



An advanced approach to

Behavioural Safety

Contents

KEY ELEMENTS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	2
THE BACKGROUND	5
SAFETY LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR	12
DEVELOPING A JUST CULTURE & LEARNING ORGANISATION.....	14
SUPERVISION AND COACHING	16
EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT & TEAMWORK	18
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	20
MAKING A START	22
CASE STUDIES	23
CLIENT BASE	25
PARTNERS	26
CONTACT US	27

Key Elements & Guiding Principles

Key Elements

The Psychalogica approach to behavioural safety includes a focus on a number of key elements:

- safety leadership behaviour
- the development of a just culture and learning organisation
- supervision and coaching
- employee involvement and teamwork
- performance management

Together, these form pieces of the Psychalogica behavioural safety jigsaw.



The Psychalogica emphasis is on *an integrated and holistic approach* to the problem of influencing people to behave safely whatever the situation.

Bespoke Design

As our clients have differing needs and aspirations, the solutions we devise with them vary. What this means in practice is that any intervention we design may involve a focus on just one of the above, may involve a combination of them, or indeed may include all of them.

What is common across all of our clients however is the desire to develop a fully integrated approach, building on their existing organisational strengths, and breaking innovative new ground so as to drive ever upwards their safety performance.

Our Guiding Principles

- **Each company is different** – the best behavioural approach will be one that is tailored to your company's needs
- **Getting people to behave safely is a complex task** – we need to beware of over-simplistic solutions that fail to impact on performance and fail to provide a good return on investment
- **Having the right attitude does not guarantee the right behaviour** – attitudes are generally resistant to change, behaviour change is easier to achieve (and ultimately leads to attitude change)
- **Worker behaviour is influenced by manager behaviour** – we need to focus on behaviour at all levels of the organisation
- **Culture, climate, systems, design and infrastructure** all serve to influence how people behave so we need to adopt a wide focus on a variety of organisational factors

- **You can't force commitment to safety** – the need is to encourage safe behaviour and safety attitudes through adopting a mainly positive approach to influence
- **Safety conversations are one tool in the behavioural strategy** – but they are only part of the strategy and typically they are only partially effective
- **Any attempt to change behaviour should be founded on established science** - our approach incorporates: Applied Behaviour Analysis, Social Learning Theory, Reinforcement Theory, Goal Theory, Transactional Analysis and Performance Feedback
- **Unsafe behaviour can be responsible for organisational as well as individual accidents** - we are talking about much more than preventing cuts and bruises – outcomes range from the likes of these to major catastrophes and multiple fatalities
- **Teamwork is an extremely powerful tool** – we need to embrace the synergies that result from teamwork and recognise how these can drive safety performance
- **Organisations are political structures** – safety issues can lead to defensive attitudes and serve to prevent deep down learning. The need is to bring these issues to the surface and promote the development of an effective learning organisation

The Background

Why is behaviour important?

Safety is serious business. A poor safety record can make a difference between profitability and insolvency, can seriously damage a company's reputation, increases exposure to litigation and action by the HSE, and increasingly is regarded as being morally indefensible. Most importantly, poor safety ruins people's lives!

Most companies now appreciate that a good safety record makes good business sense and so aspire to achieving the highest levels of performance. Even one incident or accident is now held to be one too many! However, even those companies that have developed the most advanced and comprehensive safety management systems are finding it hard to achieve levels of safety performance that matches their aspirations. Why?

The answer lies in how people perform - how they behave.

What causes accidents?

People cause accidents!

