Safety comes from within
WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL OFFSHORE SAFETY CONFERENCE 2014
By now the annual offshore safety conference has turned into a tradition – and a good one with an ever growing number of participants from the international oil and gas community. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I once again welcome all of you to the eighth conference in a row.

Every year we strive to present a concentrated one-day program in which highly qualified speakers present us with the most important topics that are currently ongoing in the community – this year under the theme “Safety comes from within.”

In this conference magazine, you can read in-depth interviews with the speakers. I can promise you that the interviews give rise to both reflection and thought for everyone who works with and relies on safety in their daily work, with statements like:

“The biggest improvements come from communication; simple non-threatening conversations can really improve a site or work environment.”

“Safety cannot merely be a priority, competing with performance and value. It must be seen as a core value, something we never compromise on.”

“Safety Leadership is about being visible and by actions demonstrating to followers what is required. Secondly, it is consistently asking ‘what can I do for you to improve your safety?’ and following through.”

“Safety discipline is key, and whilst you can do much to make it a positive experience, you also have to be prepared to tackle anyone who compromises.”

“Many in the workforce want more meaningful involvement (in safety) and want their suggestions taken seriously.”

We hope that the conference’s many speeches, debates, and the more informal exchange of views and experience will help all of us in the quest to further increase the safety at all worksites and throughout our respective companies.

Finn Primdahl Brodersen
Chairman OGD HSE Committee
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Revisit conference proceeding from previous years' conferences
Shortly after the conference you will be able to review the top moments of the conference on our website and all proceedings. In the conference archive you can watch proceedings, movies and other highlights from the safety conferences from 2009 – 2013.

Menu

Breakfast
Whole grain buns with butter, low fat cheese, cold cuts and jam, coffee/tea

Coffee Break
Smoothie/coffee/tea

Lunch
Smoked salmon terrine with lumpfish caviar and a chive cream
Flan of Norway lobster with glasswort and wild garlic
Small meatballs with pickled red onion and arugula pesto
Asparagus pie with spiced mayonnaise and smoked bacon
Terrine of pork with marinated vegetables
“Digekrone” cheese with tapenade
Strawberry mousse on a chocolate base

Coffee Break
Cake/coffee/tea

Safety Award dinner (registered participants only)

Starter:
Souffle of salmon with capers, crayfish and grilled scallops – Salmon with a truffle marinated salad of pearl barley – Italian rolls and butter

Main course
Medallion of veal served with potato gratin, saffron wrapped in ham and a mousse of olives and mushrooms

Coffee/tea/petit four

Moderator
Tim Marsh, Ryder Marsh ltd.
2011 safety conference speaker Dr. Tim Marsh has for the second time been appointed as moderator for the safety conference. Learn more about Tim Marsh by watching his proceedings from the 2011 conference at our website.

Tim Marsh was one of the team leaders of the original UK research into behavioural safety in the early 1990s. Tim is one of only a few Chartered Psychologists who are also Chartered Fellows of IOSH and is considered an authority on the subject of behavioural safety, safety leadership and organizational culture.

Conference objective
The oil and gas industry is seen as a proactive and standard setting industry when it comes to safety. Is this an illusion and has the industry been relying on this for too long?

In realizing that the human factor still plays a vital part in having a proactive safety culture, are we at all measuring the right things? What are the right performance indicators and what are the leading indicators we can link to the human element? If we as a growth industry wish to stay proactive and further improve our safety performance while at the same time we are facing more regulation where safety culture is a key measuring point – we need to grow the safety culture from within! Can we learn from other industries who have realised that safety comes from within?
Offshore safety award

The offshore safety award sponsored by:

![Shell Logo]

The company safety award sponsored by:

![Roxtec Logo]

Programme Offshore safety Award

17.30 - 20.30:
Offshore safety Award Dinner:
- Welcome
- Dinner
- Ben Ring, VP Denmark, Upstream International, SHELL
- A fall from height, Jason Anker, UK
- Award ceremony
- Coffee and networking

Offshore safety award and award dinner

Oil Gas Denmark hosts the Offshore Safety Award and award dinner. The event takes place just after the conference from 17.30 – 20.30 pm.

The offshore safety award
The award is divided into two categories. The main award is given to a person who has done something extra to improve employee safety behaviour or reduce the likelihood of accidents. The main award consists of a bronze sculpture, DKK 10,000 and a safety award diploma. The second award is given to a company that has done something extra to improve safety or reduce the likelihood of accidents. The company award consists of a safety award diploma.

Oil Gas Denmark’s HSE committee will announce the winners at the offshore safety award dinner by principal sponsor SHELL.

Jason Anker, dinner speaker at the offshore safety award

Jason Anker was paralysed from the waist down due to an avoidable incident on a construction site in 1993 when he fell off a ladder. He was 24 years old.

His story of his life before the incident, the day of the incident, the time spent in hospital and rehab, his initial release from hospital and his struggle with life over the last 18 years is an honest and sometimes graphic account of the devastation the incident has had on Jason and his family & friends.

For 16 years he was unable to talk openly about his experience of a work related major incident. Then a chance meeting with a safety expert changed everything. Since then he has been talking to industry about all of his experience of living as a paraplegic. This is reflected in a story that is very raw; the emotion in which he delivers his talk is as strong as if it was the day of the incident. His unique story has a powerful impact and grabs the attention of those listening, from Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Operatives alike.

He is willing to talk openly about all of his experiences, the physical and physiological effects of a major incident.
Biographies

Mark Gallagher, F1 Executive,

With three decades experience in international motorsport, including senior roles with the Jordan and Red Bull Racing Formula One™ teams as well as running Cosworth’s F1 Business unit, Mark has worked with many of the sports leading figures and developed a unique insight into the way they operate. He has also developed a wide range of business interests in the sport, including creating a championship winning racing team. Starting out as an F1 journalist and broadcaster he went on to become a media consultant for major sponsors including Marlboro and Canon. He joined Eddie Jordan’s fledgling F1 team for its debut season in 1991, returning to the team in 1995 where he became head of marketing and was on the team’s management board during its most successful years.

Joining Jaguar Racing in 2004 Mark remained with the team during its transition into Red Bull Racing before leaving to establish his own sports management business and racing team, Status Grand Prix, which continues to excel.

Emma Head, Head of Safety Culture Change, Network Rail

Emma has worked in the UK railway industry since 1999, gaining a wealth of experience from both the client and contractor perspective, and having worked on major railway engineering schemes including the West Coast Route Modernisation Project and the new cross London railway – Crossrail.

Working with Victorian infrastructure, the potential to improve safety through technology development is clear, however this will take time. The only way to achieve a sustainable improvement in workforce safety performance now is to engage the energies, knowledge and skills of our people; by creating a culture where everyone looks out for one another and our default is to always work safely. Leaders need to be at the forefront of creating a culture that values and prioritises safety in the pursuit of our vision ‘Everyone Home Safe Everyday’.

Emma leads the safety leadership and culture change programme; a 5-year programme that commenced in 2011 and is designed to deliver a sustainable improvement in the safety culture at Network Rail.

