

# CATERPILLAR SAFETY SERVICES

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*Customer Story: Wagner Equipment Company*



## S.T.A.R.T.™ LAYS FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE

*Leaders at Wagner Equipment Co. decided in 2007 that the organization's safety culture needed a shot in the arm, a push over a performance plateau. Wagner's renewed commitment to zero-incident performance began with Caterpillar's leading edge safety accountability program, S.T.A.R.T.,™ which continues to serve as the foundation for the dealership's safety culture today.*

### Good Isn't Good Enough

When Wagner Equipment Co. realized in 2007 that its safety performance metrics had flat lined, its 6 Sigma Team turned to other Cat® dealers who seemed to have the formula for continuous improvement. Their secret was S.T.A.R.T., a training course that ties safety to every part of business, gives every employee accountability for safety and replaces criticism with a much more effective tool – recognition.



*"Something that works for one Cat® dealer should work for us also," said Curt Siroky, Wagner's Environmental Health and Safety Manager. "So beginning in 2008, we started the full training of all managers, supervisors and leads in the S.T.A.R.T.™ program."*

S.T.A.R.T. is a three-module training course that takes the guesswork out of safety management by empowering employees

to define tasks that prevent injuries. Rather than focusing on lagging indicators and statistics that reveal only what has gone wrong in safety, S.T.A.R.T. introduces a different, more effective, performance driver – accountability for completing processes that create a safer workplace.

### Embracing the Journey

S.T.A.R.T. illuminates the full range of costs associated with an injury, no matter how severe. The video storyline captures the grief of a worker's family after a fatal accident, while revealing the deep impact any lost-time incident can have on an organization's morale, productivity and ability to meet customer demands. Realizing the domino effect that can result if one worker gets hurt, several Wagner managers experienced "a-ha" moments.

*"If you have three technicians in a small shop and one of them gets hurt, all of a sudden now each technician left has 50 percent more work to do while that guy is out," Siroky said. "That really hit home for one of our managers who realized if he can keep that guy on the job, it's going to make his job a lot easier."*

The first Wagner employees to take the S.T.A.R.T. course found the experience so valuable that they suggested every employee throughout the organization's 30

facilities should be given the opportunity to complete the training. To accomplish such a widespread delivery, Wagner provides an 8-hour session for all managers, supervisors and leads and developed an abbreviated version, called S.T.A.R.T. Lite, for all hourly employees. The program's flexibility allows any organization to customize the lessons and delivery to suit its own work environment and training schedule. Caterpillar consultants are available to deliver onsite training, or prepare an organization's own trainers to facilitate workshops.

*Contact us today to learn how we can support you.*

Email: [CatSafety@cat.com](mailto:CatSafety@cat.com)

Phone: 1.866.963.3551

Outside US: +1.309.494.2751

*"In our initial rollout it brought a lot of credibility to have a consultant from Caterpillar join me in the training, but for the last four years now we've used our own trainers," Siroky said. "If you believe in the program – and the results speak for themselves – anyone can do the training."*

## Catalyst for Change

After one year of full implementation of S.T.A.R.T., Wagner's Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) was down by 60 percent. In each year since, TRIR and injury severity have continued to drop.

Yet the S.T.A.R.T. program didn't, in itself, change Wagner's safety culture. The improvement came from empowering employees to take ownership of safety – to develop solutions to the challenges they know best. After learning from S.T.A.R.T. that the formula for safety excellence includes effective communication, accountability for tasks that prevent injuries, and positive recognition for good performance, employees took the lead in building processes for weekly and monthly shop inspections, job safety analysis programs and near-miss reporting.

Siroky to recognize employees in a substantial, non-gimmicky way. Most importantly, he visits every site at least once per year to demonstrate his personal engagement in continuous improvement. During those visits, he has noticed a marked change in attitudes about safety.

*"One year after we rolled out the program, I visited a store where an employee had been a vocal skeptic about S.T.A.R.T., figuring it was just a flavor of the month program that would wither and die," Siroky said. "After just one year, this individual couldn't wait to show me the improvements his location had made since my last visit. Once he saw the results, the benefits of the program just kind of clicked."*

## A Relentless Pursuit

Wagner continues to see evidence that its employees have embraced safety as a journey, a pursuit that delivers increasingly valuable rewards along the way, but never truly ends. Annual employee opinion survey results demonstrate empirical proof that the culture has improved. For the last three years, employees have rated safety among the top three of all categories surveyed.

*"Safety culture isn't something that happens instantaneously, it's something you build on."*

**Curt Siroky**

Environmental Health and Safety Manager  
Wagner Equipment Company



*"Now employees know that if there's an issue, it's going to be taken care of, and that's where culture comes into play. That's what S.T.A.R.T. helped do for us," Siroky said.*

Fulfilling their own accountability to the safety culture journey, leaders at Wagner are ensuring that employees continue to see evidence of genuine commitment from top management. With the money saved through an improved culture that resulted in fewer injuries, Siroky was able to purchase automated external defibrillator (AED) devices for every facility. Investing in life-saving technology to complement the cultural growth was an effort by

New employees quickly realize that safety is one of the dealership's core values. Starting in 2012, every new employee now receives up to seven days of safety training, depending on his/her job role, to learn the skills and processes required to work safely. It's an opportunity for Wagner to communicate from the beginning its unwavering commitment to zero-incident performance.

*"Safety culture isn't something that happens instantaneously, it's something you build on," Siroky said. "This journey never ends, and S.T.A.R.T. will continue to be the foundation of the Wagner culture and our journey." ■*