Developing a culture of prevention jointly: a workshop

Contents

Introduction

In the world of work, many processes are changing: work is becoming more flexible and organisations are moving away from fixed hierarchies. In occupational safety and health (OHS), much has been done in recent decades to prevent risks from arising in the first place. For instance, hazardous materials have been replaced, old machinery has been replaced with new equipment, and personal safety equipment has been improved. When it comes to communication, however, which can also contribute significantly to safe working practices, this preventive approach is often lacking. It is also important for all the measures in the field of occupational safety and health to tally with the values of the managers and the employed persons in the company. In other words: occupational safety and health measures must match with the culture of the company. If this is not the case, the measures can often only be effective if the organisational culture also develops further.

The organisational culture plays a key role in how people get along with each other in the company. This also applies to health at work. This not only relates to the importance of accident prevention and preventive health care in everyday work, but also to which specific occupational safety and health measures are considered appropriate in the company. In this respect, we cannot speak of a prevention culture only when there is already a pronounced understanding of health issues within the company. Rather, it can be assumed that every organization develops a culture - and also a culture of prevention. Regardless of how pronounced this culture may be, the question always arises as to which values and routines an individual company can build on if it wants to develop its own culture of prevention. The goal is to ensure that all employees and managers give high priority to occupational safety and health.

This BAuA practice brochure serves as a guide for the development of a culture of prevention within the company. It is based on findings which were published in the report by the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) "Forms of a prevention culture in German companies" (Schmitt-Howe, 2019). On this basis, a workshop concept for determining the specific culture of prevention and deriving development goals was created and tested in four companies. Thus, this is a scientifically sound handout that has been tested in practice. It can be used exactly as described or adapted to your own methods. It is generally suitable for all companies and sectors.

This information is aimed at workplace stakeholders, managers as well as external consultants for occupational health. Companies can use this guide if they want to develop their culture of prevention but the way forward is still unclear. Experts can also create important conditions in the company right from the start, and provide orientation for the stakeholders involved.

1 Basic principles of the workshop

Culture of prevention: term and models

The culture of prevention is the culture of safety and health in a company (Marschall, 2017). It focuses on the day-to-day management of safety and health at work. It relates to shared values as well as shared patterns of thinking, problem solving and behaviour (Elke, 2001). Safety and health basically refers to all topics in occupational safety and health, but also to the promotion of health. These include, for example, risks, possible accidents and illnesses, but also topics such as spinal health and wellbeing. When we talk about safety or health, we always mean both. The culture of prevention is part of the organisational culture, which also includes the culture of communication and management.

the culture of prevention is the culture of safety and health in a company

When employees and managers successfully share common beliefs over time, they eventually become self-evident (Guldenmund, 2000). These beliefs also play a key role in the culture of prevention. If a team is clear about its own beliefs and is able to state the importance of safety on site at the customer, for example, or health when working at home, this can help it to further develop its culture of prevention.

Different models can be used to assess the culture of a company. Well-known models for the culture of safety and health, such as the Safety Ladder (Hudson, 2007) respectively the 5-stage model (Gebauer, 2013), describe the culture in terms of the stages of development that the company undergoes. These offer a simple introduction to the topic, but one which is derived exclusively from research into large companies in high-risk industries, including oil rigs and power stations. This makes these models only partially applicable to many smaller companies and less hazardous areas of work. Moreover, stage models give the impression that a stage that has been reached is a stable state. In fact, however, the culture in the company is far more dynamic, and can alternate between the stages.

This is where multi-level models start, with the assumption that culture is a continuous process of learning. They do not assess this process as a step forwards or backwards, as they assume that the culture of prevention in the company is never complete. The culture of prevention model from Schmitt-Howe (2019) is a multi-level model. It highlights,

culture of prevention is also a constant internal learning process

- what makes the culture of prevention in the company visible,
- which conditions influence the culture of prevention, and
- which possible orientations shape the culture of prevention in the company most strongly.

In contrast to the stage models, the multi-level models are also suitable for businesses with an average risk potential and for small businesses. The overall guide is based on this model for a culture of prevention, see figure 1.
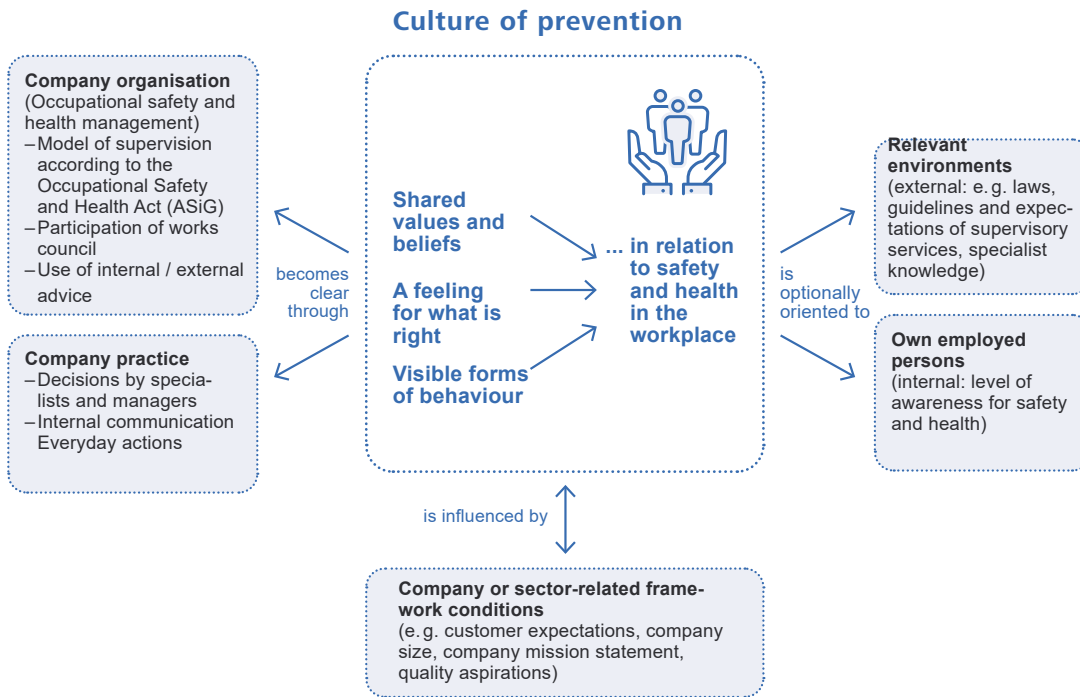
Culture of prevention

Company organisation
(Occupational safety and health management)
– Model of supervision according to the Occupational Safety and Health Act (ASiG)
– Participation of works council
– Use of internal / external advice

Company practice
– Decisions by specialists and managers
– Internal communication Everyday actions

becomes clear through

Shared values and beliefs

A feeling for what is right

Visible forms of behaviour

... in relation to safety and health in the workplace

is optionally oriented to

Relevant environments
(external: e.g. laws, guidelines and expectations of supervisory services, specialist knowledge)

Own employed persons
(internal: level of awareness for safety and health)

is influenced by

Company or sector-related framework conditions
(e.g. customer expectations, company size, company mission statement, quality aspirations)

Fig. 1 Model for a culture of prevention according to Schmitt-Howe (2019).