Benedikt Lammerding, SHE Supervisor, ExxonMobil

Benedikt Lammerding is a Supervisor at ExxonMobil Production Germany, department of Safety and Risk. He was born in Duesseldorf in 1981 and studied Process Engineering at the University of Karlsruhe. Benedikt Lammerding has been working as an Engineer Subsurface in several WellWork projects of ExxonMobil’s onshore gas fields in Germany. Previously he was working in facilities as an Engineer Surveillance in Hannover and on ExxonMobil’s sourgas plant.

Stig Stellberg, Manager Compliance & Leadership, Statoil

Stig Stellberg has 37 years of experience from the oil and gas industry, onshore and offshore including the British sector and the gulf of Mexico. For more than 20 years he has been offshore as production operator, production supervisor, production and maintenance superintendent and 13 years as Platform Manager. Had the positions as Operation manager and safety manager Statoil DPN (development and production Norway). Managed main Leadership and Culture building programs in Hydro and Statoil. Is now the project manager for the Statoil “Compliance & Leadership” program in DPN (Development & Production Norway).
Ben Ring has been the Shell Country Chairman for Denmark, Greenland and Iceland, and the Vice-President Upstream Denmark since July 2013.

Ben studied Mechanical Engineering at Bristol University and followed this with post graduate studies in law. He then worked for Linklaters as a trial lawyer in London and Hong Kong, specialising in engineering and infrastructure disputes.

He joined Shell in 2005 after completing an MBA at IMD in Switzerland. His first posting was to Qatar where he worked for five years in a number of roles including Deputy Construction Manager and Integration Manager, both on the Pearl GTL project. During this time, Ben implemented Incident and Injury Free, a safety leadership programme that touched around 100,000 people.

In 2010 he moved to Shell’s headquarters in The Hague where he ran Upstream International's Strategy & Portfolio team, advising the Upstream Director on a broad range of strategic issues. Since July 2012 he was a Senior Deal Lead in Upstream International’s New Business Development team, based in The Hague.

Tom Knodle is the HSE Director for HSE Standards and Performance for Halliburton. He has been with Halliburton for 25 years, starting as a petrophysicist and then working as an environmental engineer and HSE manager in different capacities. He worked as a government regulator for 3 years.

Tom has been very active within the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) having co-chaired 5 conferences on HSE and authored and co-authored upwards of 20 publications within SPE and other venues. He served as the Technical Director for SPE from 2008-2011 for HSSE-SR and also chaired the OGP Safety Data Task Force for several years.

Ivan’s main role is as Founding Director of Robertson Cooper Ltd – a leading provider of well-being services to organizations. He is also Emeritus Professor at the University of Manchester and Visiting Professor of Organisational Psychology at Leeds University Business School. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and Fellow of the British Academy of Management.

He has published over 40 books on Work & Organizational Psychology and 200 or so scholarly articles/conference papers. He has held visiting academic posts in the USA, Singapore and Australia.


Dr. Cooper is both a Business Psychologist and a Safety Professional who has implemented safety culture processes internationally for over 20 years. A past Professor at Indiana University, he has written 6 books and over 150 articles on Behavioural Safety, Safety Culture change, and Safety Leadership.

More than an academic, Dr. Cooper has worked shoulder to shoulder, on-site with frontline managers and employees, creating and fine-tuning the most effective Behavioural Safety process available. As the CEO of his professional advising company, BSMS Inc., Dr. Cooper is actively engaged with clients, is a well-known speaker, and is a member of several professional organizations.

Dr. Cooper developed B-Safe®, an award winning Behavioural Safety process, and he co-founded BSMS Inc, an international safety culture advisory firm operating in the Americas, Asia, Africa, Australasia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Dr. Cooper continues to innovate and refine his processes by actively working as an on-site advisor and project manager.
Objectives

09.10 - 10.40
Session 1:
Outside inspiration

Mark Gallagher, F1 Executive, UK

Title: Formula One Safety Culture: 20 Years of Saving Lives
For the teams competing in Formula One™, risk management comes in various guises; from ensuring the health and safety of drivers, team personnel and staff, to managing the commercial risks of one of the world's most expensive sports. Add to that the operational risks associated with transporting cars, equipment and personnel to 20 destinations around the globe.

A sport that witnessed 47 drivers killed between 1950 and 1994 has shown what can be achieved when a business culture is reprioritised towards safety-first. Under the leadership of the sport’s governing body, the FIA, the teams achieved a paradigm shift, recording zero driver fatalities in the 20 years since Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger died during the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix weekend. So profound has been the lessons learned in F1, that they have been widely applied to road safety programmes, including the European Union’s NCAP safety certification initiative.

Commercial risk in Formula One is managed through teams securing a portfolio of sponsor-customers and responding quickly to changing circumstances such as the legislative ban on tobacco sponsorship or the effects of the world-wide financial crisis.

Operationally the teams take a belt-and-braces approach to ensuring that they have the capability to compete in all 20 Grands Prix. This means being ready to race irrespective of whether cars have been destroyed in practice accidents, key personnel falling ill or urgent freight shipments being required to update the cars with the latest developments fresh from their factories.

Emma Head, Head of Safety Culture Change, Network Rail, UK

Title: Building Sustainable Safety Culture Change – Network Rail’s experiences so far...
To explore Network Rail’s journey of safety culture change so far, and understand the lessons learned. Primary focus on the question ‘Can people change be predicted and measured?’ and if so, how can this help inform and shape the delivery of safety culture change?

11.10 - 12.20
Session 2:
Current benchmarks

Benedikt Lammerding, SHE Supervisor, ExxonMobil, Germany

Title: Journey to eliminate serious incidents – the ExxonMobil way
ExxonMobil’s journey to “Nobody gets hurt!” with specific focus on three key areas that support the desire to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities: Life Saving Actions – reinforce the vital role of following procedures every time. Hazard Recognition – includes fostering a culture of approaching others and recognizing factors which influence risk tolerance; focus on peer to peer: leverage the power of observations. Managing higher risk activities – Focus on sharing the learnings from higher potential incidents/near misses.

Stig Stellberg, Manager Compliance & Leadership, Statoil

Title: Compliance & Leadership – from Structure to Culture
Objective:
Stig Stellberg will be talking about risk management in everyday life in Statoil. How to ensure consistently high performance and reduce variation in the performance level. How to build a more robust organization where precision and quality improves. Describe the generic A standard action pattern in detail. Describe how to train organizations during daily work with the leader as a trainer of own team.
13.30 - 14.40
Session 3: Need for improvement

Ben Ring, VP Denmark, Upstream International, SHELL, Denmark
Title: Improving worksite safety: A leadership journey

Drawing on the experiences of the Pearl GTL project in Qatar, the presentation will highlight the key elements of driving a step change in safety performance: A clear vision of success, underpinned by a committed leadership team; a structured and rigorous process to drive the desired change, but which adapts over time as the journey unfolds; and dedicated resources to help drive the process.