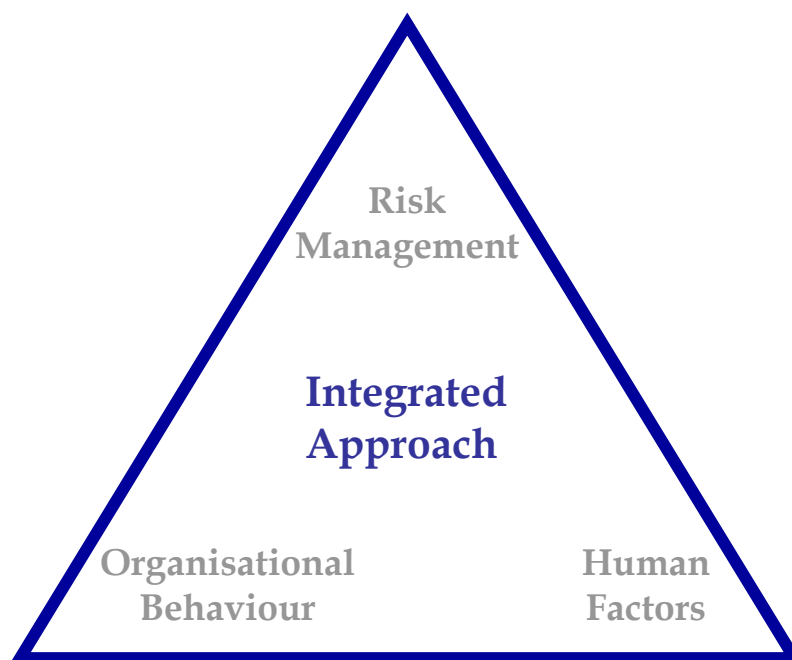
As human beings we are all fallible - we make mistakes and suffer from slips and lapses of attention. All of these at times result in an unplanned event and subsequent loss. Such **errors** can emanate out of poor design of the job or the workplace, or they can be the result of inadequate training. They can also result from inattentivity and mood.

As human beings we also have the tendency to take the path of least effort. In safety this means that we can be tempted into taking unnecessary risks. In other words, we have a tendency to **violate** systems, procedures and safety rules. None of us are exempt - we all do it, it is normal behaviour. (How many of us at times exceed the

speed limit?). And we do it for what at the time seems good reasons to us! (We believe by ignoring the speed limit we will get there quicker). Like mistakes, unnecessary risk taking leads to incidents and accidents.

Errors and violations

Statistics tell us that the majority of accidents are caused in some way by human behaviour (more than 80% according to the HSE). Some of these result from people making mistakes, whilst others are caused by more intentional acts – violations. Attempts to improve safety must consider both errors and violations although dealing with each of these requires a different approach. Developing preventative approaches to human error typically requires *human factors* expertise, whereas dealing with the violation problem relates more to the discipline of *organisational behaviour*. Of course, given the specifics of the issues involved, expertise relating to *risk management* is also important.



The Psychalogica approach brings these three disciplines together. Our orientation is an integrated one, the aim being to develop a holistic approach to the problem of

human beings and safety performance. In so doing, we combine established theory and knowledge in the disciplines of risk management, human factors and organisational behaviour so as to produce a more *joined-up safety strategy*.

What about the role of management?

The behaviours that managers and supervisors practice are there to make a difference. A fundamental aspect of their task is to influence how those who work for them behave. In this respect, managers and supervisors are responsible for the behaviour of their workforce. What does this mean?

It means that we need to focus on the behaviour of managers and supervisors if we are going to improve worker behaviour and therefore improve safety. Whilst a worker may have suffered an injury through taking an unnecessary risk, their choice of the risky behaviour will not have occurred in isolation but within the context of the company setting and culture.

Managers and supervisors, like everyone else, are also prone to take the path of least effort. This can mean that they may not be as vigilant in terms of monitoring what is going on or as focused on ensuring that rules and procedures get followed. Such behaviour contributes to increased levels of risk and an increased probability that accidents will happen.

Of course, the train of influence does not stop there. How senior managers and company leaders behave is instrumental in determining how those who report to them behave. The relationship between how people behave and safety performance exists at all levels of an organisation and the implication is that if we are going to make a difference then we must also focus on these various levels.

Why are people prone to error?

None of us are perfect – we all have the capacity to get it wrong from time to time. This can be a result of our information processing capabilities, a lack of knowledge, or because we have been distracted. Whilst the first two require a technical understanding and typically expert solutions, our ability to maintain focus may be the result of individual factors, but can also be explained in terms of the organisational culture. A strong safety culture means that people are much more likely to maintain their focus on safety irrespective of any changes in their working conditions. Because of this, we include in our approach an emphasis on promoting a strong focus so as to eradicate errors such as slips and lapses.

Why do people violate safety rules and procedures?

People take a risk because they think that they will get away with it! In terms of safety, people risk-assess their choice of behaviour. In their minds they will be weighing up the probability of:

- Will I get caught for breaking the rule?
- Will I get hurt?

