning from mistakes – instead of keeping quiet and blaming others
Approachable management	Prevention gets a face – not just a set of rules



What can you do in concrete terms?

Relationships don't happen by chance – they are the result of attentive leadership. Those who listen instead of reacting immediately, who regularly seek dialogue and show appreciation for even small contributions, create closeness and trust. Those who address tensions early on demonstrate responsibility – and thus also give others a sense of prevention.



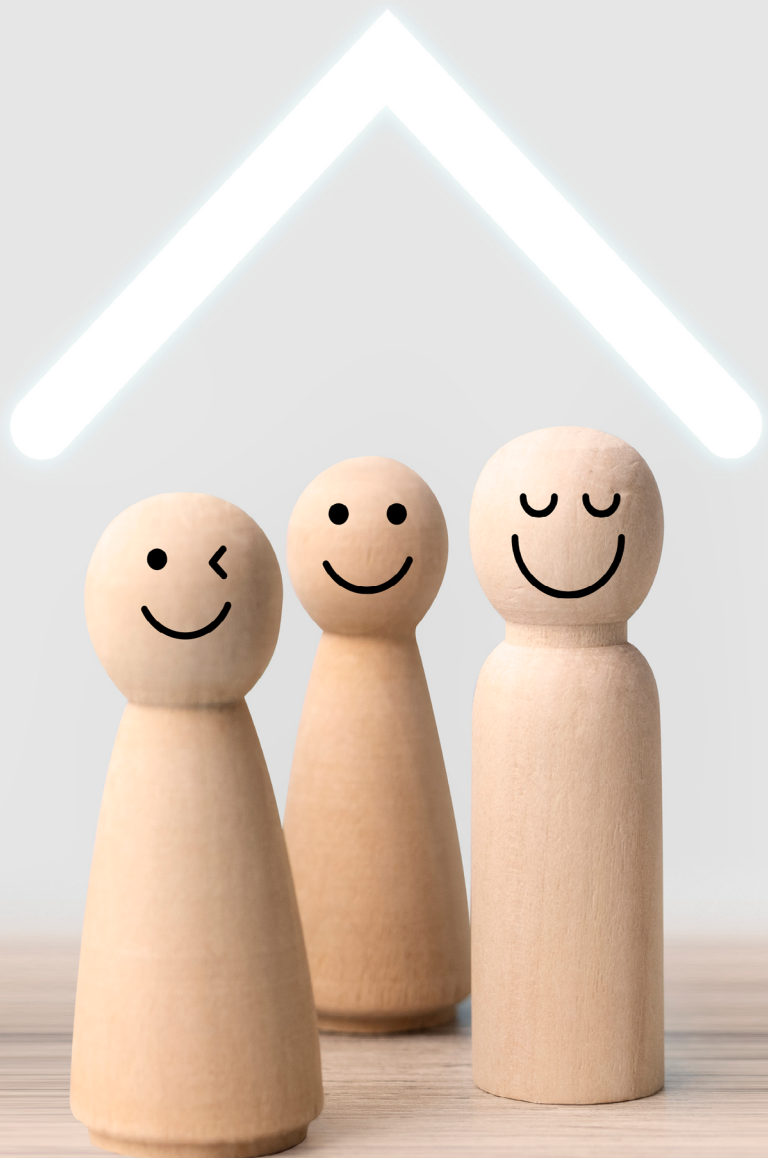


Your key takeaway as a manager

Strong relationships are the foundation for confident action and not only a soft topic. People who feel connected to their team report risks, take responsibility and actively support their colleagues.² Trust is the basis on which a culture of prevention can grow – without it, every rule is meaningless.

Relationship-oriented leadership means:

- Showing presence – not just exercising control.
- Enabling dialogue – not just passing on information.
- Being approachable – even when nothing is going wrong.



Tips from practice



“Relationships are like safety nets for prevention – you only realize how important they are when you need them.”

Make a conscious effort to take time for genuine encounters: a quick visit to the shop floor, a sincere “thank you” or an enquiry can build more trust than other measures. It is precisely in critical moments that the true strength of relationships becomes apparent – and how much they contribute to a culture of prevention.

“Handover ‘Risks-Buddy-Thanks’ Loop”



Context: Shift handovers in a hospital are moments where misunderstandings can easily lead to drops in patient safety and prevention.

How: For each patient, the nurse who is handing over briefly covers three points:

- Risk: one key concern for this patient.
- Buddy: the colleague to contact first if the situation worsens.
- Thanks: one specific appreciation for how a teammate helped in the last shift.

The receiving nurse then gives a short repeat-back (about five seconds) to confirm understanding. The team lead tracks completed “Risks-Buddy-Thanks” handovers on a small whiteboard.

Example (≈45 seconds): “Room 12: Risk – unstable blood pressure after the diuretic. Buddy – call Priya first if systolic falls below 90. Thanks – Tom spotted the early downward trend yesterday. Priya, can you repeat that back?”