Tom Knode, HSE Director for HSE Standards and Performance, Halliburton, USA
Title: Partnering for success: How operators and contractors work together to ensure an incident-free environment

The oil and gas industry has transformed dramatically over the past several decades in the management of health, safety and environmental performance. The introduction of management systems and more sophisticated risk evaluation tools, complimented by the increased awareness of the imperative of soft skills for leadership have led to unprecedented levels of performance. Along with these changes comes a better understanding of the necessity for a transformation from pure oversight and management of contractors to more of a partnership model. Contractor safety questionnaires were introduced as part of contract award decades ago and have now become more detailed and are being validated through audits. There is still variability in this oversight and the question becomes, what is the most effective means of driving performance with contractors and subcontractors.

15.30 - 16.20
Session 4: Safety comes from within

Ivan Robertson, Professor, Robertson Cooper, UK
Title: Psychological well-being at work: Causes, consequences and solutions

Research and case study evidence over the past decade has revealed that positive employee well-being and high performance are mutually reinforcing. The workplace drivers of psychological well-being are beginning to be well-understood and systematic interventions to improve well-being can bring about sustained improvements in health and well-being of employees and organisational performance.

Dr. Dominic Cooper, B-Safe Management Solutions Inc., USA
Title: The impact of safety leadership on safety culture and performance

To explore the relationship between safety leadership, employee engagement and safety culture. The available evidence shows the impact of safety leadership on employee safety behaviour can be considerable, as does research showing the beneficial impact of Employee Engagement in the safety improvement process. Deliberately creating a “safety partnership” appears to harness the benefits of both approaches to enhance the prevailing safety culture and promote employee-wellbeing.

16.20 - 17.20
Workshop: Health and well-being (and how leadership behaviours and culture impacts on it)

The workshop will:
- explore the strong and causal relationship between safety leadership, employee engagement and safety culture.
- discuss the case study evidence that shows positive employee well-being and high performance are mutually reinforcing.
- explore the beneficial impact of employee engagement in the safety improvement process and the drivers and systematic interventions that improve well-being as well as employee and organisational performance.
- explore the benefits of creating a “safety partnership” to harness the benefits of both leadership and engagement approaches to enhance employee-well being as well as culture generally.
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We must keep on improving the safety attitude

The biggest improvement we can achieve is making workers feel confident about challenging unsafe acts and conditions. Safety should be something we all just do, and coming home safe at the end of the day is a fundamental human right.

"If I had had the courage to speak up I would not have been sitting in a wheelchair today, nor for the past 21 years. I really do believe it is as simple as that; but I was the inexperienced worker and maybe I felt a little reluctant to speak up to my supervisor." So says Jason Anker. He was paralyzed from the waist down due to an avoidable incident on a construction site in 1993 when he fell off a ladder. He was 24 years old.

— Could a similar accident happen to someone today?

“Yes,” says Anker without any hesitation, “and it still is happening. This is the worrying aspect to the apparent safety improvements over the last 20 years, that these life accidents although reduced are still happening all too frequently.”

It’s all about culture — How can we prevent this?

I believe it is all about culture. Talking from the point of view of an injured worker who has no formal training in health and safety, I can only speak about what I have witnessed over the last years. The biggest improvement I think we can accomplish is making workers feel confident about challenging unsafe acts and conditions, and as importantly being prepared themselves to be challenged, be it by a director, manager, supervisor or fellow worker.

Also, it should always be part of a safety policy that every employee not only is allowed to, but actually obliged to speak out if they feel unsure, or think that it may be hazardous to carry out a given job.”

For 21 years Jason Anker was unable to talk openly about the experience of this his work related major accident. Not anymore. Today many people learn from the story of his life before and after the accident, and the accident itself.

Safety attitude — What went through your mind, the moment you fell?

Pretty much the obvious, ‘Oh no’, but if I’m totally honest, I can only remember the moment the ladder slipped, the next memory I have is looking up from the concrete floor.

— From your perspective, how has the attitude towards safety developed from the time of your accident until today?

There has been a monumental change in people’s attitude towards safety in the last 20 years, but I believe there is still a lot we can improve. The workshops I conduct are mostly attended by the people working in the front line, and I always ask the question: Is it possible to improve your attitude towards safety. The answer is always ‘yes’!

Open communication — What can we still do better?

I believe the first thing we all can benefit from is free and open communication between all levels of staff again be it a director, manager, supervisor or fellow worker. People should feel comfortable speaking to anybody on all subjects, but especially about safety.

— What do you think is the best approach, when you have to deal with bad habits that has become part of a safety culture at a work site – thus making it less safe?

Again, the biggest improvements come from communication, simple non-threatening conversations can really improve a site or work environment. Conversations do not have to be about unsafe acts, they can be to workers choosing to work safely. Positive comments are a useful tool in creating a safer working environment.

— When working on creating a safe workplace and establishing a safe working culture – how much is a battle of minds and how much rules, procedures etc.?

Obviously, there has to be rules and precise procedures, but getting people on board with a great safety culture usually has the best effect on creating and maintaining a safer working environment.

The long journey — You would think that a safe working environment is in everybody’s best interest; why then is it so difficult to create a zero incident workplace?

I think the problem lies in the whole zero accident statement. People do not believe we will ever get to zero, so they may not buy into the safety culture. This is a long journey towards trying to achieve fewer accidents. If something does go wrong, we must always learn from the accident to make sure it is not repeated. It is and should be possible to reach a goal of zero accidents/incidents, but how long it will take to get there, is the big question.

— How do we make employees and management see eye to eye on safety?

Communication has to be key, breaking down the barriers between all levels of staff. There should not be any bad safety conversations, and workers need to be able to freely voice anxieties and have access to information on any safety concern raised through constant communication.
We must keep on improving the safety attitude.
Leaders must take difficult decisions that demonstrate: safety first

“Safety cannot merely be a priority, competing with performance and value. It must be seen as a core value, something we never compromise on,” says head of Safety Culture Change at Network Rail, Emma Head.

“Safe working is often seen as a compromise, something that hinders productivity. In reality, safe businesses are usually also more productive. Both come down to good planning. When shifting an organizational culture to a mindset of safety first, performance sometimes has to take a short term hit and this can be unpalatable,” Emma Head continues.

“Frontline leaders making safety decisions, while also under the pressure to deliver will often have a skewed perception of risk. Working next to high risk hazards everyday, can result in people becoming comfortable and sometimes complacent about the risk – and so taking decisions without really weighing up the potential consequences.”

Emma Head leads a 5-year safety leadership and culture change programme that commenced in 2011 and is designed to deliver a sustainable improvement in the safety culture at Network Rail.

“Safe working is often seen as a compromise, something that hinders productivity. In reality, safe businesses are usually also more productive. Both come down to good planning. When shifting an organizational culture to a mindset of safety first, performance sometimes has to take a short term hit and this can be unpalatable,” Emma Head continues.

“A reporting culture is key to building a learning business – but this takes trust and personal investment by the workforce.

Demonstrate safety first

— What are the most important factors when implementing safety leadership? Walk the talk?

“Absolutely by role modeling safe behaviors. Words and actions both need to be consistently reinforcing the safety message for it to be seen as authentic.

Leaders need to take difficult decisions that demonstrate safety first – allowing an overrun so that the works can be completed safely for example. Leaders equally have a role in demonstrating support for those around who take difficult decisions to prioritise safety over performance.”