Before a culture of prevention can be developed in the company, it is firstly important to understand what it is based on. To do this, the factors of risk framing, interaction focus and understanding of occupational safety and health are of fundamental importance; see the info box.

Three factors for determining the culture of prevention

The three factors are reflected in the following beliefs regarding **safety and health at work**.

1.   Risk-framing:
What is the basic strategy for managing risks at the company?
Possible manifestations:

Dynamic: At our company, a continuous analysis occurs and there is a permanent process of joint learning.

Fragmentary: We have limited influence over what we are able to do. Preventing everything is impossible.

Relating to aptitude: The personal aptitude of the managers as well as the employees is crucial.

2.   Understanding of occupational safety and health (OHS):
Which is shared by the employed persons in the company?

Comprehensive: We have a comprehensive understanding of occupational safety and health and also take mental health and the promotion of health into account.

Technology: We mainly ensure safety and health with the use of technology.

Behaviour: We essentially ensure occupational safety and health through dialogue and feedback on the behaviour of our employees.

3.   Interaction focus:
Whom or what does the company address when measures are developed?

Internal: Maintaining intensive discussions with employees is the most important thing.

External: Keeping up to date with the legal requirements and keeping in touch with the employers' liability insurance association or the labour inspectorate is required.

Five different cultures of prevention

On the basis of these three dimensions, it was possible to identify five types of prevention culture in the BAuA study (Schmitt-Howe, 2019). These each differ in terms of their stated beliefs. They have the short titles:

Do-it-yourselfer

Systematist

Technician

Standard setter

Error avoider

The five types of cultures, i. e. do-it-yourselfer, error avoider, technician, systematist and standard setter differ in terms of their key beliefs regarding occupational safety and health.

All types have their own strengths and are oriented towards the organisational culture as a whole. The workshop described here serves to jointly identify which type of culture applies to a specific company as well as the areas in which there is a need for development.

The available approaches for further developing the culture are determined on the one hand by current issues, but on the other hand also by blind spots in the company. This refers to areas of action that the respective type of culture has neglected so far. Each type of culture has its own beliefs about safety and health at work and emphasises certain activities because it fits in with the organisational culture. To further develop the culture of prevention, however, it is the blind spots which are the possible areas of action.

The following info boxes describe the five types in more detail.

A typical statement: "The expertise of our employees provides our company with the best protection against occupational health risks and accidents"

Do-it-yourselfer

This type of culture is most widespread in micro and small enterprises (MSEs). Company owners with this culture of prevention often rely on their own aptitude and/or the aptitude of their employed persons, and are convinced that they can avert any risk on a situational basis. The company managers often work alongside the staff team themselves – as master craftsmen or women, for example – and often try to raise awareness for safety by giving brief tips directly at work. For them, occupational safety and health is largely a question of behaviour. Measures are usually developed by the head of the company himself or herself or at the suggestion of the workforce.

Beliefs regarding the three dimensions:

Risk-framing	Understanding of OHS	Interaction focus
dynamic	comprehensive	● internal
fragmentary	technology	external
● based on suitability	● behaviour	

6

Technician

This type of culture mainly considers health to be a matter of technical equipment and technical measures. Little attention is paid to sources of stress which can only be reduced with non-technical measures. Companies of this kind assume a realm of the inevitable, i.e. they are convinced that accidents and illnesses can only be prevented to a limited extent. As they see it, technology which is inadequate, poorly maintained or defective is the most likely to be tackled. They largely take action in terms of the rules and regulations and/or the supervisory services. Other sources of risk are quickly assigned to the realm of the inevitable.
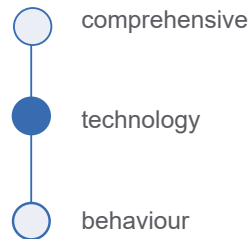
Beliefs regarding the three dimensions

Risk-framing

- dynamic
- fragmentary
- based on suitability

Understanding of OHS

- comprehensive
- technology
- behaviour

Interaction focus

- internal
- external

Safe working equipment and systems are the focus of technicians.
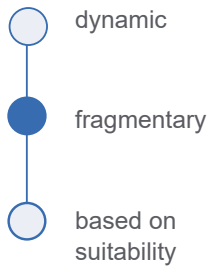
Error avoider

This type of culture assumes that there will always be unavoidable damage events. These are mainly attributed to human error or incorrect behaviour. Companies of this type mainly view occupational safety and health as being a question of the behaviour of employed persons. They believe that while employees are the company's most important resource, they are also the main source of safety risks. Errors therefore generally lead to disciplinary measures. A lot of training and instruction takes place. Measures are also developed in discussion with the employed persons.
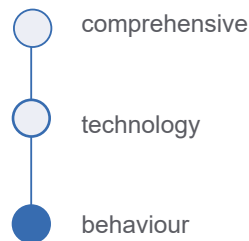
Beliefs regarding the three dimensions:
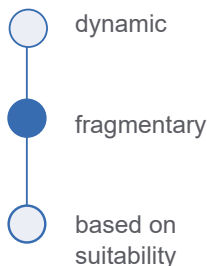
Risk-framing

- dynamic
- fragmentary
- based on suitability

Understanding of OHS

- comprehensive
- technology
- behaviour

Interaction focus

- internal
- external

For avoiders of errors, health is primarily determined by the behaviour of employed persons.

Systematist

Companies of this type only consider possible risks to be partially foreseeable and therefore relevant to the prevention of accidents and illnesses. However, they still view health as a comprehensive topic which also includes psycho-social factors and the promotion of health in the workplace. Here, the most promising approach is to control occupational safety and health issues on the basis of a formal management process. Information which is not gathered in the form of key figures is rarely considered. When developing measures, they are almost exclusively guided by key figures, standards and the body of rules and regulations.

Beliefs regarding the three dimensions::

Risk-framing

- dynamic
- **fragmentary**
- based on suitability

Understanding of OHS

- **comprehensive**
- technology
- behaviour

Interaction focus

- internal
- **external**

Systematists approach occupational safety and health systematically with key figures.
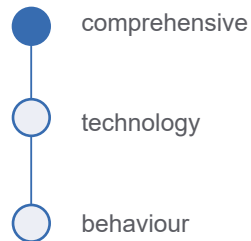
Standard setter

Companies of this type see employees as co-creators of the the culture and involve them extensively in the development of health measures. They explicitly ask their workers for feedback and ideas, and have a comprehensive understanding of occupational safety and health. To the same extent, they are also guided by the supervisory services and the statutory regulations. They therefore have a dual focus of interaction. They usually act in the awareness that their standards of occupational safety and health go beyond what is required by law. Because they act out of their own self-interest, resources are also generally available to implement safety in compliance with the legal standards or better. The internal discussions gain new impulses all the time, and are experienced as a continuous process of joint learning and improvement.