Why it works: This simple ritual builds appreciation into everyday work, which strengthens relationships. Naming a buddy makes it clear who to contact first under pressure. The repeat-back creates a shared mental picture of the patient’s situation. The result: stronger cohesion and fewer handover errors.

Signals to track (monthly): Percentage of handovers with all three elements plus repeat-back:

- Average time from early signs of deterioration to escalation.
- Number of incidents linked to handovers.
- Pulse item: “In my team, people have each other’s back” (percentage who agree).

Traffic light checklist: RELATIONSHIPS – Creating sustainable relationships

How to use (60 seconds per week):

1. Rate each statement.
2. Add one evidence note (a name, example, or metric).
3. Choose one ○ ○ ○ and write a micro-step you will do before a set date (e.g. “Add 30-sec check-in to Monday toolbox talk – by 18 Nov”).

○ **Already well implemented**
 ○ **Room for improvement**
 ○ **Action required**

Statement	Rating	Evidence/ notes	Next micro- step (by...)
I regularly hold personal 1:1 conversations with my employees.	○ ○ ○		
I ask open questions that invite thinking and participation.	○ ○ ○		
I listen actively without jumping in to correct or judge.	○ ○ ○		
I respond to feedback and comments in an appreciative manner and follow up.	○ ○ ○		
I cultivate rituals that promote connection and team spirit.	○ ○ ○		
I am visible and present for my team – not merely “available”.	○ ○ ○		
I make it clear that mistakes are an opportunity to learn, not to be punished.	○ ○ ○		
I involve the team in prevention-culture matters.	○ ○ ○		
I recognize tensions early on and actively address them.	○ ○ ○		
I act empathetically and fairly, even in difficult situations.	○ ○ ○		

M

EANING

Conveying MEANING in work

Meaning is what makes work more than just a tedious duty. It answers the question, “Why am I doing this?” – and it is precisely this question that determines whether your employees support safety rules or merely follow them, whether they think for themselves or switch off internally.

Meaning acts as an emotional anchor, a motivating force and a moral compass – especially when external structures come under pressure. People do not automatically act preventively. They need clarity about why their actions are important – and what they are responsible for.

In work on the culture of prevention, this means that only those who understand why a measure is important will see it as a contribution rather than a burden.

Meaning is experiencing meaning and significance in one’s own work. Managers play a central role here: they can help to establish a connection between their own actions and the larger goal.

This cannot be achieved through appeals, but through genuine interest, clear communication and consciously addressing the “why”. Employees then experience: “I am not just executing – I am contributing.”

Why is this important for the culture of prevention?

When people see meaning in their work, their behaviour changes. They work more attentively, take responsibility and remain committed even in difficult situations. Rules are not perceived as a burden, but as part of a common goal.¹⁰

Effect of meaning orientation on safety behaviour

Aspect of meaning	Significance for a culture of prevention
Recognizing contribution to something bigger	Rules are perceived as meaningful, not just as obligations
Experiencing safety measures as a contribution to others	Responsibility is actively assumed
Value-oriented communication	Trust in leadership grows
Establish a connection between measures and effects	Motivation increases, cynicism decreases
Clear stance on the part of managers	Promotes acceptance of rules

When there is no meaning ...

...the prevention culture suffers noticeably:

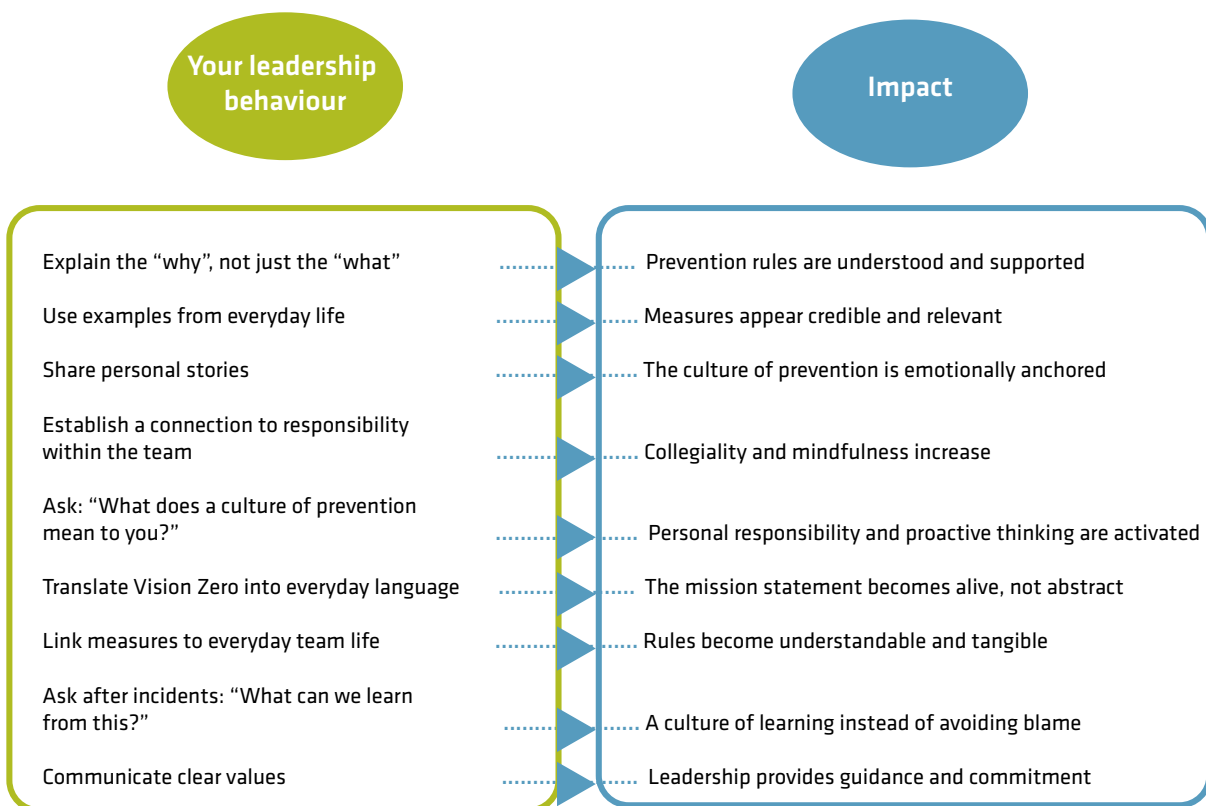
- measures are carried out mechanically, without reflection.
- participation declines – cynicism increases.
- safety rules are observed formally but not supported.
- changes are met with fatigue instead of interest.¹¹



What can you do in concrete terms?

Meaning does not arise by itself – you must make it visible. Meaning arises from connection, not from appeals.

By focusing on the “why,” you provide guidance. By explaining why a culture of prevention measures is important, you create meaning beyond the rules. By showing the contribution employees make, you lend their work weight. As a result, preventive behaviour is not just practiced – it is actively supported.





Your key takeaway as a manager

Meaning does not arise from appeals – it arises from connection. When you clarify the link between tasks and their impact, between measures and people, and between goals and everyday work, the culture of prevention is experienced as meaningful – not as an additional burden.

Meaning-oriented leadership means:

- Clearly communicate what something stands for.
- Engage people – don't just inform them.
- Convey the culture of prevention as a contribution – not as control.





Tips from practice

Meaning has the greatest impact when it is reflected upon as a group.

Ask your team regularly:

“Why is this important?”

“What are we doing this for – in concrete terms?”

This makes meaning tangible – and duty turns into participation.

1. 30-Second Why in Toolbox Talks



Context: Start-of-shift briefing or toolbox talk.

How: Leader states in one sentence who is protected by today’s tasks, links one task to a core value (care/responsibility), and names one recent micro-win.

Script (30s): “Why today matters: ventilation checks keep night crews and contractors safe. Value: responsibility. Yesterday’s win–Zero dust alarms after the filter swap. Same focus today.”



Why it works: Makes the beneficiary and purpose salient ➤ higher intrinsic motivation, better rule adherence under time pressure.

Signal to track (weekly): % briefings including a “who is protected” line; quality notes from safety conversations; deviation rate on the highlighted task.

2. Golden-Thread Tags on Work Orders



Context: Permits-to-work, maintenance tickets, or line changeovers.

How: Add a 7-10-word purpose tag to each critical work order: “This prevents [specific harm] for [specific people].” Read it aloud at handover.

Script (20s): “Purpose tag–Guard refit prevents hand injury on Cell B for shift C. Check interlocks after install.”



Why it works: Connects routine tasks to real-world protection, sharpening attention at the exact risk point.

Signal to track (per week): % critical orders with a purpose tag; first-pass compliance on permits; near-miss rate on tagged assets

Traffic light checklist: MEANING – Conveying meaning in work

How to use (60 seconds per week):

1. Rate each statement.
2. Add one evidence note (a name, example, or metric).
3. Choose one ○ ○ ○ and write a micro-step you will do before a set date (e.g. “Add 30-sec check-in to Monday toolbox talk – by 18 Nov.”).

○ **Already well implemented**
 ○ **Room for improvement**
 ○ **Action required**

Statement	Rating	Evidence/ notes	Next micro- step (by...)
I regularly discuss the “why” behind measures that promote a culture of prevention.	○ ○ ○		
I tell real stories about successful prevention (“storytelling”) from our context.	○ ○ ○		
I present Vision Zero as a meaningful goal – not as a slogan.	○ ○ ○		
I link the culture of prevention goals to our core values.	○ ○ ○		
I discuss with the team what a culture of prevention means to them personally.	○ ○ ○		
I take doubts seriously and talk about the reasons behind measures.	○ ○ ○		
I encourage people to think for themselves instead of just enforcing rules.	○ ○ ○		
I highlight successes that have contributed to the culture of prevention through conscious behaviour.	○ ○ ○		
I explain changes in the culture of prevention clearly and simply.	○ ○ ○		
I actively involve the team in communicating the meaning behind changes.	○ ○ ○		

A

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Making ACCOMPLISHMENT visible

A culture of prevention is not only created by rules, technology or control – but also by the feeling of being effective. People behave more safely when they experience:

“My efforts count. I make a difference.”

