Powering Improvement Leadership Workshop

ENA offices, 17th September 2014

Introduction

A workshop was held at ENA on 17th September in support of the 2014 focus on Leadership, which is also one of the strategy's overarching themes running throughout the five year programme.

Over 40 delegates from across the industry gathered to hear examples of successful initiatives and leadership programmes that have been introduced in companies across a number of different sectors, including electricity networks, energy generation, aviation and the automotive industry.

The event was chaired by Doug Wilson (UK Director of Health and Safety, Scottish Power) and Peter McCormick (Powering Improvement Coordinator). Doug opened the day by emphasising that not only does leadership from the top set the tone for any organisation, but that leaders are also needed at all levels; all of us have a responsibility to raise and take forward the standards expected of leaders. Leaders must ensure that a consistent approach is adopted to help build a teamwork ethic. Leaders must also be sincere, consistent and deliver on their promises in all circumstances.

Peter McCormick then highlighted how leading by example is demonstrated by placing safety at the heart of everything we do and also through the industry's implementation of Powering Improvement (PI). An overview of progress since the launch of PI in 2010 served to remind delegates that the strategy set out at the beginning to define the roles and responsibilities of senior management in order to promote the leadership and safety cultures we want to be evident. In turn this will encourage more open reporting on health and safety and provide the environment for more demanding SHE standards.

The annual themes, supported by Champions and dedicated working groups, have lead to a portfolio of guidance, case studies and best practice examples (all of which are available on the PI web site at www.poweringimprovement.org).

## Murdo Allan (UK Power Networks)

Murdo outline the importance and impact of leadership on an organisation and the approach that UKPN has taken to embed this within their company programmes.

Leadership is the blend of skills, qualities and behaviours that inspires and motivates others to succeed:

Some of these characteristics are naturally evident in staff, but we also need to identify those areas where we are weaker to enable the coaching and training needed to encourage the development of these abilities.

There is a need to promote ingenuity and new channels of behaviour to encourage people to lead and to be leaders. In turn this should have a positive effect on the organisation's Vision and Values; namely Integrity, Responsibility, Inclusiveness, Unity and Respect.
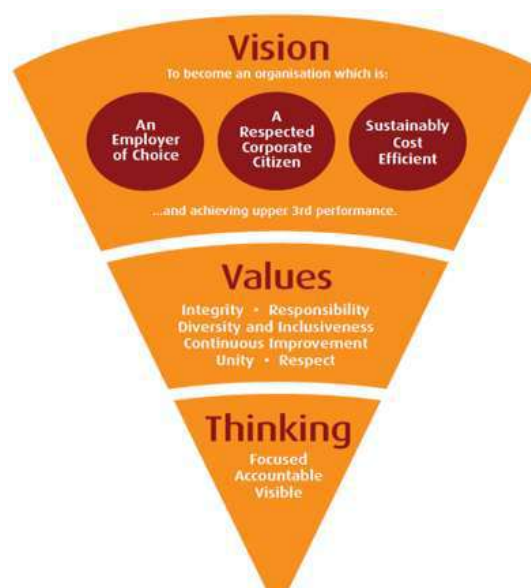
UKPN's Leadership Way programme focuses on a number of key principles and drivers for the business including Safety, Performance, Teamwork, Customer Service, Employee Engagement and Continuous Improvement.

This is intended to help develop well rounded leaders with an awareness of priorities who also understand their influence through 'the shadow cast by a leader'. All of these parameters are also reflected within the company's overall strategy and its key objectives as a business.

The ultimate aim is to develop leaders who are:

**Intelligent, Creative, Confident, Driven and Courageous**

And in so being then:

Lead by Example, Set High Standards, Set Stretching but Achievable Targets, Praise Good Behaviour, and Tackle Poor Performance, Make Decisions, Admit Mistakes and Listen to Colleagues.

Nigel Lilley (National Grid)

Nigel provided an overview of National Grid's Leadership and Cultural Change programme, which is aimed at encouraging staff to develop through the provision of suitable learning tools.