— How do you create a culture, where looking out for one another is "just part of the daily routine"?

“This will not happen overnight. Individuals, teams and managers will need time to practice and find the support resources needed to make a transformational change. Skills can only be ‘installed’ through events and training. The more experience based the install, the more impactful this can be. Then in returning to the day-job, support and further opportunities to practice will help to move these skills to unconscious competence.

The systems and processes also need to intuitively reinforce the safe behaviours you are trying to drive; removing bureaucracy will also help to eliminate short cuts and workarounds.

Safety culture is often described as the ‘way we do things here...when
no one is watching/checking’. It is the environment in which people are placed, that will drive how they react and behave.”

A reporting culture
— What are the key blockers to achieving safety?

“When Safety and Performance are seen as competing demands – this can hinder safe decision making. Individuals who are valued and rewarded for performance will see this as the currency within the business, and safety will be a poor afterthought.

A lack of trust in leadership by the workforce is another key blocker – if a workforce does not feel able to report safety issues and concerns without fear of blame or reprisal, then many safety issues and early warning signs will go unknown. A reporting culture is key to building a learning business – but this takes trust and personal investment by the workforce.

Failure by leadership to demonstrate safety by their actions as well as words can lead to a perception of ‘lip service’.”

Identifying root cause
— How do you create an open culture based on trust, where the individual can report safety issues without fear, and where the aim of the reporting is to look to identify root causes and not to blame individuals?

“Network Rail has had real success here. In July 2012, we launched our Lifesaving Rules. 11 rules developed against the things that we know have killed, or seriously injured our workforce, based on 12 years of fatality and serious incident data. The rules were developed with 1500 of our people, and they set a minimum level of compliance where breaches will not be tolerated.

This was just the first step. We also established a new investigation process around the rules where the focus is on identifying root cause, rather than individual blame. We launched a fair consequences model – which assumes that 85% of breaches will be due to systemic or individual error, and shows the associated consequence is to support, retrain and reintegrate those involved. In the 15% of instances where a breach is due to a deliberate violation, the individual responsible will be held to account. The shift in focus however will be to the decision maker that drove the unsafe act, whether that is the individual affected or a manager.

Fair and open culture
We established ‘The Principles of a Fair Culture’ – our visible commitment to achieving a fairer and more open culture, where individuals can trust that they will be treated fairly if they report safety incidents. We committed that all breaches would be investigated in accordance with the Fair Consequences Model. The Principles were developed and signed up to jointly with our trade union partners, who are now actively involved in implementing them through their more active role in the investigation process.

A result of this program has been an 80% reduction in the number of safety investigations that result in disciplinary action. Feedback from focus groups indicates that our workforce have seen a noticeable shift and are more likely to report unsafe acts than they were 12 months ago. We have also seen a 400% increase in the number of close calls being reported in our business.

These are only the first steps. As more examples of the fair consequences in action become known, and we demonstrate learning and improvement as a result, we will start to rewrite the narrative within our business, and trust will become more explicit,” says Emma Head.
Safety behaviour will suffer when psychological health is poor

Professor Ivan Robertson: “Many specific examples and the research shows that better psychological well-being among employees is associated with a very wide range of positive outcomes for organisations.” Examples are lower sickness absence, lower presenteeism, higher productivity and better staff retention.

Psychological well-being has two main components: the first relates to the experience of positive emotions – i.e. feeling good; the second concerns sense of purpose – i.e. feeling that what you are doing is worthwhile and meaningful.

“The best jobs are ones in which demands are high, rather than low – but control and support are also high. What this ensures is that people have positive challenges at work – and can experience the positive feedback from meeting these challenges; but they also have the freedom to tackle things in their own way – with good levels of support, including suitable equipment and resources,” says Professor Robertson.

— What are the basic elements necessary to create a workplace where employees feel valued and feel good about themselves, their colleagues and their bosses?

Three key factors
“Research into psychologically healthy workplaces has identified three key, underlying factors that are of most importance:

- Demands
- Control
- Support

Demands relate to the levels of workload and targets that employees have. Control concerns the levels of freedom and autonomy that people have to carry out their job and Support refers to support from others or via communication and resources,” says Roberton. He is co-founder of Robertson Cooper, a company that guides organisations in the process of making well-being work – something that can provide a common language for business leaders, line managers and employees alike.

Challenge and support, hand in hand
— Do you work more safely, when you feel good about yourself and are appreciated by your colleagues and bosses?

“When people experience poorer psychological health due to workplace stress (created by problems with Demands, Control and Support) they behave less safely. Safety behaviour will suffer when people’s psychological health is damaged along with many other behaviours, such as performance and support and helpfulness to others,” continues Ivan Robertson, who divides his time between Robertson Cooper and Leeds University Business School, where he is visiting Professor.

— Being a front line manager, how do you go about creating a working environment where (most of) the employees have a feeling of psychological wellbeing?

“The most important thing as a manager is to balance the levels of challenge and support that you create. Employees need challenging work so that they can experience a feeling of achievement – but they also need support (equipment, resources as well as personal support) to enable them to cope with the challenges. Many managers are naturally quite unbalanced and either provide too much challenge and not enough support – or vice versa.”

Doing something meaningful
— How do you define psychological well-being?

“Psychological well-being has two main components: the first relates to the experience of positive emotions – i.e. feeling good; the second concerns sense of purpose – i.e. feel-
ing that what you are doing is worthwhile and meaningful. So positive psychological wellbeing is enhanced when people can see the value of their work – e.g. because other workers depend on them and have a positive working environment."

— How much is money and benefits and how much is recognition etc.?

“In terms of psychological well-being, money and other rewards are important but mainly in a relative sense. If people feel that they are being rewarded less well than others who are doing similar jobs, it will have a negative impact. However, the absolute amount of reward is not that important as long as it seems fair.”

**The positive effect**

— Why is it that people with higher levels of psychological wellbeing learn and problem solve more effectively?

“When psychological well-being is high people naturally broaden and build their psychological resources. This means that they are better able to see a range of possible actions, just as they are attentive to what is going on around them. When psychological well-being is low, people narrow their attention and focus more on negative factors.

— What does it take to sustain the psychological wellbeing in a team – and is it at all possible? Private factors will also intervene: One has a sick child another is getting a divorce...

Non-work factors can be important, but it is important for managers and leaders to ensure that the workplace is as positive as possible. This means focusing on the “Six Essentials” of the workplace. These six factors are all related to Demands, Control and Support."

**The six essentials are:**

- Control and autonomy (Limitations on how the job is done or freedom to make decisions)
- Resources and communication (Pressure from lack of resources or information)
- Balanced workload (Peaks and troughs in workload, difficult deadlines, unsocial hours, work life balance challenges)
- Job security & change (Pressure from change and uncertainty about the future)
- Work relationships (High pressure relationships with colleagues, customers, bosses)
- Job conditions (Pressure from working conditions or pay and benefits)

“When people have specific non-work problems it is important to try to provide flexibility (e.g. time off) but this must always be done in a way that seems fair and equitable to other employees.”