Beliefs regarding the three dimensions::

Risk-framing	Understanding of OHS	Interaction focus
● dynamic	● comprehensive	● internal
○ fragmentary	○ technology	● external
○ based on suitability	○ behaviour	

For standard setters, the continuous improvement process is key. They regard occupational safety and health as their own project.

The error avoider type of culture is the most widespread in Germany, see Figure 2. This is also related to the widespread belief that the improvement of safety and health with technical measures has reached its limits and that it can only be further increased by the behaviour of employees. The frequencies are based on a standardised telephone survey in 375 companies and are an estimate for Germany.
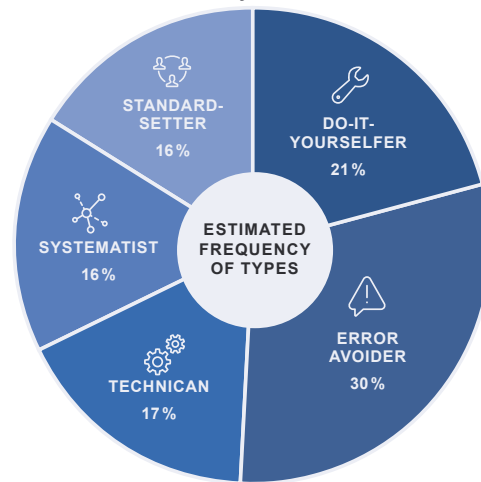

Fig. 2 Types of culture of prevention in Germany.

Different behaviour

Specific situations show how the beliefs of the types of prevention culture determine the behaviour of employed persons. The following example clarifies how different the management of a damage event is.

Accident at the entrance to the underground car park

A female employee walks into the underground car park of the company building shortly before closing time. As a vehicle had left the garage shortly before, the barrier is still open. She therefore walks through. While she is walking under the barrier it closes again, however, and hits her on her head. The result: a minor injury and one day's inability to work. How do the five types of culture deal with this situation?

- **Do-it-yourselfer:** The owner holds a meeting with the employee and appeals to her qualifications and experience: "You know what's important from the perspective of occupational safety and health. Please pay more attention to this and be careful. I can't afford to do without you with our current workload."

- **Technician:** The condition of the barrier in terms of its safety is checked. If it meets the requirements of the manufacturer and the legislator, all employed persons are reminded once again of the safe use of the barrier in a circular. If the inspection of the system reveals defects, the owner of the building is required to rectify these immediately.

- **Error avoider:** In a joint discussion, solutions are sought as to how the employee is able to act in the future so that the mistake does not happen again. There is an appeal to taking responsibility for oneself and for others. The incident is also a topic at the next departmental meeting so that as many colleagues as possible can learn from it.

- **Systematist:** The event is integrated in the internal statistics. The assessment is used to decide whether additional measures need to be taken. With regard to the actual condition of the barrier, the owner of the building is informed about the rules and regulations in occupational safety and health if necessary, and is requested to remedy the defect.

- **Standard setter:** A comprehensive accident analysis is initiated to identify all possible causes of the accident. These can be personal (behaviour shortly before closing time), technical (length of barrier and exit route) or organisational (access authorisation for the building). It is clarified whether a similar incident has happened before. The owner of the building is requested to remedy the defects. The analysis of the accident is documented and integrated in the training courses.

Preparation of the workshop

Good preparation is essential for the workshop. This includes defining the goals, participating persons and organisational matters.

Goals and motivation for the workshop

Before the workshop takes place, the expectations and corresponding wishes concerning the implementation of the workshop should be clarified. This is important in order to properly assess the character of the workshop and to integrate its results into the context of the company. The context sheet on the culture of prevention, which can be filled out together with relevant actors, in the framework of the safety and health committee or the management meeting, for example, can also help here.

If expectations are queried at the beginning, the workshop can be better adapted to operational issues.

Participants

In addition to official members of staff such as the management team, staff representatives and experts, employees can also take part. Above all else, those with informal roles should be considered, such as old hands, a go-to person in a department, particularly respected colleagues. It is important that the participants have a direct or indirect influence on at least one of the following points: decisions, the design of working conditions and company processes. The moderation is also key: Internal persons cannot moderate and participate in the workshop at the same time. External persons are neutral, but are associated with a financial cost.

Organisational matters

It is advisable to prepare the following for the workshop in advance:

- Invitations sent to all participating persons
- Selection of suitable premises or digital platform
- Provision of flipcharts and moderation pack with pens; alternatively a whiteboard or digital board
- Clarify the moderation: internal or external
- Print the quick diagnosis tool as handout
- Print the cultural profile as a poster or draw on the flipchart
- Print the agenda as a handout or draw on the flipchart
- Fill out the context sheet on the culture of prevention together in advance
- Prepare a knowledge input on the topic of the culture of prevention, as a PowerPoint, for instance
- Check the technology in the rooms, e.g. projector
- Provide catering: Drinks, lunch break

Individual working materials for the workshop are available for download, see info box.

2 The seven steps of the workshop

The workshop is divided into seven steps: from the initial assessment of the culture of prevention, to the identification of the most applicable type and the deriving of development goals, to a basic plan of measures. The steps build on each other and can be adapted to individual concepts. The times given are empirical values and can vary depending on the size of the company and the number of people at the workshop. The seven-step guide is the result of testing the workshop at four selected companies in different sectors and of various size. The seven steps are:

