

## **Electricity North West Limited: Behavioural Safety Programme Summary**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The control of health and safety risk within Electricity North West Limited is heavily reliant on the behaviour of workers undertaking operational activities. Primarily this risk control factor is due to the peripatetic and dynamic nature of much of the work undertaken within the business and the subsequent need for workers to continually make risk based decisions, interpret established rules and determine and apply appropriate controls.

Whilst many aspects of influencing behaviours have been considered in the development of the procedures and competence criteria utilised in Electricity North West operations and are inherent in the HS&E management system, a specific programme looking at positively changing health and safety related behaviours was initiated in 2011 and which continues to run.

The programme is based on current research into improving safety cultures and in particular the “Affective Safety Management” ASM® concept developed by the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management and continued through the work of Dr Tim Marsh of Ryder Marsh Ltd. A key part of the programme is behavioural safety training delivered by Ryder Marsh with change being delivered by the Electricity North West individuals and teams involved.

### **2. PROGRAMME**

The programme originally involved the establishment of workforce project teams, selected from within business areas and made up of people identified as key safety “leaders” in that area. The teams then attended a four day training course covering behavioural theory, safety culture theory, behavioural analysis models, just culture, leading by example, challenging effectively, coaching, and behavioural observation and feedback. From the training the project team then applied the learning in the workplace by identifying and prioritising positive or negative behaviours that they or their colleagues demonstrate, identifying root causes and then initiating changes.

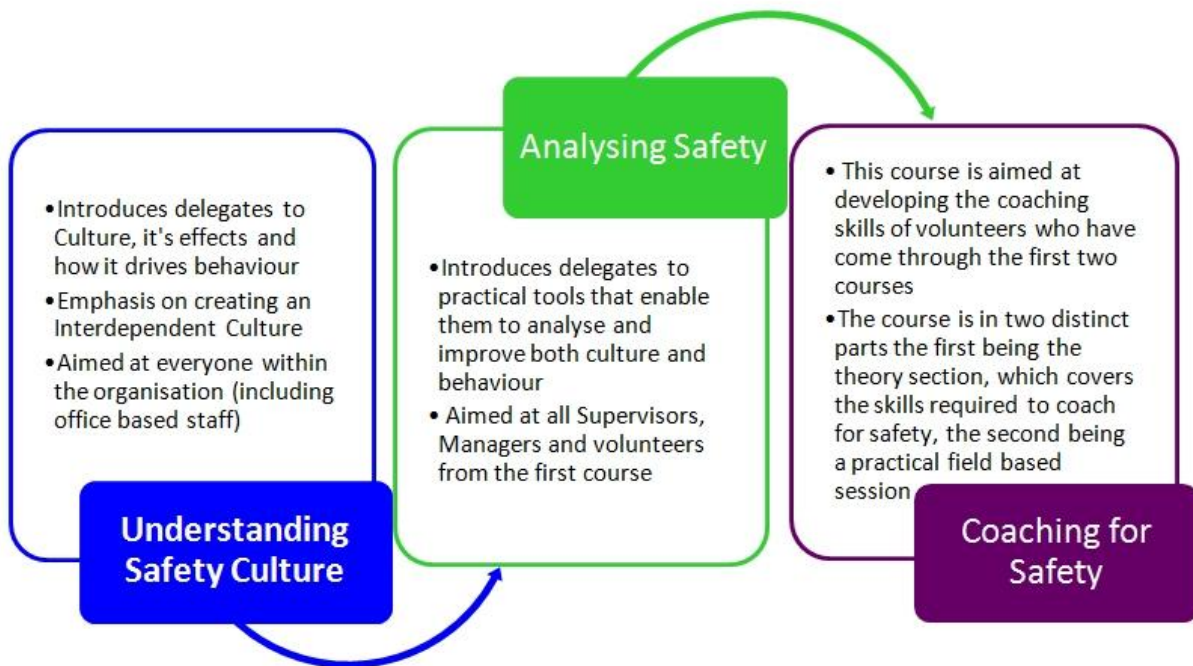
At the same time as the specific analysis and change activities are being undertaken, the project team utilised their learning and development to observe, analyse and challenge everyday unsafe behaviours and in doing so develop the overall safety culture within their area.