**Worthwhile investment**

— How much do you have to invest (money, manpower etc.) in greater psychological wellbeing of your employees, and what do you stand to gain?

“Investment in psychological well-being compares favourably with investment in other “people-related” areas.

Some of the core actions to improve psychological well-being are:

- Survey to assess the current situation
- Organise solutions groups – giving staff feedback from the survey and drawing from them ideas for solutions
- Carry out training and development for managers to improve the impact that they have on employees’ psychological well-being
- Provide employees with resilience training to help them to cope better.

There are many studies on each of these aspects and all of them show worthwhile benefits for the investment” says Ivan Robinson.

When people experience poorer psychological health due to workplace stress, they behave less safely. Safety behaviour will suffer when people’s psychological health is damaged along with many other behaviours, such as performance and support and helpfulness to others.
RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT PROCESS FUTURE PEOPLE MEASURING PERFORMANCE CULTURE ATTITUDE BEHAVIOURS LEADERSHIP ENVIRONMENT HABIT DEVELOPMENT
Killing or injuring people is no longer an option

“Setting a target of ‘zero’ fatalities and serious injuries is achievable. We thought it was impossible;” says Mark Gallagher who has the experience of three decades in international motorsport, including senior roles with the Jordan and Red Bull Racing Formula One teams.

“The reason for the success of safety initiatives in Formula One is that we had a ‘top’ The technology of the sport has been radically re-engineered to place Safety first, on not only the cars but also the race-tracks. In essence, the technology on the cars and the tracks assumes that an accident will definitely occur, and therefore ensures that the person inside the car can survive. Finally, but most importantly, the culture changed. We decided that, whatever the pressure to perform, killing or injuring people is no longer an option, and everyone changed their behaviour accordingly. The change in attitude made everything possible.

To finish first, first you have to finish. So in Formula One we want products and systems that are 100% reliable, and also 100% safe so that we achieve sustained performance and results.”

The zero target is achievable — is there anything the oil and gas industry can learn from the Formula One experiences?

“What F1 can perhaps share with the oil and gas sector is that setting a target of ‘zero’ fatalities and serious injuries is achievable. We killed 47 drivers between 1950 and 1994, and we have killed 0 at a race track since then. As we understand our industry very well, we can predict the kinds of accidents that will happen — very accurately enabling us to put in place the technology, process and culture among staff to make sure that the outcomes are not negative.

Leadership in relation to safety was the first step. Safety can’t be built from the bottom up; the people who own and run the companies have to recognize that the balance of cost versus benefit in relation to Safety is very clear. It costs a lot more in money, reputation and human suffering to have fatalities and injuries than it does to put the right technology, systems and processes in place.

Team work is vital; in Formula One we know for sure that if you don’t have seamless team work you cannot hope to optimise your key metrics; safety, reliability, performance.”

A healthy fear of incidents — What does it take to win the battle for zero incidents?

“Focus. There is no point saying that Safety is central to what we do if you don’t mean it. And everyone has to buy in to that approach within management, the workforce and, very importantly, among contractors. We only want to work with contractors who will commit to the same goals and culture as our employees; it is our company reputation that is on the line, as well as the lives of our people.”

Clear targets — Does working in a multinational and multicultural environment create special challenges when you want to create a culture of zero accidents/incidents?

“The multinational and multicultural aspect can be challenging, especially when operating with cultures or in countries where industrial safety is not traditional, and where there may be little in the way of legislation or controls in place. In this respect the education of staff becomes even more important; the reasons why we do things the way we do them, and what the potential outcomes could be if we don’t follow the procedures.”

“It is vital to be very clear about the targets, and setting a high target for people to aspire to. You should explain your vision in relation to safety, communicate it in a credible way, and then show by example how serious you are about sticking to that strategy. That may mean investing in the right equipment, training, management and systems. It means showing safety results just as much as you show productivity or financial results. And definitely engaging with your
We decided that, whatever the pressure to perform, killing or injuring people is no longer an option, and everyone changed their behaviour accordingly. The change in attitude made everything possible.

We have a new way of looking at things. We have increased the scrutiny of failed safety processes, and we have linked this to the performance of people and teams. In F1 we call this the ‘other guy syndrome’: people who think ‘it will never happen to me, it can only happen to the other guy’. One of the best ways to get alignment is to show case studies and put the reality of the negative outcomes in front of people. Make them understand.

— A safe working environment is in everybody’s best interest; why then is it so difficult to create a zero incident workplace?

“In one word: Complacency. People become complacent; they relax. Helmets are not worn, chinstraps are not tightened, fireproof overalls are not zippered to the neck, gloves have holes in them, safety shoes are left in the locker. We still have incidents in Formula One, and we review every one, we try to learn and apply a lesson to prevent it happening next time. Today we have enjoyed 20 years of driver safety, and the task is now to make sure that the next generation does not go into reverse. We don’t want to go back to the dark days that caused us to change,” says Mark Gallagher who has established his own racing team, Status Grand Prix, and a Formula One sports management business.
Many in the workforce want more meaningful involvement in safety

“Employee involvement in safety is one of the fundamental features of a world-class safety culture. Evidence shows that as people’s proactive involvement in safety increases, there is a corresponding reduction in incident rates and associated costs,” says Dr. Dominic Cooper, the award winning author of “Behavioral Safety: A Framework for Success”.

Those very few people who intentionally act recklessly or take deliberate and unjustifiable risks should be punished appropriately.

Currently, most people’s involvement consists of watching safety videos, attending safety training courses, discussing safety in shift briefings or toolbox talks, and raising ideas or suggestions to improve safety. Many in the workforce want more meaningful involvement and want their suggestions taken seriously. However, this means giving employees real authority to make a difference.

The principle of “Limits exist only in your mind” applies here when extending this authority to employees. For example, practical opportunities for greater employee involvement range from chairing weekly safety meetings to developing or revising safety procedures to reviewing ‘close-calls’ and incident reports to extract ‘Lessons Learned’. Obviously, the risk profile of operations would help determine the degree of employee engagement,” says Dominic Cooper, CEO of BSMS and a past full-time Associate Professor of Safety Education and Visiting Professor of Psychology at Indiana University, Bloomington, USA.

“Often, employees are denied opportunities to become engaged, either due to HSE being done “at” people via corporate edicts, and/or the employees suggestions are not taken seriously, with corrective actions not being followed through. In some instances, performance appraisals are used to punish people for reporting a close call or being involved in an incident. Where this is the norm, employees are highly skeptical about how serious a company is about improving safety and disengage from the process. In other instances, employees are simply not trusted to do the right thing at the right time. If safety is valued by a company, and that is manifest in everything they do, there is very little reason why anyone would not want to get involved,” Dominic Cooper continues.

Safety is a social activity — What does it take to create a working safety partnership that will allow safety to grow from within?