In prevention, much remains invisible – because when nothing happens, it often seems as if nothing has happened. But it is precisely this “nothing” that is the result of good, attentive work.

Every accident-free day is a success – but only if it is experienced as such.

When there is no sense of achievement, motivation and responsibility decline. People then adhere to guidelines, but not out of conviction, but out of routine. Conversely, visible effectiveness strengthens confidence in one’s own competence – and in the purpose of safety, health and wellbeing measures.¹²

Accomplishment is the experience of progress, goal attainment and effectiveness in one’s own actions. It describes the feeling: “I have accomplished something – and it has made a difference.”

In everyday management, this means that successes do not have to be big – but they must be noticeable. Especially in the context of the culture of prevention, where good work is often equated with the absence of incidents, leadership is needed to make visible what would otherwise remain hidden.

Link to proactive leading indicators: to make accomplishment visible, track proactive leading indicators as recommended in the ISSA Vision Zero *Proactive Leading Indicators* Guide (e.g. quality of near-miss reports, stop-work activations, corrective actions closed, learning-team reviews completed, prevention conversations held). Show these as simple weekly/monthly progress counters so teams see their impact – not just lagging injury rates. Recognize improvements in briefings and ask, “What enabled this?” to turn visibility into learning.

Why is this important for the culture of prevention?

When progress is not recognized, commitment declines – even among motivated teams. Leadership that recognizes, names and shares success not only strengthens the prevention culture behaviour, but also emotional attachment and identification with common goals.

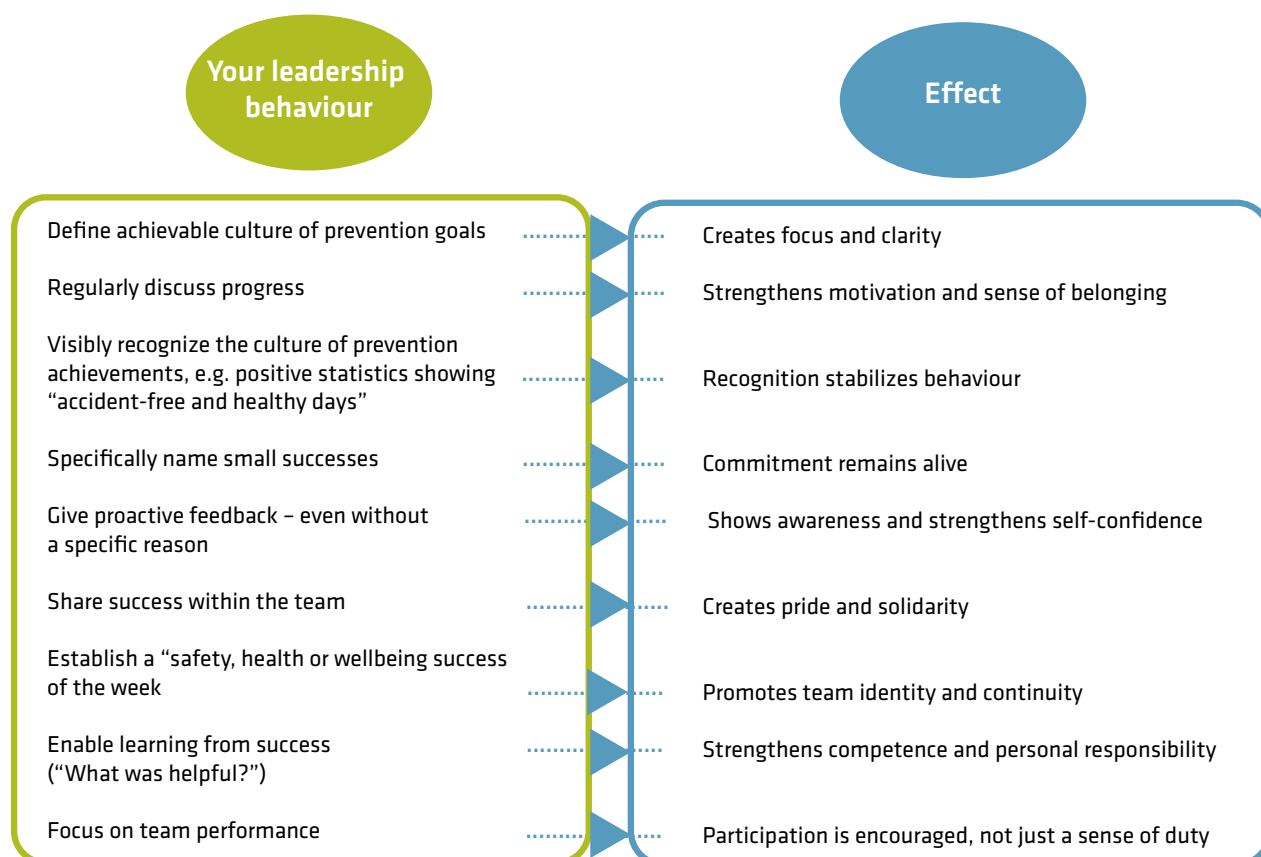
Impact of accomplishment on the prevention culture behaviour