Set against these negative factors, people also think in terms of the benefit they will derive from acting unsafely. Typically this is in terms of:

- Saving time
- Avoiding additional effort
- Avoiding discomfort

In many instances, people conclude that it is worth taking the risk because the various negative outcomes are unlikely to happen whereas in contrast the benefits to them are almost certain to occur.

This explains why people engage in the following examples of risky or unsafe behaviours:

- Not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Driving in excess of the speed limit
- Handling heavy equipment without help or use of an lifting aid
- Smoking and drinking to excess
- Avoiding reading / following procedures

In each case the unsafe behaviour is associated with an outcome that is satisfying or of benefit to the individual. We all know that there are many more such risky behaviours! So what is the problem?

The problem is that these behaviours represent **unnecessary risks** – and there will be times when the taking of such risks will produce a negative outcome for the individual or for others in the organisation. This explains why people can get injured or incidents happen when least expected. An individual will have behaved in the same way many times before but nothing bad has happened to them. Through such experience we all learn bad habits!

Behaviour and Consequences

What the previous paragraphs illustrate is the fact that our choice of behaviour is largely determined by our expectations of the consequences that will follow if we choose that behaviour.

- If we expect a behaviour to lead to a favourable consequence then we are likely to behave in that way
- If we expect our behaviour will lead to a negative outcome, then we are likely to try and avoid that behaviour

It follows from this that if we want to influence how people behave then we must set about understanding how consequences work and how we can manage them to get the behaviours we want - how to get the best from people!

Have to or want to behaviour

In terms of strategy, an organisation can choose to force compliance (threaten negative consequences for non-compliance) or it can choose to encourage safe behaviour (make safe behaviour easier to do and more attractive, and make available positive consequences for compliance). Both strategies work to reduce unnecessary risk taking – but in different ways and with varying degrees of success.

The use of a forced compliance strategy is disliked and generally leads only to “minimal compliance”. This is *have to behaviour*, which has to be driven by close supervision and the use of sanctions. Further outcomes are poor morale and the likelihood of dysfunctional behaviour springing up elsewhere.

The use of encouragement generates *want to behaviour*. It also supports the development of a positive culture. The challenge is that, at least in the short term, adopting a positive strategy takes more effort and consideration. However, such a strategy generates levels of performance that far exceed that possible from the minimal compliance attitudes associated with a forced compliance strategy.

