

The Human Side of Safety



Our mission is to improve the safety and success of people and the places where they work.

What's Good for Football is Good for Work?

On September 6, 2015, The New York Times published a sports story entitled, *No Foul Mouths on This Field: Football With a New Age Twist*. It seems Seattle Seahawk's coaching philosophy might have something to offer business leaders, even those who oversee gritty industrial plants where machismo pride reigns supreme.

Pete Carroll is a coaching maverick. Ask his all-star tight end Jimmy Graham who had adjustments to make when he arrived for spring training. For starters, after he dropped a pass during practice, Coach Carroll ran over to Graham with fatherly counsel rather than a torrent of invectives, which are endemic on the football field.

As Graham knows well, "Football has an old-school mentality: We're going to grind you into the ground, we're going to make men out of boys, and when you do something bad, we're going to demean you." But here, "They feel like you guys are already men and were going to treat you like men. It's literally all positive reinforcement."

Coach Carroll's soft-spoken and deliberate approach to feedback has helped him win games. His positive mentality also focuses on embracing diversity and encouraging players to express their opinions about what works. To rally them, he insists that his staff remain "supportive and positive."

It turns out that Coach Carroll's players revel in the freedom from top-down coaching in favor of more strategic guidance that does not include hectoring from the sidelines. Carroll's quarterback coach Cary Williams says, "We create a positive attitude and a positive upbeat attitude from everybody, and that's rare, and it makes football fun and makes your job easier."

Carroll's management style has caught the attention of other football teams as well as people outside football.

If Carroll's positive mentality works on the football field, imagine how it might improve morale and performance on a shop floor or in male-dominated workplaces.

Seattle Seahawk's Pete Carroll's positive coaching style has made everybody's job easier, and it's caught the attention of a people inside and outside football.