“It requires leaders to wean employees off a dependence on management for safety so they accept responsibility for their own behavior and then move to a state where they recognize safety is a social activity and everyone has to work together as a TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More!). This likely requires a just and fair culture, whereby employees trust the company’s management to only discipline for blatant safety violations, not unintentional errors or mistakes. Reprimanding an injured person for their injury resulting from a mistake will almost certainly lead to people hiding any close-calls and minor injuries, as nobody wants to get into trouble, which in turn denies opportunities to learn any lessons. Nonetheless, those very few people who intentionally act recklessly or take deliberate and unjustifiable risks should be punished appropriately. Equally, it is important to set up and fully support the means and methods to proactively involve employees in the safety effort, buttressed by effective safety leadership, where managers make decisions that err on the side of safety when there is any doubt, are seen to do so, and are willing to defend their actions if questioned.”

On-going commitment

We conduct a safety analysis every time we have to cross a road. We were taught to do so from early childhood. Is it possible to make safety analysis an equally integral part of working life in the oil-gas
industry so that it is done before you start on any task? Every time!

“Yes, but it will take a lot of effort, on-going commitment and the appropriate means and methods to facilitate this.

“First and foremost, the original job planning has to be optimal (Job Planning is an important underlying contributor to Serious Injuries and Fatalities), with documented risk assessments, and questioned at every step by all involved in task execution. Managerial personnel will certainly have to build in sufficient time in every job schedule for people to conduct hazard identification at a worksite.

Second, those completing the task need to be thoroughly trained to identify hazards (including hidden ones). In my experience, viewing hazards as ‘any form of potential energy release, whether permanent or temporary in nature’, is an easy way for people to understand what they should be looking for.

Third, to become adept at applying the skills at the worksite, people need constant practice, reinforced by discussions with colleagues and supervisory personnel until it becomes second nature.

Fourth, it is equally important to capture and disseminate any “Lessons Learned” across the company/industry that may arise from the process to help others.”

Challenge the ‘bad habits’ — What is the best strategy when you have to deal with bad habits that have become part of the safety culture?

In my experience, the way forward is to implement an adaptive BBS process that is owned, developed and executed by the workforce, fully supported by management, which helps to re-set a workgroup’s norms and expectations. Many existing BBS processes do not recognize and harness the fact that safety is a social activity. Observations tend to be of individuals, with little by way of group feedback and discussion of results. If done correctly, the safe way of doing things will have been analyzed and captured on workgroup or task-specific checklists, which are used by trained observers to monitor a workgroup’s safety behaviors at least once per shift. The results of each workgroup’s observations over the course of a week or shift are collated, summarized and discussed at weekly feedback meetings by those very workgroups. In this way, people’s ‘bad habits’ are regularly challenged by their peers in an enabling atmosphere, which over a period of time leads to huge changes in people’s behavior, with ‘bad habits’ becoming a thing of the past.

Visible safety leadership — It has been said that one of the main reasons for the effectiveness of the Israeli armed forces is that the officers do not say to their soldiers: “Forward” but instead “follow me”. Is the same principle applicable when it comes to safety leadership?

Yes, absolutely. Safety Leadership is about being visible and by actions demonstrating to followers what is required. Second, it is consistently asking ‘what can I do for you to improve your safety?’ and following through. This is termed ‘Servant’ leadership, and has been proven to exert huge impacts on actual safety performance.

What characterizes a company with a viable safety culture?

A viable safety culture is one where a company adopts, promotes and lives by the philosophy that ‘Safe Production is understood to be, and is accepted as, the number one priority’. The norm is for everybody in an organization to fully consider the safety of their activities, before, during and after every task.
An injury-free environment is achievable

Good leadership is the cornerstone component for creating a culture where everyone is fully engaged in achieving superior performance – and this includes safety performance, says Tom Knod, Director for HSE Standards and Performance for Halliburton.

“The documentation of processes and work methods is critical to performance improvement. They provide the foundation of understanding for successful job execution. Also they are the backbone of a continuous improvement of the environment as lessons learned can be incorporated to ensure that future incidents are prevented,” Tom Knod continues.

“The more advanced risk evaluation tools have taken the documentation even further, as they allow “What if” scenarios to be played out, and controls to be established without having an incident to drive learning.”

Soft leadership skills — What effect would you say the introduction of the more soft leadership skills have had – creating a “safety culture” and a working environment where (most of) the employees have a feeling of psychological wellbeing?

“The soft leadership skills are essential to the health of the system. The systems and processes are antecedents that establish the expectations for behavior, but if there are no consequences to lack of adherence to the procedure, then it can defeat the controls. We need soft skills to set expectations, both for positive reinforcement of the desired behavior and negative for the undesired actions. Since not all scenarios can be covered, the preferred discretionary behavior of stopping work to address risks is a derivative of the safety culture,” says Knod.

Tom Knod has been with Halliburton for 25 years, starting as a petrophysicist and later working as an environmental engineer and HSE manager in different capacities. For 3 years he worked as a government regulator.

An inclusive environment — Do you work more safely, when you feel good about yourself and are appreciated by your colleagues and bosses?

“A positive safety culture will foster an inclusive environment where people look out for themselves and each other. Where employees are fully engaged, and led by engaged management, the outcome is typically high performance across the spectrum of business metrics, including safety.”

— What have been the key drivers in reaching the present level of health, safety and environmental performance in today’s oil/gas industry?

“Some of the key drivers include an enhanced awareness of risk management techniques, management systems and development of soft skills for leadership to provide guidance and direction. Better understanding of the hazards and controls has led to technological developments along with parallel efforts to understand human factors and how they play a part in the control scheme.

One of the obstacles may be a full appreciation of the link between technology, processes and employee engagement. In other words, do people fully understand the hazards, and how the technology and work methods employed control the risk?”

Tremendous improvement — How much of the success is due to equipment, technique, safety gear etc. – and how much is due to training, management and a changed attitude among the people on the job?

“The success from the advances in equipment is inextricably linked to the advances in training and management. If the purpose of the equipment is poorly understood, then it could be used improperly so the improvement in training and education has come along in parallel.”

— On a scale from 1 to 10 (10 being best) where do we find the oil/
Gas industry today when it comes
to health, safety and environmen­
tal performance respectively?

“Certainly, the industry has shown

tremendous improvement over the
past few decades. The level of so­
phistication in the understanding
of risk management techniques
is greatly improved and compara­
tive to many high-performing indus­
tries. It would be hard to rate on
a scale against other industries as
the variables are too many, and
the microclimates of performance
across the globe add dimensions
that many other industries may
not have to deal with.”

Understand and manage risk
— What more is needed to win the
battle for zero incidents – on the
management level and among the
work force?

“Continued development of new

technologies that enable the work
force to better understand and
manage risk. That comes with the
advancement of soft skills on leaders­
ship so that employees can be
fully engaged and actively driving
performance. More advanced point­
of-use training and demonstration
of competencies for the skills and
knowledge needed to execute the
work will be needed as well. Finally,
the incorporation of lessons learned
from incidents and near misses will
help improve overall performance.”

— Is it possible to create a corpo­
rate atmosphere or culture whereby
safety is understood to be, and is
accepted as, the number one prior­
ity, in a working environment with
people from several different con­
tractors working side by side?

“Not only is it possible but it is be­
ing demonstrated every day by all
those involved in operations going
incident free for a day, a week, or in
some cases for years. These groups
show us that an injury-free environ­
ment is achievable.”