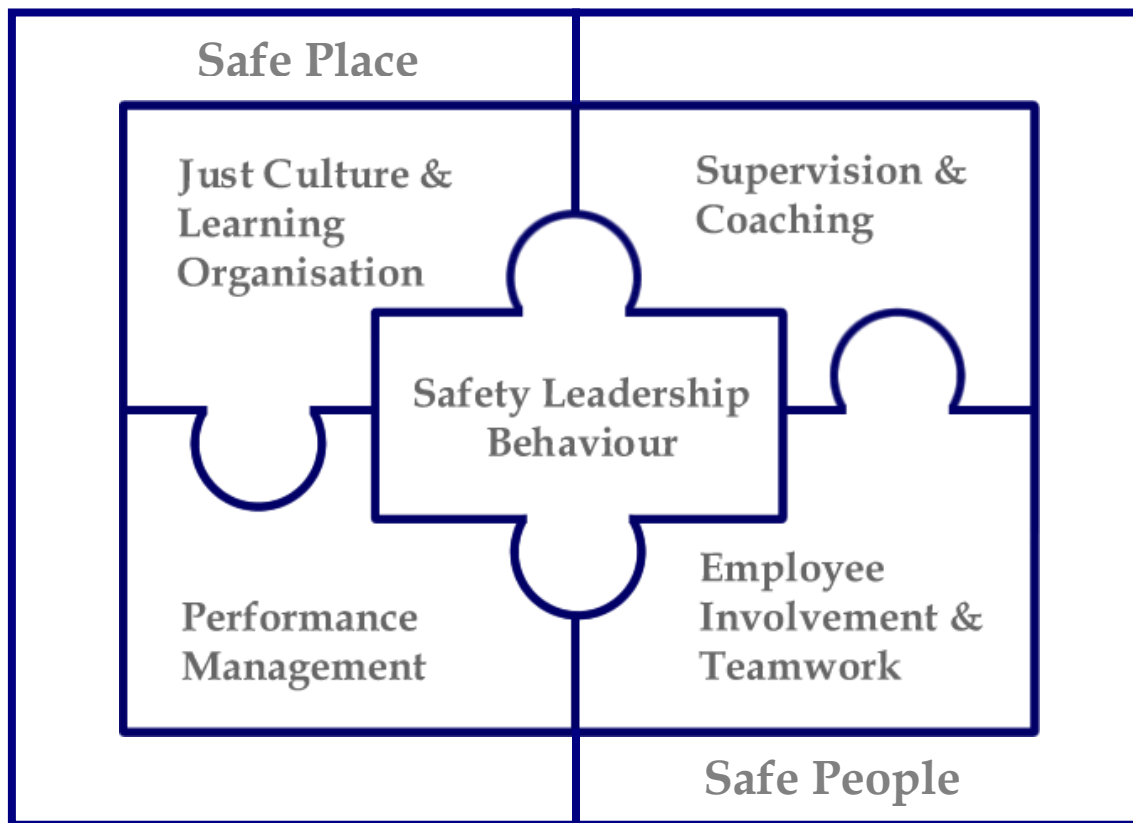
A Question of Balance

The above paragraphs polarise the issues. Best practice is represented by the careful and considered use of both positive and negative consequences to drive the required behaviours. The issue is a question of balance. Whilst there are times when the use of sanctions is called for, the healthiest, safest and most successful companies place far greater emphasis on managing behaviour through the use of positive consequences.

The safe behaviour challenge therefore involves the managed use of positive consequences to drive effort and achievement.

Safe Place, Safe People, Safe Behaviour, Safe Organisation

We now return to the Psychalogica behavioural safety jigsaw. Built on a foundation of a strong safety environment (*safe place*) and competence (*safe people*), the aim is to influence how people act (*safe behaviour*), and together create the *safe organisation*. In the following sections, we explain in more detail the separate pieces of the jigsaw.



Safety Leadership Behaviour

How leaders behave at all levels of an organisation is instrumental in exerting influence over how others behave.

Leaders exert influence through:

- Providing clarity about what is important and valued
- Showing others how to behave through exemplary modelling of critical behaviours
- Reinforcing behaviour when they see others acting safely



How we can support your company

Beginning at the top of the organisation we work with your Leadership Team to help its members clarify or review core values, the safety vision and key guiding principles. Together these form the basis of how people in the company should behave at all levels. Having achieved this clarity, we then guide the Leadership Team in how to make these aspects of safety management “come alive” throughout all aspects of your company’s operations.

We also work with your Leadership Team to help identify the critical leadership behaviours and the means to ensure that these are consistently practiced. The focus here is on individual members of the Leadership Team and all those others in the company who perform a safety leadership role.

Part of our emphasis here is on the more informal aspects of leadership influence. Leaders by their presence will be exerting influence – both intended and unintended. We explore how certain behaviours can produce inadvertent and negative influence

and in so doing raise the level of consciousness in leaders to new levels such that they create a stronger drive within the organisation.

A further focus is on audit and evaluation. Our work here is directed at supporting your company to determine that your people are behaving as intended. The starting point for this is the safety values and principles – the aim being to establish the extent to which these are consistently reflected in people's behaviour and decision-making.

Developing a Just Culture & Learning Organisation

This concerns the setting of expectations in terms of how people should behave and clarity about what happens when people don't comply.

It is also about how the organisation pursues learning when things go wrong or from situations where risk is

exposed. A significant tension exists between holding people accountable for their behaviour and the need to encourage open reporting.



This tension needs managing. The promotion of a blame-free culture may encourage reporting but in many organisations it is something that cannot be delivered. In contrast, a just and fair culture promotes a sense of accountability but also seeks to maintain a positive climate such that people will openly report risk issues.

Generally, people will accept a disciplinary system if it is highly transparent, seen to be fair and consistently managed. The issue here is that there has to be a “bottom line”. There are some behaviours that can never be tolerated. On the other hand people make mistakes and take short cuts for very good reasons. The major emphasis therefore needs to be on understanding and learning – learning so as to prevent reoccurrence.