1. Welcome and introduction

2. Create culture of prevention profile

3. Create understanding of cultures

4. Identify type of prevention culture

5. Establish recommendations for development

6. Determine development requirements and plan of measures

7. Conclusion, outlook
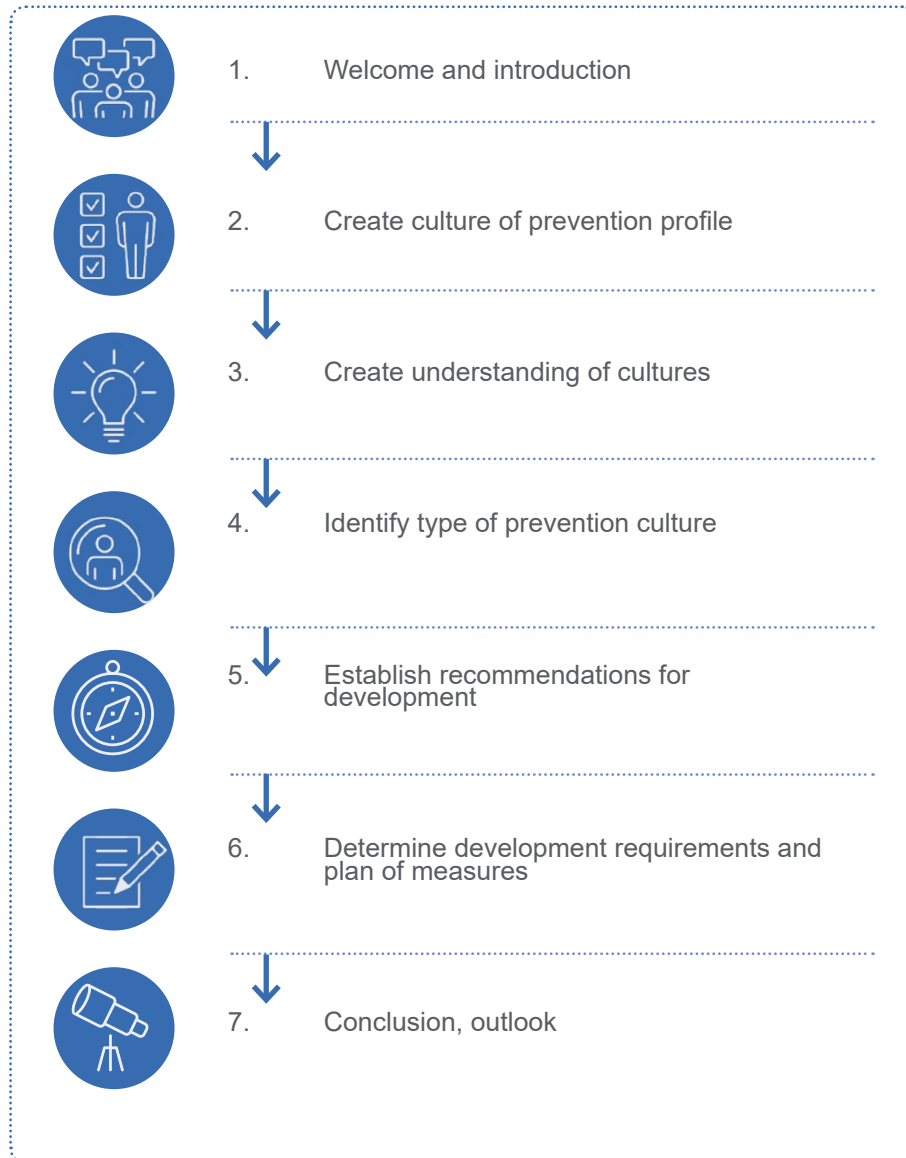
Step 1:
Welcome and introduction

At the start of the workshop, it is advisable to grab the attention of those present and to introduce them to the topic:

- Why is the workshop taking place?
- What is the operational reason?

If not everyone knows each other, a short round of introductions helps to identify the different perspectives and experiences that are present in the room:

- Why are people participating?
- Who has which roles?
- What do the participants imagine the culture of prevention to be like?
- What have their experiences been?
- What are their expectations?

The expectations of the workshop should be written down for everyone, on a flipchart, for example. This means they can be referred to repeatedly in the course of the workshop. This can also clarify which expectations can only be met after the workshop, as more time is needed, for example.

For the first step, approximately **30 minutes** should be set aside.

Step 2:
Create a culture of prevention profile

In this step, the moderator gives a copy of the quick diagnosis tool to each participant and asks them to answer yes or no to the 20 questions. It is important not to view this as a survey of personal views, but to answer in terms of the entire company or one's own group. The guiding question is whether the majority of the team or the entire company agree or disagree with the statements. With this basic question in mind, the quick diagnosis tool should be completed by all participants.

The result is then to be entered by each person in the network diagram for the cultural profile prepared by the moderator: with a pen or a sticky dot. The network diagram can be printed out as a poster or drawn on a flipchart. By adding a cross with the pen or a sticky dot, an initial profile of the workplace culture of prevention is created. The sticky dots may be scattered, but their total amount indicates a trend. This provides the basis for the rest of the workshop, as it makes the trend for each of the five types clear. The selection of the predominantly applicable type only takes place in the fourth step, however, after the moderator has given some brief input on the topic of the culture of prevention.

Approximately **15 minutes** should be set aside for the second step.

The quick diagnosis tool and the network diagram for the culture profile are available to download in the working materials referred to above.

Step 3:
Creating cultural understanding

Once the culture of prevention profile is outlined, questions may arise: about the profile itself, about the types, but also about individual statements in the quick diagnosis tool. At this point, it is helpful to provide a brief input on the topic of the culture of prevention:

- What exactly is meant by the culture and/or culture of prevention?
- What can be used to define a culture of prevention?
- How does it manifest itself?
- What types of culture were empirically identified in the BAuA study and what are their basic characteristics?

The task of the moderator is to put together a keynote presentation from the information in the section covering the basic principles. This paper is presented in this step as a Power-Point presentation. The moderator explicitly initiates a discussion and asks the participants about the things that come to mind from their everyday work:

- What role does the culture of prevention play in our company?
- What approaches and beliefs do we have regarding occupational health and safety?
- How can we benefit from raising our awareness for this topic?

If necessary, the moderator can also specifically ask about the three dimensions of risk framing, the understanding of occupational health and safety, and the interaction focus.

For the third step, approximately **20 minutes** should be planned.

Step 4:
Identify the type of culture

Now that all participants have learned the relevant basics on the topic, this step is about determining the type of culture for the specific company. The idea is to continue from step 2 and use the profile that has been created. For this purpose, the mean value of all the added crosses or sticky dots is calculated for each type. An example of the calculation is shown in Figure 3.
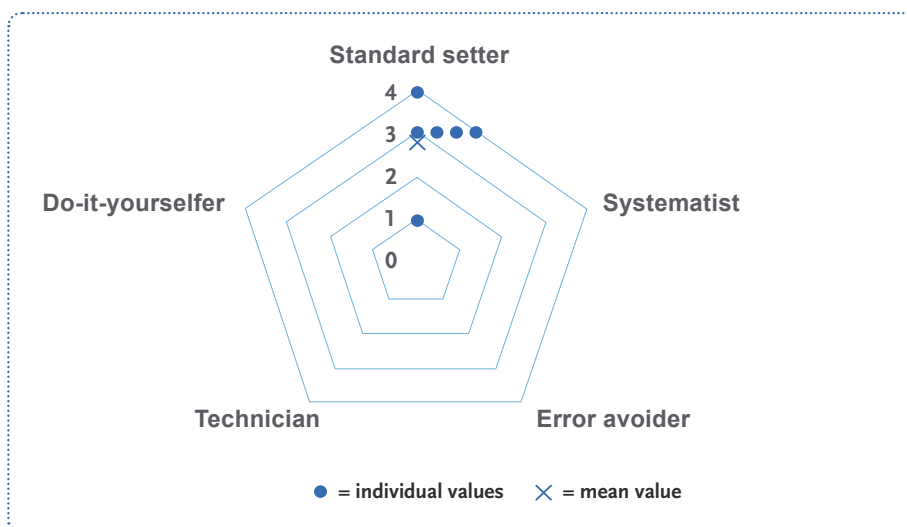
= individual values   ✕ = mean value

Fig. 3 Example: Calculate the mean value of the standard setter type of culture.