Underpinning the workforce projects was the development of the wider corporate safety culture and in particular leadership briefings for board and senior teams, the development of a process for escalating, implementing and communicating change ideas, the development of a “just culture” and the delivery of the overall people and leadership change programme.

In November 2011 a review of the programme was undertaken, with feedback from attendees and Ryder Marsh being analysed. Feedback from delegates was very positive and the general consensus among those who attended was that the programme is very important, leading edge, and could make a real difference to safety performance, but the training is too long which will prove a blocker to the wider roll-out of the programme and therefore its effectiveness.

It was also identified during the review that there is a very close link between the leadership and coaching elements of the behavioural safety programme and wider Electricity North West leadership and development programme.

To maintain the momentum of the programme, and ensure its wider impact, it was decided to split the training into three modules, all of which would be linked into the wider Electricity North West leadership and development programme to ensure any potential synergies were realised.



### Module 1: Understanding Culture

This is a one day course aimed at everyone in the company. It looks at the effects of culture and helps participants to step back and look at the culture of the organisation. The course introduces the concept of behavioural safety and how we can use this to improve the safety culture within the company.

Within this course we look at:

- The Parker & Hudson model of safety culture
- The Bradley Curve, with an emphasis on the importance of developing an Interdependent culture
- The just culture process and how it applies to Electricity North West
- To understand the just culture process we look at the human brain and its limitations
- An introduction to behavioural observations

The emphasis of the course is on creating and interdependent culture, where people are willing to challenge unsafe behaviours and importantly willing to be challenged to keep each other safe.

### Module 2: Analysing Safety

This one day course offers delegates the opportunity to gain practical skills to enable them to understand and analyse both culture and behaviour. This course will look at:

- The ABC behavioural analysis model
- The Swiss Cheese Model
- Five Why's Analysis

This course is aimed at Managers, Supervisors and those who would like to volunteer to continue on the program from the first course with an aim to becoming a safety leader within the business. Delegates who have attended this course will continue the formal analysis and correction of unsafe behaviours in workforce project teams.

### **Module 3: Coaching for Safety**

This is a one and a half day course, which is aimed at developing the coaching skills of leaders within the business. The course will look at:

- The principles of coaching
- The power of ownership
- Providing feedback
- Communication and questioning skills

This course is aimed at those who have been through the first and second course and therefore builds on the techniques the participants have gained thus far. The half day section of the course is a mentored opportunity to put their skills in to action by conducting observations and providing feedback.

In 2012 over 700 employees attended the Module 1 training with the remaining 900 employees attending this in 2013-2015.

At the same time, voluntary teams from across the business will attend the analysing safety module in 2013. These teams will then begin the work of analysing unsafe behaviours and implementing or proposing changes to reduce the frequency of these actions whilst increasing the frequency of safe acts.

The coaching for safety module is closely aligned to the leadership development programme and will give the opportunity to support that programme. The roll-out of this module to all managers, team leader and supervisors will be linked to the wider management development programme and will be delivered in 2013-14.

Methods for measuring success of the programme, in terms of recording behavioural changes and positive interventions by employees, will also be developed and implemented in 2013.

### **3. LEARNING**

In terms of what has worked well and what could be improved in terms of the programme, as mentioned above when the programme started, it quickly became apparent that four days training was too long for many delegates and would inhibit the ability of the organisation to expose all employee to the programme in a reasonable time. There were also the cost implications which were not sustainable.

By splitting the training into modules this has allowed far more people to attend training and begin to put the learning into practice.

Overall the fact that the training focuses on the individual, human behaviours, how individual influence each other and the difference they can make, has resulted in the vast majority of delegates enjoying the training and coming away keen to put their learning into practice. Most delegates attend these events expecting to be “told” about health and safety but actually go away having learned about people and empowered and motivated to change their own behaviours.

The major change that needs to be made, and which probably applies to all similar programmes, is the ability to measure success in terms of different behaviours. This does happen but it would be better to have real evidence to support the investment in the programme and to demonstrate actual risk reduction rather than just rely on a leap of faith.