How we can support your company

Your aim will be to promote a positive safety culture and climate and drive an emphasis on continuous learning and improvement. We work with you to uncover some of the underlying assumptions that serve to underpin current practice and

which can significantly inhibit learning in your organisation. We help you to challenge these assumptions and works towards creating a stronger culture.

We review with you both the design and the working of your current approach to discipline in the context of safety. This includes sampling the views of the workforce with respect to issues such as fairness and consistency. Our focus also includes a review of the clarity of expectations and how these are managed. We also review with you how safety concerns and near misses get reported and how your company promotes confidence in the workforce such that they feel they can report without fear of retribution.

With respect to learning, we help you to develop effective incident investigation processes that enable you to identify, understand and respond to the behavioural and human factor issues. Our emphasis here is on achieving deep-down learning, developing thinking outside of the box to uncover important issues that might not otherwise surface.

Supervision and Coaching

Line managers and supervisors have a key role to play in both monitoring and influencing the behaviour of those who work with them. The issue here concerns what constitutes effective practice? Good practice produces high levels of safe behaviour. Poor practice can damage morale, create confusion and leave unsafe behaviour uncorrected.



In the context of safe behaviour, managers and supervisors face two different situations. The first is when they come across examples of good practice. The need here is to reinforce this good practice and so encourage its reoccurrence.

The second situation is when they encounter people behaving unsafely. The need here is for challenge and correction through coaching (or in exceptional circumstances, when the policy requires it, the use of the disciplinary system).

There are two significant issues here to be addressed:

- The quality of the interaction as managed by the manager / supervisor
- The frequency of such interactions (manager / supervisor visibility)

How we can support your company

We work with you in addressing both of these key issues. Through training and coaching we focus on providing managers and supervisors with the appropriate skills that will enable them to effectively deliver reinforcement, to manage coaching conversations, and to deal with difficult individuals and conflict situations.

In addition, we can also help establish systems that will encourage managers and supervisors to perform their monitoring and coaching role and to record their observations. This second aspect is important in that it makes a significant contribution to your organisation's intelligence gathering activity. This data can be used to identify trends regarding persistent behavioural problems.

Employee Involvement & Teamwork

Employee ownership of and engagement in safety are key aspects of a strong culture. However, achieving such high-level buy-in is not guaranteed. If the conditions are not right, employees may value safety but will not necessarily get actively involved – instead they are likely to act as passive recipients, leaving much of the effort and drive to management.



For those organisations seeking to achieve the highest levels of safety performance, then employee involvement is likely to be not just desirable but essential. The challenge then is how high levels of ownership and engagement can be achieved, and what activities can the employees take on to achieve maximum impact.

Our interest is on two key aspects:

- How to maximise teamwork synergies, and
- How to design and introduce systems that will achieve buy-in from the workforce and serve to add value in reducing risk

How we can support your company

We place significant emphasis on working with you to create local ownership and involvement through the development of an effective teamwork approach. Small teams are most effective as it's members have a stronger affinity with performance and purpose – in larger teams the effect is reduced, with less identification and a tendency to what is termed “social loafing”. Creating teams that have few members, clear goals, some latitude in how these are pursued, and regular delivery of feedback

have been identified as strong determinants of enhanced performance. Our approach is to apply these principles to safety.

In addition to this focus on team process, we help you to review and identify tools that the workforce can be introduced to. Typically, this will include the development of a behavioural observation system. We have an in-depth knowledge of a wide variety of different approaches and through careful assessment we support you in selecting an approach that is the best match for your organisation. Following this, our consultants work with you to design the implementation strategy, which may emphasise an external approach to training or train-the-trainer.

Performance Management

Measuring safety performance is an increasing challenge. Many companies are now searching for more reliable means of assessing how good they really are. The reliance on output measures such as accidents and incidents becomes less informative as performance improves. The need is to measure those activities that keep the company safe - safety inputs.



The problem here is how to identify those activities that most reliably predict good safety performance. Typically, this will involve a focus on a range of different **inputs** including audits and inspections, toolbox talks, safety meetings, closing-out of safety actions etc. The measures will also need to focus on both activity levels and the quality of the events.

In addition to a focus on these safety input activities, organisations should also look to measure levels of **risk**. Such a measure can provide useful insight into whether progress is being made once output measures have been brought to consistently low levels. Risk measures might include information obtained from near miss reports and other means through which safe and unsafe behaviour is monitored. The occurrence of high potential incidents would also fall into this category.