Once all the axis values have been calculated, the culture profile shows which type is more pronounced (mean value greater than or equal to 3) or less pronounced (less than 3). It is possible for more than one type to be expressed more strongly. In this case, the two to three types expressed most strongly must be selected and examined more closely.

> A discussion occurs to find out which type of culture or mixed type fits the prevailing culture of prevention.

In a discussion on the question "Which type really suits us?" an attempt is then made to agree on one type if possible. If this is not possible, it should be considered that there may be a mix of two types of culture at the company, a so-called mixed type (see info box). In this case, the brief descriptions of the three main aspects of the culture in the type profiles in the section on the basic principles can assist with identification.

To be able to determine a specific type or mixed type, the completion of an initial cross-check is important to ensure that the resources and constraints are followed. The following guiding questions serve this purpose:

> An initial cross-check is made with the type of culture in terms of resources and constraints. A second cross-check is made on the basis of company size.

- **Resources:** What can we build on and/or what can we continue to use?
- **Constraints:** What have we not yet taken into account, or what has prevented us from further developing our culture of prevention to date?

As can be seen from the type profiles, it forms part of the standard setter type of culture, for example, that extensive resources are available for measures in the area of health. Empirically, this type is almost only found in large companies. Therefore, a resource check in the discussion can, for example, result in a disassociation with having any part of this type, although the associated statements are shared by the majority.

Finally, before a type of culture is jointly determined, the guiding question should be asked: Is that how we really are? After all, it is about which type is most likely to be part of the everyday corporate culture.

A second cross-check is made on the basis of company size. According to Schmitt-Howe (2019), it is possible to determine whether a certain type of culture is likely using empirical frequencies according to the size of the company, see info box.

Cross-check:
Probability of types of culture according to company size

- **Large companies:** In large companies, a prevention culture of **standard-setters** and **systematisers** is found the most often. In this case, teams with experts and various management systems are usually available.
- **Small businesses: Do-it-yourselfers** are increasingly found in small and micro enterprises. It is often the case that small businesses don't have the time, financial and human resources to carry out constant analyses and obtain comprehensive expert advice.
- **Businesses of every size: Error avoiders** and **technicians** are types of culture that exist independently of the company size. They are to be found in companies of every size.

If, after the two cross-checks, an agreement is reached on which type or mixed type is most likely to apply to the company, initial approaches for previously neglected fields of action might then be identified. The basis for possible development paths has been laid.

Approximately **30 minutes** should be set aside for the fourth step.

Practical example of mixed type

In a medium-sized company from the retail and hospitality sector, the culture profile shows that there is a high level of proficiency for the systematist (3.5) and error avoider (4.0) types. The company attributes considerable importance to written regulations. A quality management manual exists that contains procedural instructions for every area in the company. An external quality management (QM) consultant has been supporting the company for several years and ensures that the process descriptions are written in understandable language. In this way, s/he ensures that these rules are observed in the every-day work.

At the same time, however, avoiding errors is also a priority for the company. As a customer-friendly business, high quality is to be offered to the guests. The company's mission statement also states that covering up mistakes stands in the way of opportunities for improvement and that blaming others is not welcome. In the workshop, however, it was pointed out that this approach is still not on show everywhere during the daily work, so that mistakes are often not openly addressed for fear of reprimand – especially in the service and kitchen areas.

The two cross-checks on resources and constraints and on probability based on company size allows for both types: The resources for maintaining the QM manual and for key figures are available, for example. The company is one of the larger companies in the industry. It remains unclear as to whether one can speak of a comprehensive understanding in the sense of the systematists, though. Or whether the understanding of the avoiders of error prevails after all, i.e., that occupational safety and health is almost exclusively a question of behaviour.

Result: Both types apply. The company is a mixed type of systematist and error avoider.

Step 5:
Recognising potential for development

Once a joint decision has been made on a type of culture as the starting point, the actual further development of the culture of prevention can then be initiated. To do this, it must be clear to everyone that this is a process of change. In addition to the time component, the acceptance of all those involved and their willingness to change are decisive here.

The first step is to take a closer look at the previous approach to occupational safety and health and/or the existing culture of prevention. The resources and constraints from step 4 as well as the context sheet for the working materials can be used here. The following guiding questions should be answered jointly:

- **Company resources:** What has already been successfully implemented in the company and can be used for the development of the culture? This may be the following, for example: an occupational safety and health committee, support from the occupational safety and health specialist or the company medical officer, or regular staff appraisals in which managers also include questions about safety and health.
- **Blind spots:** What things are absent and therefore preventing the business from developing and/or what is preventing the development? Examples include: a lack of support from the occupational safety and health officer or other experts, or a lack of involvement on the part of managers or employees with health-related decisions.

In principle, five fields of action are relevant for the further development of the prevention culture:
- leadership,
- communication,
- culture of error,
- participation and
- working atmosphere.

These fields of action are directly related to health at work, in the transparent, willing to learn and not accusing handling of deviations from rules or errors (error culture), in the role model effect of managers (leadership) or the consideration of suggestions and ideas from employees, for example.

Under certain circumstances, the remaining potential for development in a particular field of action is only slight: For example, in the case of the standard setter type, it is often a question of not jeopardizing the status achieved in the action field of error culture and of avoiding a relapse into one-sided apportionment of blame, for example, by regularly reviewing the actual handling of errors and accidents. An overview of the fields of action in which the respective type often has blind spots is given in Figure 4.

In processes of change, it is important to acknowledge what has been achieved so far and to highlight what has been neglected.

Type of culture of prevention	Frequent blind spots with potential for development
Standard setter	Culture of error (in the scope of the prevention of relapses)
Systematist	Participation, communication
Error avoider	Culture of error, atmosphere in the company
Technician	Communication, participation
Do-it-yourselfer	Leadership, integration of health in all decisions

Fig. 4 Blind spots of the five types of culture.

Further development recommendations on the culture of prevention are also available to download in the working materials. Once the potential for development has been identified and prioritised, the question is, how to change:

- What conditions should be met, if possible, to successfully manage change?
- Therefore, how should the measures for successful processes of change be planned?