National Grid wants to promote the importance of health and safety within this programme by instilling confidence in staff to challenge unsafe behaviour and to learn how to address the root causes of incidents. This brings together a number of related business aims and objectives within an overall Visible Leadership Programme that provides the framework to drive improved performance.
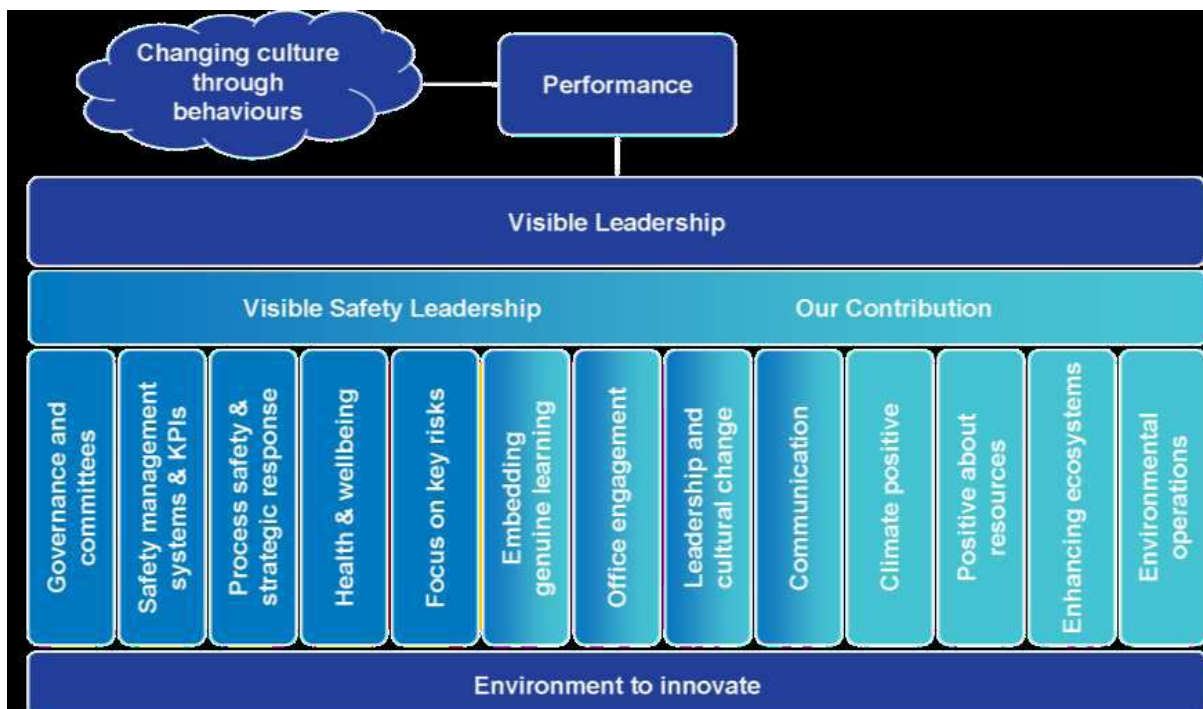
The familiar Bradley Curve illustrates an organisation's path from a Pathological State, relying solely on engineering systems, to ideally a Generative State, where 'Safety is in our DNA'. Most of us are honest enough to admit that a Proactive State is a closer definition of current performance however, and that individual parts of the organisation may be at different stages of development too.

