Safety Leadership
From Constraint to Facilitation

Ron Gantt, M.Eng, CSP

Credit: Dan Hummerdal http://www.safetydifferently.com
Session Objectives

• Define leadership and its value in producing safety performance
• Assess current models of safety leadership and management and list their limitations
• Review factors that affect human performance
• List leadership strategies for enhancing safety performance
What is leadership?

• “The state of causing a person or animal to go with one by holding them by the hand, a halter, a rope, etc. by moving forward.”
Leadership 101

Source: Griffith University Safety Science Innovation Lab
So really...what is leadership?

- “A process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.”

Source: Chemers (1997)
A Visual Representation

Process of social influences

Enlisting the aid and support of others

Accomplishing a common task

Me

Us

Them

We
Basically...

It’s about aligning the goals of individuals with the goals of the group
Great...so how do we do that?

Let’s look at current models of safety leadership
Current Assumptions in Safety Leadership

- People are a problem to overcome and control
- The best way to control people is at the behavioral level
- The best way to measure safety is to measure its absence - accidents

Source: Dekker (2014)
Foundations - Heinrich (1931)

Unsure Acts: 88%

Unsafe Conditions: 10%

Acts of God: 2%
Safe Act → Success
Unsafe Act → Failure

Source: Hollnagel et. al. (2013)
How do we eliminate unsafe acts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BBS Model</th>
<th>System Safety Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Eliminate unsafe acts through structured reinforcement</td>
<td>• Eliminate people from the equation altogether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify “safe behaviors” for each job</td>
<td>• Identify all potential risks from human interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase accountability</td>
<td>• Increase technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eliminate human error and violations</td>
<td>• Eliminate the unreliable human from the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Success = no unsafe acts/exposures</td>
<td>• Success = no mishaps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These are the extremes of both models
What are the foundations?

BBS Model

System Safety Model

People don’t care about safety unless we make them.

Humans are the least reliable part of the system.

We’re gonna protect you, from you, in spite of you
Sounds good...
But is it true?
Let’s make some assumptions

- Most people don’t do things that they think will get them hurt or killed
- Most people don’t do things that they think will cause others to get hurt or killed
- Most people don’t do things that they think have a high likelihood of failing

If that’s true, then why did it make sense for them to do what they did at the time?
Take a look at reality for a second

- People really do care about safety
  - They just may not care about your definition of safety
- People really do succeed the overwhelming majority of the time
  - They just tend to fail more often in poorly designed environments
So where does safety come from?

Behavior + Context = Outcome

*Human adaptive capacity leads to safe outcomes*
The New View of Human Performance
So why do they do these things?
Is safety the absence of accidents?

Source: Murray (2012)
Summary of the Current Model

- The current model of safety leadership focuses on three false premises:
  - People are the source of problems in our systems
  - The best way to control people is to control behavior
  - The best way to measure safety is to measure its absence
Safety Leadership

Achieving performance through facilitation
A new paradigm for safety leadership

- People are the source of safety and success in our organizations
- The best way to harness the potential of people is at the environmental/contextual level
- Safety should be measured by its presence

Source: Dekker (2014)
Our employees create safety

• ...sometimes in spite of what we do
• They are the subject matter experts for their jobs
  ▫ Not including their perspective is a huge mistake
• If safety is really everyone’s responsibility, why not include everyone?
There’s a lot we can learn from the red line

Work as planned  vs  Work as performed
Learning safety from our employees

• Implement “blackout periods”
  ▫ No phones, computers, emails, etc.

• Walk around and learn
  ▫ Watch real work get done
  ▫ Have conversations (listen more than you talk)
  ▫ Ask questions

The goal here is to LEARN, not to teach

Source: Dekker (2013)
Changing the environment/context

• People create safety through adaptability/resilience
  ▫ We are problem solvers

• We need to create an environment where they can do this safely
  ▫ Clear understanding of the risks they face
  ▫ An accurate mental model of the system
  ▫ A forgiving system
  ▫ Coping skills for making trade-offs between goals
BP Texas City Refinery 2005

- Unclear risks
- Inaccurate mental model
- Unforgiving system
- Competing goals

Source: Hopkins (2008)
Measuring safety

• Measurement is about learning
  ▫ Provides feedback
  ▫ Creates an anchor (what’s important)

• Measure the presence of safety
  ▫ Measure success, not just failure
  ▫ Measure resilience/adaptive capacity
  ▫ Measure the things that lead to safety

• Monitor for unintended consequences/competing measurement structures

*It’s difficult to get a man to know something when his salary depends upon his not knowing it.*

-Upton Sinclair
Safety-II

Focus of Safety-II: everyday actions and outcomes - risks as well as opportunities

Focus of Safety-I: accidents & incidents

Source: Hollnagel et. al. (2013)
Summary

• Safety leadership is about aligning the goals of the organization with the innate goals of the workers
• Your workers are the source of safety in your organization – treat them like that
• People want to be safe – we just have to create an environment that facilitates that
• Measure safety in a way that inspires success, not just avoidance
Questions?

Ron Gantt, M.Eng, CSP

Slides will be available on our website at http://www.scm-safety.com/past-seminars