Three touchstones provide help in answering these questions. They show the conditions that should always exist when introducing specific measures:

- **Appreciation:** How can the previous culture be appreciated? How can we refer to it positively and link up with it, for instance, founders, history and the previous development of the company?
- **Company goals:** How can the safety-relevant measures be related to the respective company goals, such as basic values and the mission of the company?
- **Sense of purpose:** How can the meaning and benefits of the change be communicated clearly, for example, the vision or the benefits of working on the blind spots of the identified type of culture?

Approximately **45 minutes** should be set aside for the fourth step.

Practical example of potential for development

A mixed type of standard setter and do-it-yourselfer is determined for a medium-sized company in the health and social care sector. However, the assignment to standard setter seems plausible, particularly in relation to the umbrella organisation, while do-it-yourselfers apply to small teams on the ground. On this basis, the following development recommendations are noted:

- **Highlighting one's own vision:** The previous mission statement of the umbrella organisation to which the company belongs applies to all member organisations in Germany. What is beneficial at the overall level of an umbrella organisation is sometimes too abstract for the workplace. To develop a shared understanding, the vision must therefore be translated into the language of the small teams on site.
- **Rethinking resources:** Financial and time resources are already allocated to occupational safety and health. There is external supervision by occupational safety and health experts, which will end soon for contractual reasons. This means that the perspective of the employees can be taken into account in terms of the selection of the new form of supervision in the area of occupational safety and health. In the future, employed persons should also be able to participate more in decisions or problem-solving from an occupational safety and health perspective. This will also enable new contacts to be found within the company as motivators for occupational safety and health.
- **Extending collaboration:** The umbrella organisation consists of different divisions with several locations. Each division has already celebrated successes on the ground, but also experienced failures in occupational safety and health. The goal here is to learn more from each other: What has proven successful in practice in one division? What can be adopted for the entire umbrella organisation? Which mistakes shouldn't be made again?

Step 6:
Establish development goals and a plan of measures

The development goals that are now to be set help to describe the target state. When searching for suitable measures, it is advisable to make use of common methods, i.e. to hold a brainstorming session, for example. Company tools such as existing worksheets or software packages for the creation of measure plans can also be used: Who does what until when? Such important milestones should be included in the plan of measures. They help to set priorities and to keep an eye on intermediate successes.

For time-related reasons, it is advisable to look for measures for only two to a maximum of three goals in the first workshop. Further goals can be set later, as soon as a goal has been achieved, for instance. Too many measures will be lost during the daily work. This reduces the probability of a successful implementation. The total number of goals should therefore remain manageable, as the info box shows.

A template for describing development goals and measures can be found in the working materials for download.

Approximately **60 minutes** should be set aside for the fourth step.

Practical example of key goals

A small company in the craft sector considers itself to belong to the do-it-yourselfer type of culture. As a potential for development, it is noted that the discussions of problems and errors has room for improvement. The following goal was defined with milestones and measures.

- **Goal:** There should be more frequent discussions about occupational health.
- **Milestone 1:** Employees receive a work mobile phone so that they can make suggestions independent of time and place using a corresponding app (to be completed in 3 months).
- **Milestone 2:** Health will become a regular agenda item at meetings of the management team. The proposals will be discussed here (to be completed in 6 months).
- **Responsible for the measures:** the master craftsman.
- **Responsible for the achievement of goals:** the management team.

Step 7:
Conclusion and outlook

With the goals and measures established, the company is able to begin the actual development work. Before the workshop ends, however, it is useful to provide a brief summary of its results and to consider the next activities. As the joint work in a workshop is a development process itself, this can also be reflected on briefly. Possible guiding questions are:

- What did I take away with me today?
- What went well?
- What went less well and needs to be different at a next meeting?

This workshop should be the beginning of regular meetings on this topic. If necessary, a cultural group should be established. Alternatively, the topic of the culture of prevention is regularly placed on the agenda of the safety and health committee or, in smaller companies, on the agenda of the team meetings.

Approximately **15 minutes** should be set aside for the fourth step.

3 Good practice: successful workshops on culture of prevention

The workshop concept presented here is derived from qualitative results from 50 companies and a standardised survey of 375 companies (Schmitt-Howe, 2019). Its practicality was tested in four companies: one small company with 10 to 49 employees, two medium-sized companies with 50 to 249 employees, and one large company with more than 250 employees. One company for each size category is presented below.

Small company

Initial situation

A change of managing generations is imminent in a craft business. The management of the company will remain in the same family. According to its own statement, the employees are its most important resource to be promoted. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, there was actually growth in terms of personnel. The company has opted for safety and occupational health care provision according to the entrepreneur model. The entrepreneurial model applies to owners of small businesses after they have taken part in a training course run by the employers' liability insurance association on their duties and tasks in occupational safety. As a result, they are not obliged to be permanently supervised by an occupational safety specialist, as is normally required. Instead, they can decide when and for what exactly they involve an external occupational safety specialist, taking into account the occasions listed in DGUV Regulation 2 - some of which are mandatory. They can take over the basic supervision themselves.

The company does not have a safety and health committee or a works council. In terms of occupational safety, among others, the focus is on ergonomic work equipment and partially-automated manufacturing processes. Personal discussions between employees and the master craftsmen on safe working, such as during on-site assignments at construction sites, are also in focus. In recent years, some staff have taken sick leave due to musculo-skeletal complaints. The motivation to participate in the workshop is therefore:

- To improve the ergonomics and integrate spinal health into daily working life,
- Design workplaces to encourage a healthy posture at work,
- Strengthen the idea of prevention so as to avoid damage and staff sickness,
- Learn new approaches that serve the further development of the company's culture of prevention.

Sequence

In the preparatory interview, the expectations of both the junior manager and his mother, the senior manager are identified. It is clear that they want to come up with specific approaches for everyday life as quickly as possible and not to simply stay on a theoretical level. The workshop takes place on site with two members of the owner's family and a master craftsman who, as a manager, is familiar with everyday life at the company and is therefore an important stakeholder in the development of the prevention culture. Due to the order-related situation, other employees do not participate directly, but are involved in the form of a site visit.