Whilst we are always aware of the hazards and risks inherent within our businesses, we must bear in mind the impact that we have as individuals on health and safety and need to be mindful of our and others' attitude and influence in achieving this. This places a high importance on engaging with colleagues through Safety Conversations with an emphasis on encouraging people to think for themselves, and equipping them with the tools and skills to meet the needs of their role. The programme therefore looks to influence behaviour by helping employees take ownership to both help shape the culture and become better leaders.
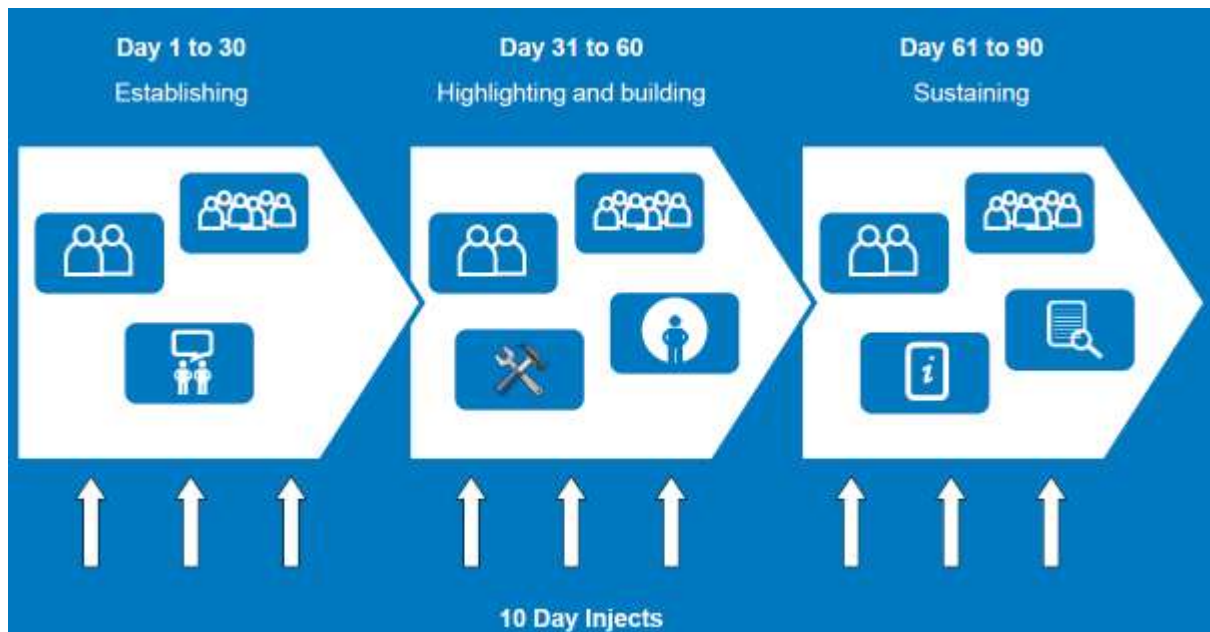
Training and implementation is staggered over three months, which reinforces its importance and allows time for effective change to be established. There are opportunities to gear the programme according to the needs of individual parts of the business and the best time in which to introduce the initiative. At all times a focus on replicating and promoting positive behaviours is reinforced with an emphasis on looking for opportunities to improve rather than simply highlight organisational and individual failings.

Mike MacDonald (Prospect Union)

The theme of creating a positive organisational culture was continued with Mike MacDonald's talk on *'Ability is Nothing Without Opportunity'*.

We need to use our skills, including leadership, to make a positive difference in the workplace and leadership must go hand in hand with employee engagement to achieve this. Reiterating the headline message that leadership is not just an issue limited to a few managers, Mike reminded delegates that the 'Leaders Are Us!'

Leadership starts before the role is defined; it is not a job description nor an executive perk but a requirement, a skill and a capability. We must think beyond the traditional Plan, Do, Check, Act approach to management and management systems and set wider, more encompassing standards and look for new opportunities to bring influence.

We all are capable of and therefore should:

- **Set the Tone;**
- **Set an Example;**
- **Care Deeply; and**
- **Change Safety**

To nurture this ability we need both talent but also the desire to develop and grow. By setting specific, manageable targets (SMART) we can create a culture of confidence which will also encourage individuality.

Effective management and leadership are best achieved by jointly designing and sponsoring work programmes. The aim should be to develop our knowledge, teamwork and confidence through, for example, joint training of managers and health and safety representatives to promote joint thinking and problem solving by tapping into the experience of those best placed to improve systems.

Judith Hackitt (HSE Chair) is supportive of this approach:

> *"I find it hard to imagine how we would ever put in place an effective workplace health and safety system that did not include real participation and engagement of the workforce"*

This must be evident even through times of difficult organisational change in order to demonstrate a consistent and visible partnership commitment to safety irrespective of the prevailing environment.

Without leadership commitment then staff and the organisation as a whole will not be engaged and conversely without engagement then the impact of leadership is limited and we set ourselves up to fail.

So we need to create the opportunity to:

- **Ensure Practical not Theoretical Leadership is evident;**

- **Go Beyond simple day-to-day commitment;**

- **Walk safety and not just Talk Safety;**

- **Practice Visible, Clear Engagement.**

This will ensure that the key issue of leadership contributes to the promotion of the organisation's Vision and Values and keeps us on the path to Vision Zero.