Aspects of accomplishment	Significance for a culture of prevention
Achievable culture of prevention goals	Orientation and clear expectations
Regular reflection on progress	Motivation is maintained
Positive feedback	Strengthens desired behaviour in the long term
Make small successes visible	Prevention becomes concrete and credible
Experience personal effectiveness	Increases sense of responsibility
Emphasizes team performance	Growing sense of unity and participation
Celebrate progress together	The culture of prevention work becomes emotionally anchored
Make lessons learned visible	Learning culture instead of blame
Use visualizations (e.g. progress charts)	The culture of prevention becomes tangible and measurable



What can you do in concrete terms?

As a manager, you determine whether success in everyday work goes noticed or unnoticed. Often, it is small gestures, clear words or rituals that have a big impact:





Your key takeaway as a manager

Confident behaviour is often quiet – but it needs reinforcement. People remain committed when they experience:

“What I do makes a difference.”

Leadership that not only recognizes success but also makes it visible ensures that the culture of prevention is not lost in paperwork but is felt in everyday work.

This not only boosts morale but also makes prevention more sustainable.



Tips from practice



Don't just point out what's wrong – say more often:

"That was great – that's exactly what will help us move forward." A sentence like this often has a stronger effect than any instruction.

After all, a culture of prevention requires not only commitment – it also requires pride.

1. Leading-Indicator Counter Board (5-minute Friday)



Context: Weekly wrap-up at the board/on the shop floor (Gemba).

How: Track 4-6 proactive leading indicators (for example: safety conversations held, near-miss reports with good descriptions, stop-work decisions, corrective actions completed on time, learning-team reviews completed). Update the counters live and name 1-2 people whose actions moved a counter.

Script: "This week: 18 safety conversations (+4), 6 near-misses with learning, 3 stop-works, 5 corrective actions on time, 1 learning-team review. Shout-out: Amir's stop-work on Line 2 prevented a jam—counter +1."



Why it works: Visible progress creates a sense of effectiveness; teams see that prevention is measurable, not just about past injury rates.

Signal to track (weekly): Trend for each leading indicator; percentage of meetings with a live update; number of named contributions.

2. 48-Hour CAPA (Corrective and Preventive Action) Close-and-Show



Context: After an incident, near-miss, or audit finding.

How: Commit to closing at least one corrective action within 48 hours and show the result at the workplace (photo "before/after," one-line learning). Name the owner and link the action to who is protected.

Script: "Corrective action closed in 42 hours: guard realigned on Cell B. Before/after here. Owner: Jess. Protected: night-shift hands. One rule reminder: verify the interlock after any guard work."



Why it works: Fast, visible wins increase trust and ownership and reduce cynicism ("nothing changes").

Signal to track (weekly): Percentage of corrective actions closed within 48 hours; repeat rate of the same deviation; number of "Close-and-Show" spots per week.

Traffic light checklist: ACCOMPLISHMENT – Making accomplishments visible

How to use (60 seconds per week):

1. Rate each statement.
2. Add one evidence note (a name, example, or metric).
3. Choose one ○ ○ ○ and write a micro-step you will do before a set date (e.g. “Add 30-sec check-in to Monday toolbox talk – by 18 Nov.”).

○ **Already well implemented**
○ **Room for improvement**
○ **Action required**

Statement	Rating	Evidence/ notes	Next micro- step (by...)
I formulate achievable culture of prevention goals with my team.	○ ○ ○		
I make progress visible regularly – including small wins.	○ ○ ○		
I promote a feedback culture where positive contributions are shared, not only gaps.	○ ○ ○		
I enable the team to set their own goals and track them.	○ ○ ○		
I document and share lessons learned after tasks, audits or incidents.	○ ○ ○		
I use short rituals to reflect on success together (e.g. “win of the week”).	○ ○ ○		
I use simple visuals (e.g. charts/boards) to show development over time.	○ ○ ○		
I give constructive, motivating feedback that reinforces desired behaviours.	○ ○ ○		
I support learning from both successes and mistakes.	○ ○ ○		
I regularly emphasize the impact of our safety behaviour (incl. “nothing happened wins”).	○ ○ ○		

Psychological safety – The result of a positive leadership culture

Positive Leadership shows how leadership can shape emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment in a positive and preventative way. When these elements are practiced consistently, they culminate in one decisive outcome: psychological safety.

