

Safety Culture Reality Check

**A Leadership Benchmark for
Behavioural Transformation**

“Safety is not the absence of incidents — it is the presence of capacity, discipline, and culture.”

Why Safety Systems Don't Create Safety Culture

Most organisations we work with have made substantial investments in safety — documented procedures, regular audits, dashboards, incident trackers, and compliance scorecards. Yet incidents persist. Not always visible. Not always reported. But always present.

The issue is rarely a lack of systems. The issue is the absence of embedded behaviour.

What organisations typically HAVE:

- Detailed safety procedures and SOPs
- Regular audits and inspections
- Dashboards and compliance metrics
- PPE mandates and checklists
- Safety committees and officers

Yet incidents persist in the form of:

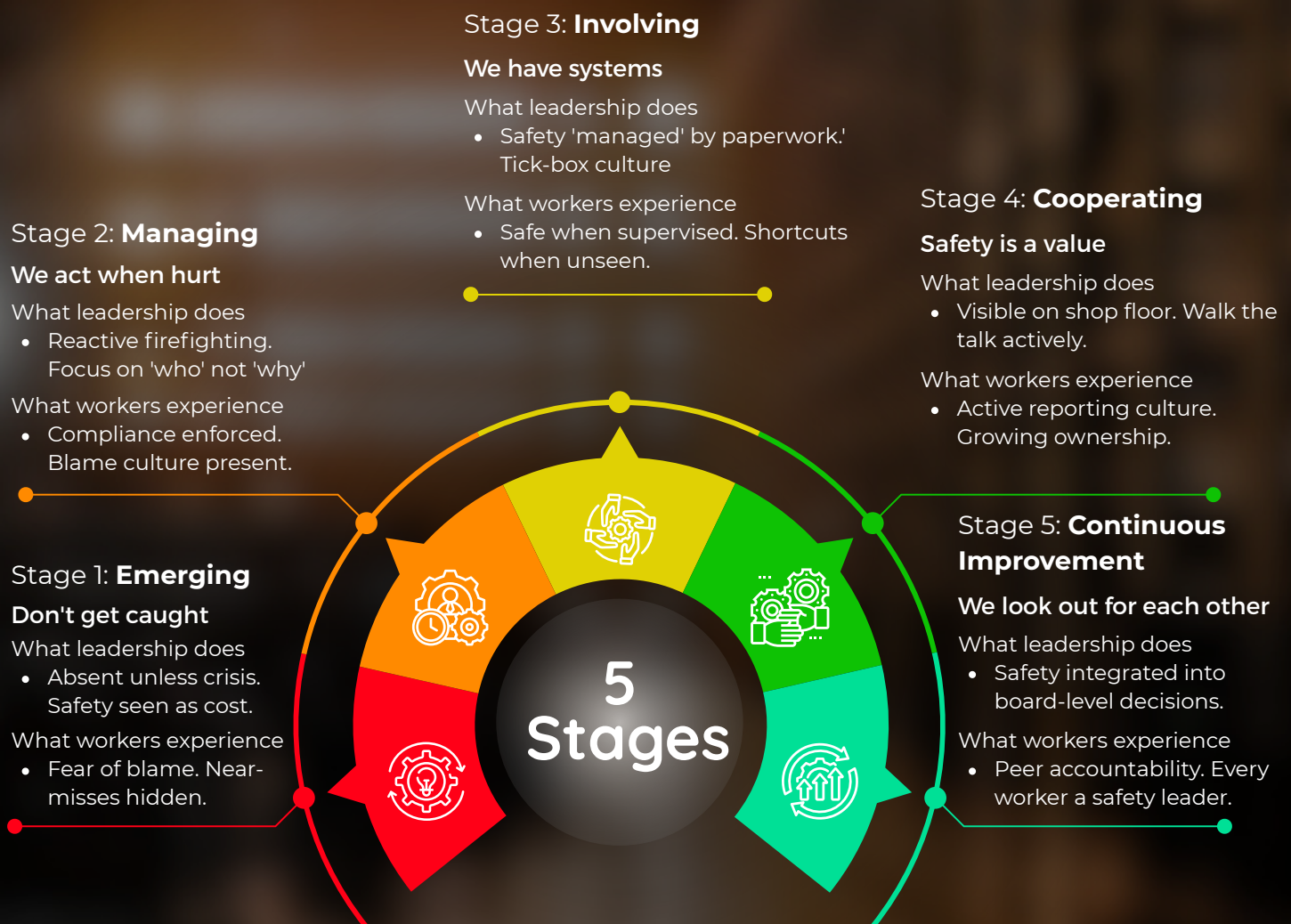
- Unreported near-misses and close calls
- Unsafe shortcuts under production pressure
- Silent risk-taking among experienced workers
- Inconsistent supervision and leadership presence

Systems	Culture
Documented	Demonstrated
Enforced	Internalised
Audited	Practiced
Top-down	Peer-driven
Compliance	Commitment
Have to	Want to

A mature safety culture exists when people do the right thing - even when no one is watching.

The 5 Stages of Safety Culture Maturity

Based on Consultivo's work across 240+ industrial units, safety culture maturity follows a predictable S-curve. Understanding where your organisation sits today is the first step to knowing where to invest your effort next.



Most organisations we assess are at Stage 3 — they have strong documentation and well-meaning safety programmes, but behavioural consistency breaks down the moment supervision is absent.

The Hidden Risk: The Safety Perception Gap

In our experience
across

240+ Industrial Units



the biggest barrier to safety culture maturity is not a lack of effort, investment, or intent. It is **misalignment of perception** between what leadership believes is happening and what the workforce actually experiences.