Hazel Hortop (Centrica)

Hazel introduced the audience to a new Competency Framework within Centrica that is designed to help develop the skills, competencies and overall character of employees. The Framework addresses competency strengths and weaknesses from both an individual and organisational perspective. This provides the necessary evidence and support to identify future needs and helps establish the routes to attaining them. Whilst the emphasis is on competence it assists managers in leading their teams and encourages employees to grow into leaders.
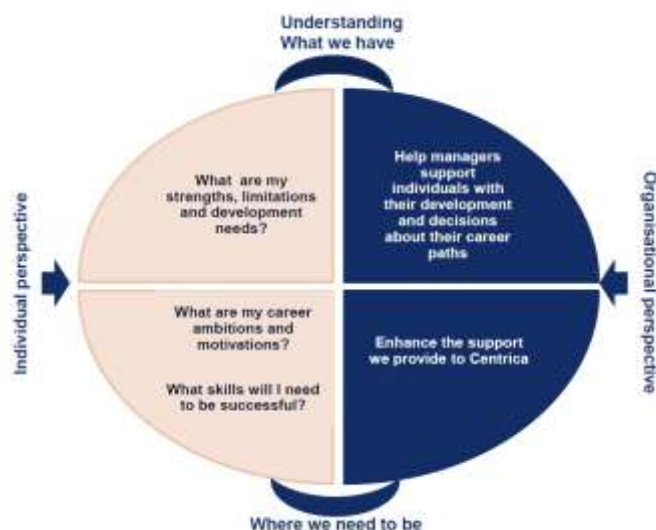
In simple terms it 'helps understand where we are and where we want to be' and all within the context of a complete SHE Family Framework comprised of Safety, Health, Environment and Process Safety. Competencies can be defined for all of these four areas and for each competency identified there are four levels of proficiency and four definitions of role.

Proficiency is categorised in increasing ability from:

Awareness – Essential – Advanced – Expert

whilst roles are defined as:

Adviser – Senior – Lead – Principal

A Competency and Self Assessment Matrix can now be set out listing the requirements of each combination of proficiency level and role. This can be used as a cross assessment by the employee's line manager as an alternative route to establishing a Safety Conversation; not by a traditional observance of a specific activity but as a tool to identify the key strengths and weaknesses of an individual. This provides avenues and opportunities for improvement to be identified both for the benefit of the employee and the organisation. This individual profile can be displayed grammatically to give an overview of the actual and expected competency levels.
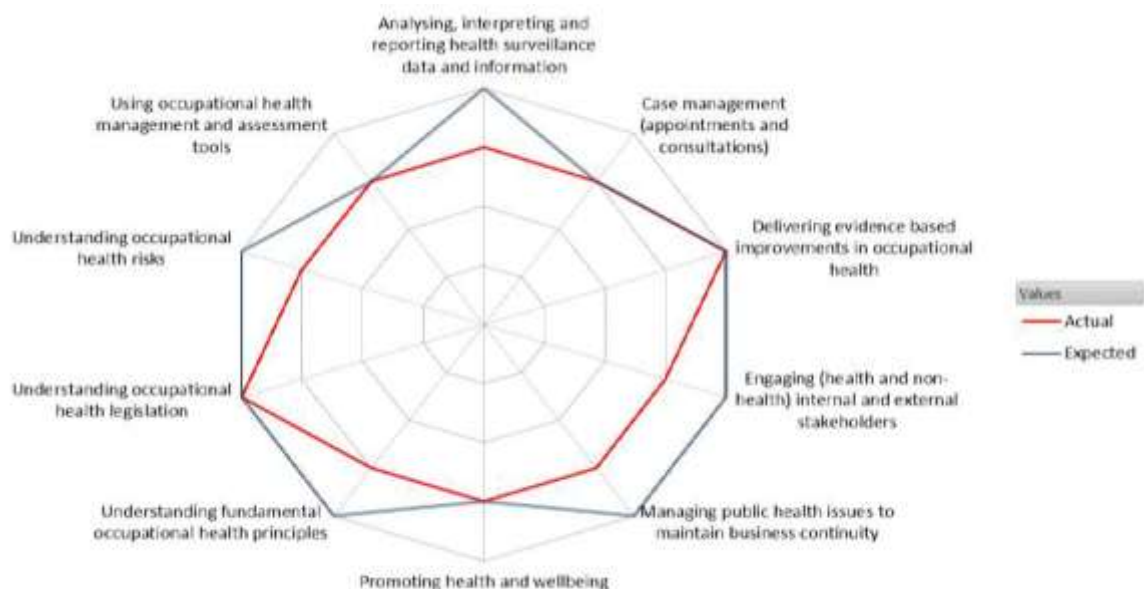
Coming full circle this also helps develop links between the different parts of the business and the SHE Family Framework areas (Safety, Health, Environment and Process Safety).