It is a factor that determines whether your employees dare to get involved, express ideas or point out mistakes. Where Positive Leadership is practiced, a climate is created in which safety is not only observed but shared by everyone and health and wellbeing is the consequence.

What is psychological safety?

Employees can say what they think without fear of negative consequences.

They express doubts, give feedback and report risks – not because they have to, but because they feel trusted.

In such a climate, the following emerge:

- responsibility without compulsion
- learning without blame
- participation without fear

Social dialogue becomes possible. A constructive exchange between managers, employees, the works council and management can develop – openly, respectfully and on an equal footing. In a culture of psychological safety, safety is not controlled but shaped together. It becomes the result of an attitude in which responsibility is shared, criticism is allowed, and development is encouraged.



What can you do in concrete terms?

You don't have to "introduce" psychological safety. It arises through your daily behaviour and communication:

Leadership impulse	Effect on social dialogue
Ask open questions instead of judging	Promotes trust and willingness to talk
Address mistakes as learning opportunities	Reduces fear, strengthens openness
Allow and contextualize criticism	Enables participation
Admit your own uncertainties	Creates closeness and lowers hierarchical barriers
Regularly reflect on team safety	Embeds responsibility in everyday life



Your key takeaway as a manager

Psychological safety comes from your daily leadership behaviour – not from announcements, but from your attitude.

If you consciously create space for feedback, allow critical issues to be raised and show that every voice counts, you will create a working environment in which responsibility is shared.

Reliability, attentiveness and genuine interest are not “extras” here, but crucial prerequisites for a culture of prevention that works.



Tips from practice

“It’s not those who dish it out who are capable of taking criticism – it’s those who listen.”

If your employees feel comfortable saying, “I’m not sure if that was safe,” you have achieved more than with any checklist. Psychological safety does not start with rules – it starts with relationships and trust.

Fostering Vision Zero

The previous sections show what Positive Leadership based on the PERMA elements means. They show how you, as an organization and manager, can take concrete steps to effectively develop, train and embed a positive prevention culture.

Positive Leadership requires more than conviction – it requires structure, training and a clear development path.

That is why we are introducing five practical steps and accompanying training ideas here. Whether you are a manager, team leader or HR manager, this guide will help you turn your attitude into action. We have supplemented it with specific training ideas and effective leadership formats such as Positive Leadership Walk Rounds as practical tools for you.

Quick start: Micro-steps for busy managers

➔ **Start with one micro-goal for the next 14 days.**

Examples: 1) Name one observed strength in every daily briefing; 2) Run one 30-second stop-moment before non-standard tasks; 3) Hold one five-minute prevention conversation per day; 4) Log three learning notes per week (near-misses or good catches); 5) Close one corrective action within 48 hours each week.

➔ **Use a simple counter/whiteboard to make these leading indicators visible.**

➔ **Micro-goal formula: “When [trigger], I will [behaviour] for [duration], tracked by [indicator].”**

➔ **Weekly cadence: 15-minute learning huddle (What protected someone? Whose strength helped? One improvement for tomorrow).**

Step 1 Perceive & understand

Goal: Make the existing leadership culture visible – create awareness

Specific steps:

- Analyse the current leadership culture (e.g. employee feedback, interviews, observation)
- Initial self-reflection: “How do I lead – and with what effect?”
- Introduction to Positive Leadership and the 5 PERMA-Lead elements (e.g. short workshops, e-learning)
- Prevention culture screening with a focus on psychological safety

Recommended tools:

- Traffic light checklist “Leadership behaviour in a prevention context” (in each chapter of this guide)
- Employee feedback on perceptions of leadership and prevention

Step 2 Prioritize & position

Goal: Create clarity about areas for action – make strategic decisions

Specific steps:

- Evaluate and prioritize results (e.g. “improve error culture”, “promote strengths”)
- Management committee decides: “What do we want to promote?”
- Internal communication: “Why are we changing leadership?”
- Visible commitment from top management

Recommended tools:

- Kick-off workshop “Combining leadership and a culture of prevention”
- Development roadmap for a Positive Leadership culture

Step 3 Develop & test

Goal: Targeted training of leadership behaviour and implementation in everyday work

Specific steps:

- Development of a training programme (e.g. modular over 3-6 months)
- Practical training based on the Positive Leadership – with a focus on the culture of prevention
- Pilot phase with transfer tasks in everyday life
- Peer coaching or collegial consultation (e.g. tandem approach with OSH)

The 5-step path to Vision Zero

Accompanying training offers

Measure	Objective
Positive Leadership workshops	Understanding the model and approach
The culture of prevention dialogue training	Strengthen communication and feedback
Error culture seminars	Enabling learning from mistakes
Coaching & collegial advice	Reflect on personal development
E-learning & micro-impulses	Ensuring sustainability through repetition