Honesty and respect
— What does it take to create a
working safety partnership that
will allow safety to grow from
within?

“Honesty and respect between
companies, supervisors and work­
ers are critical to building a strong
partnership with open communi­
cation. The expectations can be
set and understood, and barriers
brought up without fear of reprisal.”

— When working on creating a
safe workplace and establishing a
safe working culture – how much
is a battle of minds and how much
rules, procedures etc.?

“Rules and procedures establish
the foundation for expectations,
but the desire and understanding
of application involve engaging the
minds (and hearts) of those follow­
ing. Both must be done equally well
to ensure success,” Tom Knodé says.

A positive safety culture will foster
an inclusive environ­
ment where
people look out for
themselves and
each other.
Many people can die if you do not create the right culture

When he joined Shell in 2005, Ben Ring’s first posting was to Qatar where he worked for five years, including a number of roles on the Pearl GTL project. During this time, he implemented ‘Incident and Injury Free’, a safety leadership programme that touched thousands of people.

“Let me start by giving some dimensions to the project. Pearl GTL was built in Qatar’s Ras Laffan Industrial City, around 90 km north of Doha. During construction of the project, we executed more than 500 million hours of work, at peak with 52,000 workers and drove some 300 million km during the execution of this project. The 52,000 workers came from more than 50 countries and most of them worked for our 12 major contractors.

— What were the most important elements making it possible for people from a host of different countries to work for millions of hours on the Pearl GTL project without an injury leading to time off work?

The reason we had the safety performance we did is that we were successful in creating a culture for safety, which was not present at the start. I believe that our culture consisted of two simple attributes. First, we created a culture for safety where everyone working on Pearl GTL wanted to be safe – rather than just being told to be safe – and second, a compliance culture where everyone knew the rules and stuck to them.

Three fundamentals

Whilst that sounds rather simple, it took 5 years of hard work to get to that point, and reflecting on that leadership journey I believe three things have been fundamental.

First, you need to create a passion for safety that starts at the top of every company involved and is cascaded through every manager, supervisor and worker employed on the job. Second, to invest in people and show you care, putting worker welfare and training at the heart of your commitment. Third, rigorously applying your safety rules.”

— How does one go about establishing ONE safety culture in such a diverse environment?

“Creating a safety culture starts with a passion for safety, and that begins with a realisation of how many people could die or be seriously injured if you do not create the right culture. At the outset, that was something that motivated the project leadership team to act and it is very personal.

We set about spreading that message, first through convening a workshop with all the CEOs of the contractors. Pearl GTL was made up of 12 major projects of $1-2 billion each. Bringing the Global CEOs of these companies to site on 6 different occasions to share in our chronic unease about safety was instrumental in driving the right culture. At a poignant moment in October 2006, we invited these CEOs to personally sign a charter committing them to safeguard the safety and welfare of all their workers.

Passionate about safety

We cascaded the culture deep into the organisation utilising JMJ’s Incident and Injury Free programme. This leadership tool had been successfully applied on Qatargas, an LNG project also in Ras Laffan. At the heart of this program, it stimulates leaders, managers, supervisors and workers at all levels to be passionate about safety, and to leverage relationships that stimulate a culture where workers want to be safe.

This program soon grew and grew with individuals across the site volunteering to become safety champions. We reinforced this with safety days twice a year, and they became a celebration of safety, where workers demonstrated their discretionary commitment towards safety. The creativity and ingenuity of our workforce must not be underestimated.

You need to create a passion for safety that starts at the top of every company working and cascades through every manager, supervisor and worker employed on the job.

As safety leaders we set the example, we regularly attended the 5am toolbox talks, stayed in the Pearl Village with the workers, ate in their canteen, joined the safety celebrations, etc.

No breaking of rules

— How did you encourage people to follow safety rules?

“There are three key elements to this. First, we worked hard to create the culture where people knew the rules and wanted to follow them to keep themselves safe.
Second, we invested heavily in training, so people understood the risks – and how to manage them. Together with Qatar Petroleum, we built the Pearl Village for over 40,000 workers. This was a community, a home away from home, somewhere to eat and sleep, but also enjoy recreation in the 12 hectare AL Muntazah, a place to celebrate cultural festivals or to enjoy excellent medical facilities. At the heart of the Village was a training facility which delivered almost 400,000 courses. A facility where 5000 supervisors received more than 7 days of leadership training, so that they could also be safety leaders. Thus, our investment was not just about welfare, but also about investing in the development of people.

The third key element was setting clear rules and rigorously applying them – being clear that anyone who chose not to follow the rules also chose not to work for us.

Shell has established 12 life saving rules, these are based on violations of procedures or behaviours that have caused the most fatalities on our operations. They are as basic as wearing your seat belt. Despite the culture we created, people still did break rules and indeed over 1000 workers, supervisors or managers were removed from our project for breaking the lifesaving rules.

No magic bullet
— How does one keep up the commitment towards safe conduct among all employees all the time?

“This is where the hard work comes in. As leaders you need to continually refresh what it is that you’re doing, to keep the energy alive. But also it’s by keeping on doing the basics, to keep turning up to the tool box talks, to keep turning up to the Pearl Village at the weekend and join in the social activities.”

— Does working in a multinational and multicultural environment create special challenges when you want to create a culture of zero accidents?

“The major challenge was the language barriers. Some trades may be from different countries (welders from Indonesia, scaffolders from Nepal, etc.) and so working together wasn’t always easy. There was no magic bullet, but all of the contractors found ways to manage this, for example, one contractor recruited almost exclusively from Kerala.

What surprised me the most was how people poured their energy into making a difference. Once we started down this path, the amount of discretionary commitment we unlocked was incredible. Many of the safety initiatives we implemented as the project developed came from the workers and supervisors, and after doing long shifts people would take on additional commitments, like being a Camp Uncle to help their colleagues settle in to life in Pearl Village, or to help design and build a stage for a Safety Day,” Ben Ring reflects.

Creating a safety culture starts with a passion for safety, and that begins with a realisation of how many people could die or be seriously injured if you do not create the right culture.
Safe behavior is primarily all about you

“There is no reason for anybody to get hurt on the job.” Thus, zero is the only acceptable number for incidents. We are committed to that journey – and we will not give up,” says Benedikt Lammerding, who is a supervisor at ExxonMobil Production Germany.

“In ExxonMobil, we encourage everyone to focus on three key areas, which support our vision – to eliminate all serious injuries and fatalities. The three key areas are:

- **Life Saving Actions** – understanding those key activities that have the highest consequences
- **Hazard Identification** – including fostering a culture where you approach others and recognize the factors which influence risk tolerance.
- **Managing higher risk activities** – a focus on sharing the learnings from high potential incidents and near misses.

In a nutshell, this is the ExxonMobil way,” continues Benedikt Lammerding, who has been working as an Engineer Subsurface at several WellWork projects of ExxonMobil’s onshore gas fields in Germany.

A safety minute

— What is so magic about safety minutes?