Having identified input and risk measures, a further challenge involves making sense of what are likely to be a variety of metrics so as to produce a clear and comparative indicator of progress. What is required here is a single score that can be compared month by month.

Measuring safety performance is a source of **performance feedback** to your company's Leadership Team and safety director / manager. However, the use of such measures has much wider significance. Providing teams with such performance feedback can be a factor in getting them interested in improving their performance. The need here is to devise systems such that local teams have easy and regular access to performance feedback which relates specifically to their own performance.

Many companies have at least considered some form of **reward and recognition** programme for safety performance. This is a tricky area. Rewarding good safety results may mean that you have rewarded good fortune rather than good practice. Managed and targeted correctly, the use of some form of recognition programme can have a significant impact on effort and motivation. The challenge is in the design and the operation of the measurement and recognition process. Get it right and you have the means to continuously improve both your safety *effort* and *achievement*.

How we can support your company

We work with you to define a variety of input and risk measures that will complement the data you already collect with respect to accidents and incidents. Using our unique *performance matrix* tool we can also help you establish the means to reconcile the various metrics into a single safety performance score. We can also help you generalise the use of this tool down to team level - providing the means to show how individual units contribute to the safety effort.

Once these measurement systems are established, we can then help you focus on how to use these as the basis for managing your safety reward and recognition process. The focus here is to move away from recognition tied to safety outputs, to one where the focus is on team performance across a wide range of input and risk variables. We work with you to develop a reward and recognition policy that is positioned to drive team effort.

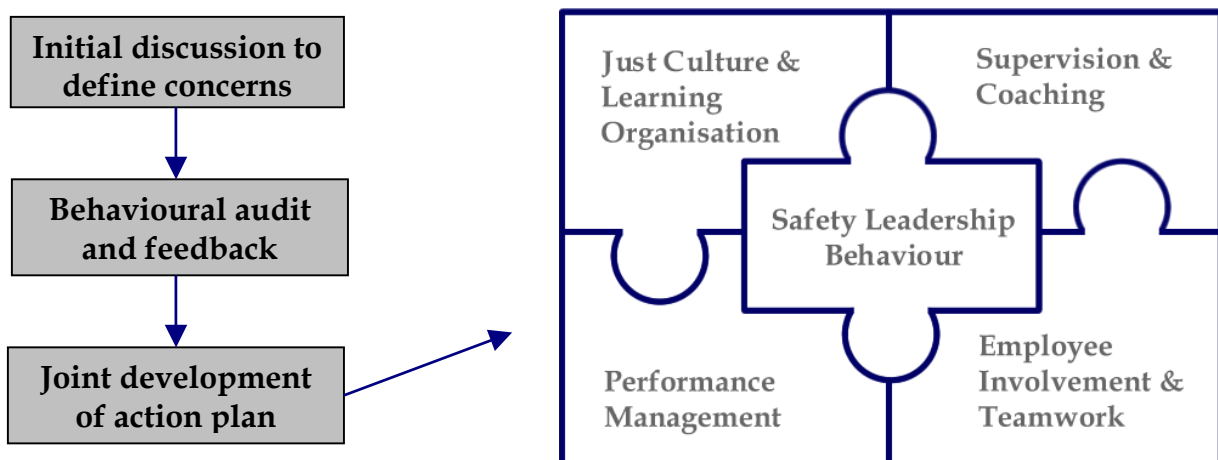
Making a start

We custom design our interventions with you based on an initial analysis of your company's needs as well as your aspirations and priorities. Where possible, we like to begin by carrying out a *behavioural audit*.

Our aim here is to establish how behaviour is influenced in your company - through various activities we look to identify patterns of behaviour and the drivers for these. We also investigate the extent to which practice reflects your company policies, systems and procedures. From this we produce for you a written report highlighting the key behavioural issues and the implications for future development. The behavioural audit is conducted by our *behavioural psychologists* and *risk management consultants*. The activities we carry out on site include:

- Climate survey
- Review of incident / accident data
- Review of systems and procedures
- Interviews with senior managers
- Discussions with groups of workers
- Direct observation of people at work

The process is as follows:



Case Studies

Case Study 1: Implementation of a behavioural safety process in an international oil & gas company with operations in UK and North Africa

This major project has involved all of the key elements and delivered in a multi-cultural setting. The work began with the Leadership Team of the company to help them define their values, safety vision, key principles and behavioural expectations. The project then involved a large-scale training programme involving the entire workforce. This training provided the basis for the development of a systematic approach to supervision and coaching, and the implementation of local behaviour change teams. Finally, the focus moved on to assist the company in establishing a performance management process based around the use of local performance matrices.