With the help of the quick diagnosis tool, a high level of proficiency is determined for both the do-it-yourselfer and the error avoider. After the initial cross-check of the resources and constraints, the standard setter is excluded as a possible type. The owning family sets high standards for the quality of the workplaces. It mainly recruits skilled workers. The conviction therefore prevails that employees are primarily responsible for their own safety, especially during assignments at customers' locations, where they usually travel alone or as a team. The goal is to avoid breakdowns and disruptions in the company, primarily any that may affect the health of the employees. Regular discussions with employees on occupational health do not take place regularly, however, but on an ad-hoc basis, for example, before individual installation projects, but not during team meetings.
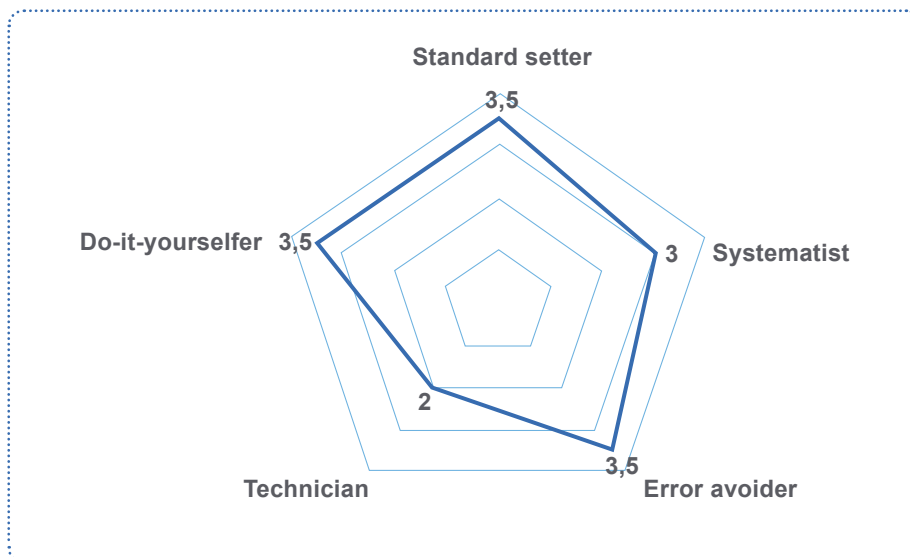
Fig. 5 Cultural profile of the small business: A mix of the do-it-yourselfer and error avoider. The standard setter was excluded.

Measures

Following the identification of the type of culture, the following development objectives and measures are determined:

Short-term goal:

The back health of all employees is encouraged through the fact that workplaces can be designed on an individual and flexible basis. This enables a healthy posture.

Measures:
- Collaboration with local provider for back training in the case of acute complaints.
- Give training to ergonomics scouts: Colleagues help each other out.

The communication on health is improved and the employees' personal interests in the topic is encouraged.

Measures:

- Set up a suggestion scheme which can be used regardless of location, for instance, how can employees contribute ideas on improving processes during projects at customers?
- Strengthen the role model function of the management and master craftsmen.

Three success factors for a successful workshop

1. **Motivation of the management team:** Both generations of the management team are very interested in the topic of the culture of prevention. Among others, it is also willing to provide time and human resources.
2. **Company history:** As a small business, a lot of emphasis has always been attached to the health of the employees. The aim is to continue to promote health.
3. **Dealing openly with blind spots:** As a small business, one is aware of one's own strengths. However, possible weaknesses are also to be identified in order to exploit additional and previously unused potential for improvement.

Medium sized company

Initial situation

The district association of an aid organisation has basic structures such as an occupational safety and health committee, in which key issues and problems in occupational safety and health are discussed. It also has a staff committee and the supervision of occupational safety and health at the external level. The company is currently undergoing a period of upheaval.

Upheavals in the company can also be a good starting point for discussing the culture of prevention.

A change of generation has taken place in the management team. Changes have also occurred due to digitalisation, the continuously increasing numbers of workers and the restructuring of the management level, among others. The competences in occupational safety and health have thus differed in the company. The rescue service is considered a showcase field, as external requirements and the continuous risk in the area mean safety is an ever-present topic. The issue of occupational safety receives less attention in other areas, such as day-care centres or family education, though. The motivation to participate in the workshop is:

- To develop a joint understanding of occupational safety and health across all sectors and promote discussions,
- To raise awareness among occupational safety and health managers during the everyday work in the company,
- To identify the requirements of the company in the areas of occupational safety and health.

Sequence

In the preparatory discussion with the management team, it becomes clear that the external occupational safety and health officer and the external company doctor will not participate. In the opinion of the management team, their understanding of occupational safety and health is no longer up to date and the cooperation with them is anyway set to end in the foreseeable future because of their retirement. The workshop takes place on site at the association headquarters and lasts for five hours. In addition to the management team, executives, the works council and selected employees, including an apprentice, also take part.

With the help of the quick diagnosis tool, it becomes clear that the standard setter and the do-it-yourselfer are more pronounced. The company relies on a strong participation of the employed persons, when selecting the work equipment or personal protective equipment, for example. It also has a comprehensive understanding of occupational safety and health, e.g. through a project on risk assessment of mental stress as well as an initial attempt to introduce occupational health care management. Risks are not managed on a dynamic basis. For example, there is no early warning system for mental stress. The aid organisation has a structure that consists of various fields of work, such as rescue, care and kindergarten, as well as numerous locations. It presupposes a certain personal responsibility on the part of all employees to act in a health-conscious way, also in everyday situations. Despite the good equipment and the comprehensive understanding of occupational safety and health which is guaranteed by the umbrella organisation, small teams on the ground are often left to their own devices and have to act on the spur of the moment. The participants are therefore unanimously in favour of the aforementioned mixed type.
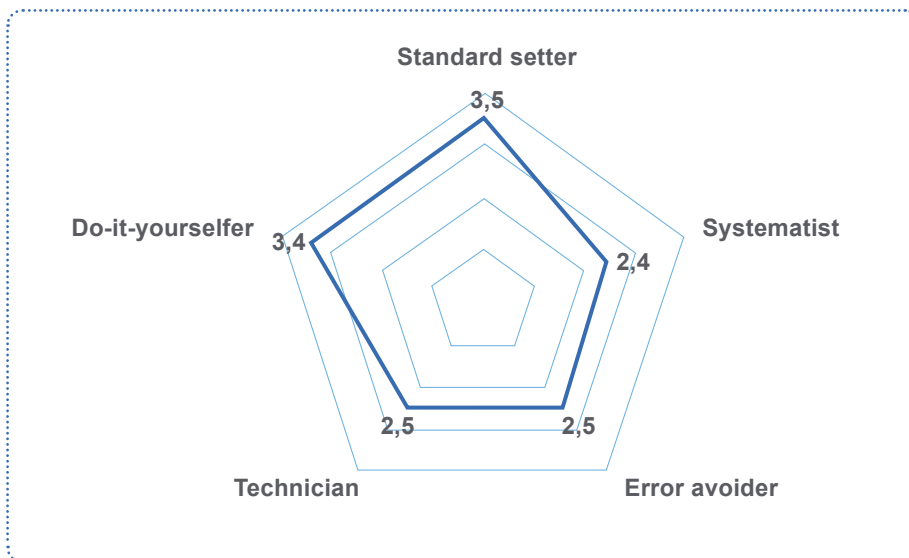

Fig. 6 Cultural profile of the medium-sized company: a mix between the standard setter and do-it-yourselfer.