Management Perception

Stage 4

Shopfloor Reality

Stage 2

What Happens When the Gap Exists?

"Pencil-whipping" of safety records

- 'Completed' checklists filled retrospectively rather than in real time.

Underreporting of near misses

- Workers fear blame or dismissal; incidents go unrecorded and unlearned.

Weak trust between workforce and leadership

- Workers disengage from safety programmes they perceive as performative.

False sense of control

- Management dashboards look green while operational risks remain invisible.

Hidden operational risks

- The gap between perceived and actual safety widens silently over time.

The Consultivo SMILe™ Solution

The SMILe™ (Safety Maturity Index Level) Perception Survey is Consultivo's proprietary diagnostic methodology. It captures authentic insights across all levels of an organisation — from the boardroom to the shop floor — turning perception into actionable intelligence.

SMILe™ doesn't measure compliance. It measures culture reality.

10-Point Leadership Diagnostic

Answer each question YES or NO based on actual practice in your organisation — not intended policy, not aspirational goals, not what the manual says. Be honest. The value of this exercise depends entirely on accuracy.

Checklist

Section	Description	Yes	NO
Near-Miss Reporting	Do workers report near-misses without fear of blame or disciplinary action?	☐	☐
Leadership Visibility	Do senior managers spend regular time on the floor discussing safety — not just conducting audits?	☐	☐
Work Stoppage Authority	If a worker stops a high-priority job for a safety concern, are they praised rather than questioned for causing downtime?	☐	☐
BBS Data Use	Is your Behaviour-Based Safety data used for coaching and improvement — not punishment?	☐	☐
Checklist Authenticity	Are you confident that safety checklists are completed based on real-time observations, not back-dated or pencil-whipped?	☐	☐
Two-Way Communication	Is safety communication a genuine two-way dialogue — not just posters, PowerPoints, and one-way briefings?	☐	☐
Budget Protection	Does your safety budget remain protected even when production targets are under pressure?	☐	☐
Contractor Parity	Are contractors held to exactly the same behavioural safety standards as permanent employees?	☐	☐
Systemic Root Cause	Does your incident investigation process look for systemic failures — not default to 'human error'?	☐	☐
Unsupervised Consistency	Do employees follow safety protocols consistently even when no supervisor is present in the area?	☐	☐

Where Do You Really Stand?

Add up your YES answers. Your total score places you on the safety culture maturity curve. This is not a compliance score — it is a culture reality indicator. Use it as a starting point for honest conversation, not a grade.

8–10

YES answers

Stage 4–5 • Culture Leader

Strong safety culture foundation
Leadership alignment visible at all levels
Opportunity to become a benchmark organisation
Focus: sustain, share, and elevate

5–7

YES answers

Stage 3 • Systems Without Culture

Procedures and systems are in place
Behavioural adoption inconsistent
Culture not yet self-sustaining without supervision
Focus: close the gap between policy and practice

0–4

YES answers

Stage 1–2 • High Risk Exposure

Compliance not truly internalised
High exposure to 'Black Swan' incidents
Perception gap likely to be wide
Focus: immediate cultural intervention required

“You cannot improve what you cannot see accurately.”

The first act of transformation is honest measurement.

What It Takes to Reach Stage 5

Reaching Stage 5 is not the result of a single initiative or a compliance programme. It is the cumulative outcome of five interlocking pillars, each reinforcing the others. Missing any one of them creates a gap that prevents the culture from becoming self-sustaining.

1. Leadership Visibility

Safety culture is shaped from the top, but it lives at the bottom. When leaders are genuinely visible on the shop floor — not auditing, but conversing — they signal that safety is a personal value, not a corporate metric.

2. Psychological Safety

Workers must be able to raise concerns, report near-misses, and stop work without fear of ridicule or consequence. Without psychological safety, information is hidden and risk accumulates silently.

3. Behavioural Consistency

Safe behaviour cannot depend on supervision. When safe acts become habitual — driven by personal ownership rather than external pressure — the organisation has crossed from compliance to culture.

4. Learning Mindset

Every incident, near-miss, and audit finding is a learning asset. Organisations at Stage 5 treat investigation findings as systemic intelligence, not individual failings.

5. Business Integration

Safety excellence is achieved when safety thinking is embedded in operational decision-making — in production planning, contractor selection, capital allocation, and leadership development alike.

Safety excellence is not managed. It is lived.

Understanding Your Safety Culture Is the First Step.

Transforming it requires structured, expert-led intervention — not more checklists, but a fundamental shift in how leaders engage, how workers communicate, and how the organisation learns. Consultivo partners with industrial organisations to move from:

- Compliance → Commitment
- Observation → Ownership
- Systems → Culture

What Consultivo Offers

SMILe™ Safety Perception Survey

Do workers report near-misses without fear of blame or disciplinary action?

Behaviour-Based Safety (BBS) Frameworks

Structured observation, feedback, and reinforcement programmes aligned to your operations.

Safety Culture Diagnostics & Maturity Assessment

Do workers report near-misses without fear of blame or disciplinary action?

Leadership Alignment Workshops

Facilitated sessions to bridge the perception gap and build leadership safety capability.

Culture Transformation Roadmaps

Customised, phased plans to move your organisation from Stage 3 to Stage 5 — with measurable milestones.

Ready for a Deeper Diagnostic?

Book your complimentary 15-minute Safety Culture Strategy Session. Understand your true maturity stage — and your fastest path to Stage 5.

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