“A safety minute is a key element to change mindset and behavior. And yes, each meeting starts with a short safety topic e.g. driving safety – if possible it includes personal experiences reflecting an actual or potential near miss. Every employee is asked to provide personalized safety minutes. This is one of the approaches which helps us to change mindsets and to calibrate our risk tolerance level. Our employees utilize this knowledge on the job just as they bring it home. If thinking safety becomes a natural part of you and the way you behave, it also affects your private life, your family and friends.”

— When working on creating a safe workplace and establishing a safe working culture – how much is a battle of minds and how much rules, procedures etc.?

“Safety first – in everything we do” We have all the right tools in place. Thus, the most important task is motivating our workforce. This requires the right behavior of our leadership. As a leader, you have to help your employees understand that safety and safe behavior primarily is all about you; it is inside the head of each individual and it is a personal decision: Who do you want to be?” Leading by example is key.

Zero incidents is achievable

— Rules and procedures that must be followed are natural and necessary parts of the daily working routines on most worksites. Is it possible to empower individuals to take action without compromising safety?

“Each and every employee – regardless of which company he or she belongs to – has an obligation to raise concerns. If we feel that something is not safe, we are empowered to intervene and stop work – and must do so.”

— A safe working environment is in everybody’s best interest; why then is it so difficult to create a zero incident workplace?

“Sometimes individuals have different risk tolerance levels, sometimes employees like to take short-cuts and sometimes the difference between a close call and a serious injury is a matter of seconds or inches only. Since we have fewer and fewer incidents, it becomes more and more important to focus on learnings from near misses with higher potential. This requires a culture where we appreciate near miss reporting – not so easy for many of us.”

Leading by example

— Humans are likely to take short cuts – at least now and again – even if we, in the back of our heads know that it may be risky even hazardous. How is it possible to overcome this obstacle on the journey to “Nobody gets hurt!”?

“Risk tolerance awareness, communication and the dynamics of the group are important parts in overcoming possible short cuts. In order to avoid short cuts, you have to create a culture of intervention. This requires awareness of personality types within your work teams in order to approach each other effectively.

— Time and money are both key factors in running a successful business. How can we make sure that safety overrules these two at all times?

“In our organization, we never put any type of business above safety. This is a management commitment that is repeated continuously and is lived throughout ExxonMobil. It is our belief and one of our core values. As a great example, I do still remember a quote from one of our board members: A year from now we will not remember if we were covering the budget; we will not remember if we were ahead over the schedule; but an injury, a serious injury to one of our colleagues – we will remember that forever.”

— Managers are also humans, and we have seen examples where management has cut corners resulting in damage to people and/or environment. What effect does this have on the “safety culture” of a company?

“When a manager or any role model in a work group consents to a certain level of risk, he or she influences the judgements of other members of the group. Being aware of this, we expect all leaders to act as role models. As an example – simple things like using handrails or off the job driving safety – it is an expectation that all leaders are aware of what their behaviour means to others. In ExxonMobil, we will not accept leaders that are lagging that commitment.

— Are there special types of accidents/incidents, which are especially difficult to eliminate, and if so, what are they?

“Yes, driving because it is so heavily impacted by third party performance,” says Benedikt Lammerding.
“We need to realize the importance of Leadership. Today managers are too much administrators,” says Stellberg, who is the Leadership and compliance manager in Statoil, Norway.

— What is Leadership in your opinion?

Leadership is what I do as a leader in order to enable my team to perform at a high level, all the time. Leadership is about realizing that it is people who do the job, and people who make mistakes. For example, if the problem is lack of compliance, the answer is not new systems and new structures, as we tend to think, but Leadership and interaction between the leader and the team. Because it is only the leader, together with his team who can make structure become culture. There is no other way.

Lack risk approach
When asked about the current state of the safety culture in the oil and gas industry, Stig Stellberg says:

“We are still not fundamentally risk managed, rather driven by procedures and governed by activities. We have plans describing how to get a specific job done, but they often lack a risk approach. We need to identify the risk in order to manage it. We focus on how to get the job done with too little risk approach,” he says and concludes:

“Whenever we have an accident or an incident, we take action immediately in order to prevent something similar from happening again. This is important but is still event-driven and reactive. We need to become more proactive which implies that learning mainly takes place when we plan for an activity to be done right the first time. This way learning becomes a proactive and preventive action.”

The convincing PowerPoint
“One major challenge we do have in the oil industry is the gap between what we believe is under control and the facts. Macondo is a very good example of this. Not a single “lost-time incident” in seven years of drilling was the record. The rig was considered to be the best performing rig in the fleet in the Gulf of Mexico. Did they misunderstand the iceberg theory and believed that they had control of a major accident when controlling personal safety? Thus, the question to all managers/leaders is: How robust – how true to life – is the information on which you base your decisions? Are you aware that it may not be “the whole truth and nothing but the truth”. Hence, the question; how do we close this gap?

One answer is on the job training – in a true sense, as an integrated part of work, and with the Leader as the trainer of his own teams. It is quite similar to training a soccer team, where the trainer is looking for gaps – comparing the actual behavior with the expected. There is no way for a player to snuggle around, and the trainer can actively work with closing gaps before they become events.

We are convinced that training is a matter of observing and closing gaps. Behavior cannot be measured; it has to be observed if you want to know the truth.”

More proactive indicators
So where do we want to be from 3 to 5 years from now?

“We do need more proactive indicators telling us about the expected future performance. The ones we have today are reactive, telling us about yesterday. I was a platform manager for more than 10 years. What I need are indicators telling me what the performance level is today. I need to know the strengths and weaknesses of all the players on my team here and now. But I also want to know their expected performance level tomorrow. Are they able to perform as I expect them to perform? This I must know.

It takes true Leadership and cannot be done sitting behind the PC. You have to be present. What we have to emphasize is not just structure but culture in order to develop better skills in identifying, understanding and managing risks whenever you are executing an activity. Developing better skills takes training, no matter your personal competence, knowledge and qualifications.

The end is the beginning
That is why we are investing heavily in training – in the true sense – as part of working in Statoil. Through training we are making leaders more accountable and teams more responsible. When you are going to perform a task, it is not enough to describe what you are going to do; you have to begin by defining the situation you want to be in, when the task is finished – your result. The person accountable for doing this is the leader, and without it is not possible to make a team responsible for the job. Thus, whenever we plan for a new activity the end is the beginning. This constitutes a significant cultural change in the thinking in the oil industry; but once you get the hang of it, it is relatively easy and it is free.”

A battle of minds
— What does it take to win the battle for zero incidents?

“A culture of safety starts with Leadership, because Leadership drives culture and culture drives behavior. Culture is built while leaders and teams are executing activities together. Leaders influence culture by setting expectations, teaching others and demonstrating stewardship by being consistent and making things happen.

We have to understand that the success in improving safety at the front-line level depends more on worker’s perception of how they are treated by their supervisor than on the perceptions of the importance of safety in the organization. People will behave the way you have taught them to behave.”

— When working on creating a safe workplace and establishing a safe working culture – how much is a battle of minds and how much rules, procedures etc.?

“Mostly a battle of minds, which is about leaders who enable people to comply with rules. Rules do nothing in themselves – people do. You have to work with your people and that is all about Leadership” says Stig Stellberg.
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