The outputs at the end of the process are thus:

- **Identification of the deficiencies in competence;**
- **Conversations between managers and staff;**
- **Development Plans in place (training programmes);**
- **Ongoing review and updating of the Competency Framework.**

Dr David Harrison and Paul Winstanley (National Air Traffic Services (NATS))

The organisation employs 4,500 staff and is part privatised and part State owned. A Just Culture programme has been established and is a key component for creating the right environment for leadership. Twenty different routes of demonstrating a commitment to safety and to safety leadership have been identified covering a number of facets, ranging from Policies, Strategies and Accountabilities through to Trade Union Engagement and Collaboration, also encompassing Investment Projects, Incident Investigation and Scenario Exercises and finally includes Target Setting and Reporting Metrics.

Culture is a delicate and fragile state to maintain, and NATS definition is:

> *"A culture where staff are not punished for their actions, omissions or decisions taken by them that are commensurate with their experience and training, but where gross negligence, wilful violations and destructive acts are not tolerated"*

Such a culture should be evident throughout the organisation and encompass the management systems, leadership, systems of work etc that are employed. A mature learning environment is encouraged via both reported and unreported 'loss of separation' investigations, which examine the causes for aircraft separation distance barriers being compromised during flight. The unreported events are key as they represent the same problems as those that are officially reported and so provide further opportunities for learning and improving safety performance.

The collation and use of this data to improve control measures helps demonstrate to staff the benefit of such reporting and encourages a confidence and openness between employees and managers. This open culture has lead to a significant reduction in anonymous reporting as staff have become more aware and concerned over the potential impact on both themselves and their colleagues.

Leadership plays an important part in growing this culture; public policy commitments, guidance to staff, effective training, positive feedback and reinforcement and a consistent attitude from managers all help create and maintain a Just Culture. Equally for their part staff need to understand their personal responsibility and accountability and their role in taking safety performance forward.

Just Culture creates the environment for more honest and open discussion of risks, contributes to learning safety lessons when things do go wrong, helps determine the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and leads to a just treatment of staff.

Andrew Butler (Aston Martin)

Aston Martin carried out an Integrated System review of its business which covered all aspects of the organisation. This lead to the Aston Martin 'Temple' framework, which sets out the Vision of the organisation that is built on a sound base of a Safe Working Environment and Processes and also the Aston Martin Culture of being an Open, Straightforward, Honest and Responsible company.

Critical success Factors are defined for the 'Pillars' of Product, Quality, Delivery, Cost, People, Environment and Customers and for each of these there are high level standards even for the basic minimum levels of compliance and performance expectation.

Health and safety considerations pervade throughout all of these essential pillars and are similarly defined within a temple framework:

Leaders are expected to comply and promote the frameworks via personalised Mission Statements which set the performance expectations for all employees:

- **Share best practice and raise the standard of health and safety management;**

- **Deliver a Centre of Excellence within a continuous improvement culture;**

- **Demonstrate a proactive attitude to risk as part of the overall culture;**

- **Contribute to a world class safety performance by being involved in safety activities on a daily basis;**

- **Enhance knowledge and skills and develop the talent of staff.**

Routes to employee engagement, which are a central part of achieving the above, include a Staff Forum, Heath and Safety Committees, Suggestion Schemes, Reward and Recognition Programmes, Wellness Programmes, Monthly Campaigns, Newsletters and a Team Safety League Table.

The 2010 Health & Safety Objective for Aston Martin was 'to create a competitive spirit amongst the workforce to enable a zero accident mentality.' This is achieved through a programme of Safety Audits, Near Miss Reporting, Safety Walks, Ergonomic Design and ongoing On the Job Training. This has resulted in a significant improvement in a number of accident data trends; the number of reportable incidents has dropped from 352 (in 2008) to 25 (in 2013), near miss reporting numbers have increased and the number of accident claims is now very low.

The Objective is accompanied by a desire to achieve improvements 'WIV SKILL':

Wisdom, Inspiration and Vision

can be achieved through:

Specific Knowledge, Imagination, Limitless Energy and Learning.