

PARADIGMS

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Recently during a Rainfair sales meeting, Craig Leipold CEO, exposed us to a terrific concept and a film* about that concept. The subject was paradigms. Since then I've been reminded of this subject of paradigms in several other instances. One- by an excellent article in ASSE's "Professional Safety" magazine, August 1991, by Dan Peterson, P.E. Ed. D. titled "Safety's Paradigm Shift"; and two- SEDA's newly elected president David Crannell touched on the subject of paradigms in his address at SEDA's annual meeting and conference in Keystone, Colorado.

I would like to share some thoughts with you about this important subject. Paradigm – an example serving as a pattern. Patterns... of the way we are used to having things done ...traditionally in our business – in our lives- in the past-“the way it's done”...e.g. “plastic products are cheap”...Swiss watches (because of the main spring) are best ...Japanese cars are shoddy...patterns. Just because it “has been done that way or this way doesn't make it the right way”.

Don't be afraid to challenge the paradigms. Examine your business, your company, your job, your life, etc.-identify the paradigms (patterns) and determine if things “have to be done” that way-ask why? Ask your colleagues “What today is (appears) impossible to do in our business, but would fundamentally change the way we do business?” We did in our company and we uncovered some interesting examples of paradigms that we had not previously identified, addressed and acted upon.

Challenge yourself, your company, your customers, your vendors, and your end users to stimulate thought –remember the commercial that asked “What if?”,,,

We all need to convey this thinking to stimulate others' thought processes that translates, communicates and becomes contagious to providing our ultimate goal –better worker safety.

*The Business of Paradigms by Joel Arthur Barker.

Joel Barker, lecturer and author, first introduced the paradigm concept to the corporate public in 1974. He has helped thousands of organizations around the world to understand the revolutionary implications of paradigms to their future success. In this program, Barker explores how hidden barriers to new ideas limit our ability to successfully anticipate the future.

Think about it.

George J. Hayward