



Green Cross for Safety® Awards 2022 Finalist | Innovation

Quanta Services

Quanta Services is the leading specialty contractor in North America with more than 45,000 employees providing fully integrated infrastructure solutions for the electric energy, utility and telecommunications industries.

Quanta's culture is about supporting an environment where all employees can be themselves, are valued and have an equal opportunity to succeed. The company is committed to the health and safety of its employees, customers, contractors and the communities in which it works. Quanta's core philosophy is safety and it takes precedence over all business pursuits and work practices.

Safety data and trends have shown injury and illness prevention programs have helped reduce the number of occupational injuries over the last several decades but have done little to reduce the number of life-ending workplace events. The company needed a way to help its workforce anticipate possible hazards and be able to make mistakes safely on the jobsite so their chances of becoming seriously injured—or worse—could be reduced, if not eliminated entirely. This need gave rise to the creation of The Capacity Model.

For years, safety professionals have been taught achieving zero incidents is possible. While this is a noble aspiration, Quanta acknowledged they could not reasonably expect that incidents will not occur. The company is in the people business, and people are fallible. Quanta will always do its best to prevent incidents, but mistakes will happen. The Capacity Model shifts the focus from simply preventing incidents to building the capacity for these incidents to happen safely. By creating the capacity to fail safely, events can be absorbed without major injury or death. Safety is not merely the absence of injuries; it is the presence of capacity. As Quanta puts controls in place to protect against those energies, the company was better able to fulfill its overall objective: bring everyone home safely. With this new way of thinking, Quanta is on a journey to do safety differently, with a vision of eliminating life-threatening, life-altering, and life-ending events.

At the core of The Capacity Model is a human and organizational performance philosophy which recognizes the fact that error is normal, and people will make mistakes. When mistakes or failures do occur, how those in leadership respond matters. Whether experiencing successes or failures, the context behind how work is done comes from the people who do it. The Capacity Model is not a program or an initiative, but a different approach to how Quanta plans, executes and learns from work. In addition to foundational human performance principles, the model has three pillars:

- Prevention: Continue to work at preventing accidents



- Learning: Accept that mistakes are inevitable in life and business; learn from them to improve prevention and build capacity
- Capacity for failure: Apply enough safeguards and controls to absorb the consequences of an incident safely (without seriously injuring or killing anyone)

The model also features four distinct elements for creating capacity:

- STKY (S**t That Kills You): A focus on the hazards that can seriously injure or kill people
- Quanta Energy Wheel: A hazard-identification tool that should be used before and during work to identify hazards
- STKY Controls Framework: The framework builds capacity for failure by providing a consistent, disciplined approach to identifying hazards and the controls that must be in place before work begins
- Operational learning: An approach to learning that relies on frontline workers to explain the context of how a particular work activity actually gets done and use that information to improve performance



With the company's in-house curriculum design and development experts, the training Quanta offers is not simply self-created PowerPoint presentations. Quanta ensures materials are designed to the highest standard of adult education with employees in mind. As it relates to the front line, everything is consumable at the field level.

Although it is early in the journey, Quanta has seen positive results:

- The company no longer defines safety as the absence of incidents but as the presence of capacity



- Jobsite observations show the workforce is becoming increasingly aware of the S**t That Kills You through routine SKTY Discussions with a focus on STKY hazards and STKY controls
- Job briefings are being restructured to identify hazards using the Energy Wheel, noting which of them are STKY and what controls will prevent or mitigate a STKY event
- Leaders are incorporating the human and organizational performance principles into their messaging and communications, which sets the tone across the organization for the commitment to learning and improving; this has resulted in healthy dialogue across the company about seeing workers not as a problem to be solved but as problem solvers
- The Capacity Model courses are being integrated into new hire and leadership training efforts and the business is demonstrating more of an appetite to learn about the context of events

Quanta believes with a focus on prevention, learning and capacity, the company will make progress toward its vision of eliminating life-threatening, life-altering and life-ending events. This new view of looking deeply into its systems to understand the context of how work is done and identify what controls are necessary differentiates Quanta's approach to safety.