Case Study 2: Large-scale behavioural audit in a UK train operating company

This project involved taking a fresh look at the problem of train drivers passing red signals ("signals passed at danger" - SPADs). Following a programme of observation and interview a report produced, highlighting key concerns relating to the behaviour of driver managers and the driver performance management system. This was followed by a series of workshops for driver managers targeted at developing their performance management skills using behavioural theory.

Case Study 3: Implementation of a worker managed behaviour change process in a UK chemical plant

The plant was concerned that members of the workforce were continuing to get hurt often because of relatively simple violations. Work was carried out with the management, supervision and workforce to develop a behaviour change process targeted at eradicating these violations. The result was an increase in compliance, a better safety performance, and an improved climate.

Case study 4: Development of a behavioural contractor management strategy in an international oil & gas company

This major oil & gas company employs many contractor companies to conduct its operations and maintenance activity. The starting point was a concern that the contractor companies were falling short in both their safety effort and performance. Following some initial research, an innovative process was developed to encourage contractor companies to increase their safety efforts. The outcome has been a significant improvement in contractor company ownership of safety with a commensurate increased effort to drive continuous improvement. All parties reported high levels of satisfaction with the process and safety performance is extremely high.

Case study 5: Implementation of a behaviour change and performance management process in a UK wide utility company

This major company with international operations recognised the need to introduce a behavioural safety process into its engineering activity as part of its drive to improve safety performance. The challenge here was to design and implement a workable process in a largely itinerant and dispersed workforce. The subsequent approach based on safety teams positioned them as the key safety performance units in the company. Performance was linked to a reward and recognition system designed around behavioural principles.

Case study 6: Implementation of a worker managed behaviour change process in two companies in Denmark

These projects were similar to case study 3 both in design and outcome. Both companies are involved in chemical processing producing ingredients for the food industry. They are competitors - the second recognising the value gained by the first company after it had introduced the behaviour change process.

Case study 7: Carrying out safety and behavioural audits in a number of newly acquired gas fired power stations for a major UK company.

Having developed a strategy of acquiring these new assets, the parent company identified the need to carry out an external audit at each power station. The result was a report that focused on a range of operational, behavioural and cultural issues from which the company has developed action plans.

Client Base

Psychalogica clients include the following companies and organisations, representing a variety of different business sectors:

- BP
- BAE Systems
- Brighton & Hove
- Cambridge Assessment
- Centrica
- Environment Agency
- Goldman Sachs
- GE Energy
- Hexcel
- Johnson Matthey
- Luddon Construction
- National Grid
- Nestlé UK
- Nexia Solutions (BNG)
- Nexen (Canadian oil and gas)
- Petro-Canada (Canadian oil & gas)
- Shepherd Construction
- TNK-BP (Russian oil & gas)
- Total
- Veolia

Other projects include:

- *Stress Management*
- Development of *Performance Management and Appraisal Process*

Partners

Psychalogica has developed strategic partnerships with the following consultancies:

- Messam & Rider Health and safety consultants, UK based
www.mandr.co.uk



- Pivotal Performance Management development consultants, UK based
www.safe-organisation.co.uk



- The Safety Hub International behavioural safety specialists
thesafetyhub.com



- Groupe Perrier Health & safety consultants, Canada & US based
www.groupeperrier.com

- Enso Consult Management development consultants, Scandinavia
www.ensoconsult.dk



Contact Us

This document provides an overview of the Psychalogica advanced and innovative approach to behavioural safety.

Should you wish to learn more about how we can help your company to improve its safety performance then we would be delighted to hear from you.

You can contact us by e-mail or by phone as follows:

Charles Shoesmith, Managing Director
Psychalogica Ltd

✉ charles.shoesmith@psychalogica.com

☎ +44 (0)1543 432468

☎ +44 (0)7711 560422