Measures

The following development goals and measures are determined.

Short-term goal:

Communications are transparent and positive

Measures:
- Check whether the company communication channels are sufficient for the topics of safety and health.
- Collect and disseminate positive examples from everyday work in the company.

Medium-term goal:

Management staff are role models and support each other

Measures:
- Qualification of managers in occupational safety and health.
- Recognising managers as a target group in occupational safety and health.

Long-term goal:

Occupational safety and health applies to everyone and can be experienced by everyone, and the personal responsibility of the employees is strengthened
The necessary measures are to be determined at a later date.

Three success factors for a successful workshop

1. **Equal participation:** So far, employees have barely been taken into account in the key decisions on occupational safety and health, especially the apprentices. Equal participation, however, encourages the motivation for healthy behaviour, and is a way of showing appreciation. Therefore, employed persons should also be involved more strongly in the future.
2. **All divisions represented:** Every division of the aid organisation is represented at the workshop. This allows for areas of common ground and differences of the culture experienced to date to be discussed. Joint learning is also encouraged through discussion.
3. **External moderation:** The discussions at the workshop are intense. The moderator guides the participants through the process and helps to focus on those areas of the company that have not been taken into account to date.

Large company

Initial situation

Important processes in occupational safety and health are defined at a major energy supplier. There is also an integrated management system. It is striking that safety-related management is organised internally, while occupational health care is provided externally. As a result, knowledge of the medical field may be underrepresented in important health issues. After a merger, the company is facing new challenges. The two merged companies both have longstanding experience in occupational safety and health and the promotion of health.

The culture of prevention is also important in corporate mergers and new business start-ups.

The motivation to participate in the workshop is:

- Develop shared beliefs,
- Make safety and health resilient to change,
- Address the role of management in this context.

Sequence

In preparatory discussions with the senior occupational safety and health experts, they express the wish that occupational safety and health experts and the company doctor should be invited to the workshop first. After it is made clear that it is also important to involve managers and influencers, managers from the strategic and operational business, individual employees and works council members join in. Due to the pandemic, the workshop is held in a hybrid format and is divided into two parts.

A hybrid workshop format must be prepared well beforehand and places high demands on the moderator.

The goal of the first part is to identify the prevailing type of culture, gather development recommendations and derive strategic goals. The second part serves as a working phase to further advance the process with selected people and to log the results.

With the help of the quick diagnosis tool, it becomes clear that the systematist, the standard setter and the error avoider are more pronounced. The question arises to what extent a type, or mixed type, is actually a unifying bracket for the individual subsidiaries, locations and areas. After a thorough discussion of the possible types, it is agreed that a basic approach with central beliefs rather than a type or mixed type should be adopted as the unifying alignment. Each structure is asked to determine its own cultural profile, which is also oriented towards the umbrella.

The standard setter is determined as the type to which all structures should aspire. Its characteristics are to be incorporated as a guideline in the central beliefs of all the company divisions. The focus of interaction is also on both internal and external interlocutors and on the set of rules and regulations.
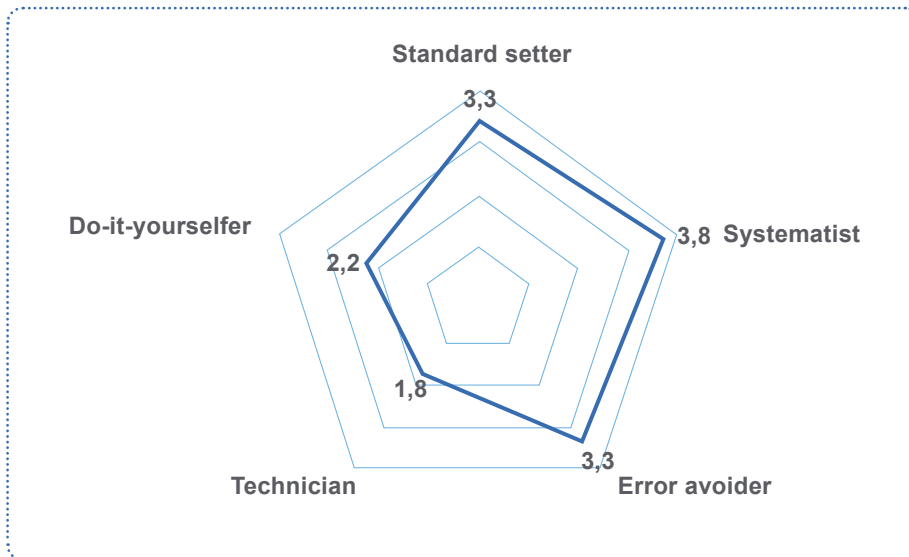
Fig. 7 Cultural profile of the large company: The standard setter is determined as the ideal type.

Measures

The following development goals and measures are determined at the workshop:

Short-term goal:

Encourage discussions on health

Measures:
- Communicate and develop solutions across all locations.

Medium-term goal:

Understand the culture of prevention as a learning process

Measures:
- Integrate health more strongly into the company goals.
- Think holistically about safety – for employees, managers, contractors, customers.

Long-term goal:

Encourage ownership and engagement during everyday life

Measures:
- Sharpen health as a management task.
- Develop recommendations for action for managers and employees.

Three success factors for a successful workshop

1. **New working group:** Those who attended the workshop have formed a working group which wants to further develop the culture of prevention and meet regularly to exchange ideas.
2. **Consideration of the structures:** The decision for an overarching basic approach as well as strengthening the individual freedoms at the locations supports the individuals' experience while integrating it within the organisation.
3. **Cross-cutting issue:** The development of a culture of prevention isn't designed as an isolated project, but is to occur throughout the company. The goal is to consider safety and health in all decisions and activities.

Conclusion

The workshop concept presented in this information serves as an initial source of help for the determination of the type of prevention culture in the company. On this basis, the culture of prevention can be further developed on a goal-oriented basis. The implementation of the workshop in selected companies has shown that the goals and measures are tailored to the respective company and therefore differ from one another. Nevertheless, they are all within the five relevant action fields of a cuture of prevention.

The workshop is particularly suitable for small and medium-sized companies. The time and personnel resources are manageable, and the guide offers specific approaches for the practical level. The workshop is also able to address current challenges in the workplace and work on them on a health-related basis.

Participants appreciate the practical relevance of the workshop: "We didn't think we would work on our issues in such a specific way."

At our workshops, we have seen that it is important to understand the respective approach, and to define company development paths. At the same time, a company can also seek external advice. Support is offered for example, by the employers' liability insurance associations and the employers' associations, but also by occupational safety and health experts or independent institutes.

The research to date shows that the culture of prevention has a demonstrable impact on accident and injury rates and on safe behaviour at the workplace. It is therefore worthwhile to determine the prevailing culture of prevention.

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