Step 4 Anchoring & reinforcement

Goal: Embed Positive Leadership behaviour in the organization

Specific steps:

- Integration into existing HR and culture of prevention processes (e.g. annual reviews, target agreements, training)
- Measuring success with soft and hard indicators (e.g. PERMA values, accident data, feedback culture)
- Recognition and visibility: e.g. internal awards
- Storytelling: making leadership successes visible

Tools & inspiration:

- KPI dashboard for culture of prevention
- Positive Leadership walkarounds
- Build up internal collections of best practices

Step 5 Continuing learning & scaling

Goal: Keep the culture alive – ensure Positive Leadership in the long term

Specific steps:

- Establish reflection routines (e.g. dialogues with a focus on the culture of prevention)
- Qualify multipliers (e.g. Positive Leadership coaches, prevention culture mentors)
- Review formats and thematic culture cycles (“culture year”)
- International scaling: Consider transfer to other locations

Also useful:

- Exchange with other companies (e.g. benchmarks, learning partnerships)
- White paper or accompanying guide for managers with exercises, checklists, case studies

Positive Leadership not only changes the atmosphere within a team – it changes the culture throughout the entire company.

Those who develop leadership develop prevention. And those who combine prevention with meaning, participation and recognition achieve Vision Zero not only structurally, but also culturally.

Tool: Positive Leadership Walk Rounds: A practical format for prevention, dialogue and recognition

What is it?

Positive Leadership Walk Rounds (PosWR) are targeted on-site visits by managers with a clear focus: not on control or shortcomings, but on what is going well. They show presence, listen and consciously identify contributions, progress and positive behaviour in everyday work.

What is the goal?

PosWR promote a culture of prevention in practice – through genuine appreciation, relationship building and meaningful dialogue. Employees experience: “My performance counts. The culture of prevention is a shared concern.”

How it works

On a PosWR, you as a manager actively approach employees and ask them such questions as:

- What have you done particularly well recently?
- What has contributed to the culture of prevention – perhaps without anyone noticing?
- Who has done something that deserves recognition?

Important: Do not evaluate, just observe, acknowledge and listen. Small gestures and genuine attention often have a greater impact than large programmes.

Effect (Sexton et al., 2021):

- The culture of prevention is associated with positive experiences.
- The emotional connection to work increases.
- Employees are seen – not just monitored.
- Trust, team spirit and motivation grow.
- Early feedback improves processes – before anything happens.

Why it works

A study from 2021¹³ shows that PosWR increase the perception of a culture of prevention, promote teamwork, reduce emotional exhaustion – and even improve work-life balance. In short: leadership that strengthens and works.

Conclusion

Positive Leadership WalkRounds are not an extra, but a concrete leadership tool that brings Vision Zero into everyday life – directly, effectively and in a way that connects people.

Appendix: Employee feedback – Perception of leadership culture

Instructions

Please rate the 50 following statements honestly from your personal point of view. Use a scale from 1 = “does not apply at all” to 5 = “applies completely”.

How this pairs with your leader self-assessment

Each employee item mirrors one leader item (same order) ➤ enables 1:1 gap analysis (leader rating vs. team rating per behaviour and per PERMA pillar).

P – Positive Emotions

No.	Statement	Rating (1 to 5)
1	Our shifts/meetings start with a short positive check-in or acknowledgement.	
2	Humour and lightness are allowed without trivializing risks or incidents.	
3	I receive specific appreciation for my contribution (not only for top performance).	
4	My manager notices emotional strain early (e.g. after an incident) and addresses it 1:1.	
5	My manager stays aware of his/her own emotions under pressure and keeps a clear tone.	
6	Small wins are made visible (e.g. accident-free week, clean handover).	
7	Positive trends are acknowledged promptly (e.g. improved housekeeping, better PPE use).	
8	When problems are raised, the language stays constructive, not accusatory.	
9	My manager has a good pulse on team mood (how people feel today/this week).	
10	My manager shares positive observations from their own day/work.	

E – Engagement (Strengths Focus)

No.	Statement	Rating (1 to 5)
11	My manager knows my individual strengths and refers to them specifically.	
12	I receive strengths-based feedback (e.g. “That’s your strength–thank you for that impact”).	
13	I am assigned prevention-related tasks that fit my strengths (e.g. checks, briefings, mentoring).	
14	My development is encouraged along my strengths, not only to fix deficits.	
15	We discuss how our strengths support prevention culture in day-to-day work.	
16	Strengths are considered in task and shift allocation.	
17	I have safe practice space to try new tasks/train and build strengths.	
18	We use team formats where strengths are deliberately applied (e.g. strengths pair-ups).	
19	Self-organized work based on individual strengths is encouraged.	
20	New employees are onboarded so they can use their strengths early.	

R – Relationships (Trust & Dialogue)

No.	Statement	Rating (1 to 5)
21	I regularly have personal 1:1 conversations with my manager.	
22	My manager asks open questions that invite thinking and participation.	
23	I experience active listening – without immediate correction or judgement.	
24	Feedback and comments are received appreciatively, and there is follow-up.	
25	We have rituals that strengthen connection and team spirit.	
26	My manager is visible and present – not merely “available”.	
27	It is clear that mistakes are for learning, not punishment.	
28	We participate in prevention-culture matters as a team.	
29	Tensions are recognized early and addressed in a fair way.	
30	My manager acts empathetically and fairly, even in difficult situations.	

M – Meaning (the “Why”)

No.	Statement	Rating (1 to 5)
31	We regularly discuss the “why” behind prevention-culture measures.	
32	My manager shares real stories about successful prevention from our context.	
33	Vision Zero is presented as a meaningful goal, not as a slogan.	
34	Prevention goals are linked to our core values and daily work.	
35	We discuss what prevention culture means to us personally.	
36	Doubts are taken seriously and reasons behind measures are discussed.	
37	We are encouraged to think for ourselves, not just to follow rules.	
38	Successes from conscious safe behaviour are highlighted.	
39	Changes in prevention culture are explained clearly and simply.	
40	The team is actively involved in communicating the meaning behind changes.	

A – Accomplishment (Progress & Impact)

No.	Statement	Rating (1 to 5)
41	We set achievable prevention-culture goals together.	
42	Progress is made visible regularly including small wins.	
43	Our feedback culture includes positive – feedback, not only gaps.	
44	The team can set its own goals and track them.	
45	Lessons learned are documented and shared after tasks, audits or incidents.	
46	We use short rituals to reflect on success together (e.g. “win of the week”).	
47	Simple visuals (e.g. charts/boards) show our development over time.	
48	We receive constructive, motivating feedback that reinforces desired behaviours.	
49	We learn from both successes and mistakes without blame.	
50	The impact of our safe behaviour is emphasized regularly (including “nothing happened” wins).	

Endnotes

1. Positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and support flexible, creative thinking (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Isen et al., 1987).
2. Positive emotions broaden attention and cognitive processing and support learning-oriented behaviour (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005; Isen et al., 1987; Pourtois et al., 2017). Positive emotions help to physiologically undo stress responses and support more adaptive error monitoring (Behnke et al., 2023; Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Fredrickson et al., 2000; Pourtois et al., 2017).
3. Trustful, psychologically safe climates foster safety compliance, feedback, and learning behaviour (Christian et al., 2009; Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990; Neal et al., 2000).
4. Kudos = brief recognition/thank-you; Gemba = the place where the work happens (shopfloor, site, line).
5. Engaged and motivated employees show higher safety compliance and safety participation, including proactive risk management (Christian et al., 2009; Kahn, 1990; Neal et al., 2000).
6. Commitment and proactive responsibility emerge when people experience autonomy, competence, and impact – they cannot be commanded (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Spreitzer, 1995).
7. When people feel respected and psychologically safe – seen, heard, and taken seriously – they show higher engagement, more learning and citizenship behaviours, and are more willing to speak up about issues and risks (Detert and Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990).
8. Teams with high psychological safety – a climate of interpersonal trust without fear of negative interpersonal consequences – are more likely to raise concerns, questions, and uncertainties early (Detert and Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017).
9. Feeling connected and identified with one's team is associated with more safety voice (risk reporting), responsible safety behavior, and helping/supporting colleagues (Chen et al., 2022; Hu and Casey, 2021; Sidorenkov and Borokhovski, 2021; Tucker et al., 2008).
10. Meaningful work is strongly related to engagement, commitment, and helping behaviours, and it has been linked to better safety behaviour and fewer accidents when combined with worker engagement (Allan et al., 2019; Hong et al., 2023; Wachter and Yorio, 2014).
11. When work lacks meaning, research links this to lower engagement and commitment and higher organizational cynicism and withdrawal; cynicism in turn undermines genuine participation and openness to change (Allan et al., 2019; Cartwright and Holmes, 2006; Chiaburu et al., 2013; Hong et al., 2023; Reichers et al., 1997).
12. A lack of achievement experiences undermines self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and responsibility, leading to more routine, compliance-only behaviour; visible effectiveness and mastery experiences, in contrast, strengthen self-efficacy, engagement and safety compliance (Bandura, 1997; Hu et al., 2022; Katz-Navon et al., 2007; Locke and Latham, 1990; Ryan and Deci, 2000).
13. In a cross-sectional survey of 10,627 health care workers in 396 work settings, exposure to Positive Leadership WalkRounds (PosWR) – leaders regularly asking staff what is going well and who deserves recognition – was associated with better safety culture (patient safety norms, teamwork norms, leadership accessibility and feedback behaviour, readiness for quality improvement) and better workforce well-being (more favourable work-life balance norms, less emotional exhaustion) (Sexton et al., 2021).

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