

Toward Sustainable Development, Adapting to New Business Challenges

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Last year, 2011, saw the Centenary of the American Society of Safety Engineers, and of course during that past one hundred years the world, society, business and employment conditions have changed beyond recognition. The concept of safety moved from being one beyond that of just an ‘injury-oriented’ approach to encompass the broader, accident-oriented approach.’

Let me at the commencement of this paper endorse such a concept. I shall certainly attempt later to expand on this move, but it is certainly a step in the right direction. It has been my belief for a number of years that just being concerned with “injuries” does not represent best use of safety professionals’ talents and certainly does not present best value for employing organisations. But it has to be stated that this move is not endorsed by a lot of companies or industrial sectors. Heretic that I am, I would also suggest that there is a great deal of resistance within the profession as well.

Let us turn for a moment to the Centre for Safety and Health Sustainability launched at the ASSE PDC June 2011 in Chicago. (1)

The Centre came about after it became apparent that safety professionals were in need of a voice in the shaping of sustainability policies. It will provide new insights into the measurement, management, and impact of safety and health sustainability, with the goal of being a recognised thought leader for sustainability and corporate social responsibility. It will seek to educate the business community on the importance of safety in good corporate governance and corporate social responsibility. The hope is that, through the work of the Centre, all organisations will recognise their responsibility to protect the health and well-being of workers, customers, and neighbouring communities in any business practices, operations, or development.

One can only but applaud this initiative; it is certainly on the right lines and in an early stage. The beginning of perhaps of meeting the some of the challenges, which business in the 21st Century will continue to present to the safety professional. But—and this point must be made—that we are in danger of miss-using the terms of both “safety” and “sustainability.” It must be considered that in using the term “Safety and Health sustainability” that the individual that we must seek to influence in respect of the real decision makers in business will consider that it is just the “negative reporters” adding something else to their portfolio rather than a systematic management approach to control of fundamental business measurement tools.

Could it not be argued that the very terminology seeks to sustain the concept of Safety and Health?

It is the contention of this author that safety is the foundation of what we are attempting to achieve and, therefore, we must be prepared to adapt to the challenge of allowing the subject term to be absorbed within the broader context of sustainability. Let me extend this for a moment by asking the question, How often has the phrase, “Safety should be integral to the work process” been used, or some variation seeking to embed the concept of safety into the very core of company culture? Yet

terminology has been used which has the potential to not be misunderstood by those we seek to influence. The implication of being about sustainability of 'health and safety' rather than safety being an integral part of sustainability and business I would suggest must be addressed by the leaders in our professional organisations. A challenge for them which I would offer is fundamental to move our profession forward.

It is not the desire of this author to be a critic of other professionals, far from it. The respect in which the members of the profession and those that seek to influence is second to none. Their ideas over the years have shaped much. It must be noted however that even in educational arenas there is not clarity.

At this point I should clarify and be comfortable that I am not alone in seeking to expand the influence of the profession on business leaders. There are, as can be observed, initiatives taking place. But I sound a word of caution, for if we misuse terminology then the message will be confusing. Let me make the point again Safety and Health Sustainability, does not, I would offer, relate to 'Sustainability' it relates to sustaining 'Safety and Health.' We should as a profession be seeking to expand our influence and secure the career progression and diversity of those not only engaged in the profession but those who are to come after us.

While thus far the elements of sustainable development have not been expressed in this paper, it is understood as a journey, the symbiosis of various management functional activities which protect the stakeholders and enhance the efficiency of business organisations.

The reader may be aware that the ASSE hosted a Virtual Symposium in September 2011. (2). Again this initiative is applauded and it is sincerely hoped that such events will continue. (It must be stated however that from this authors' perspective you cannot fault a face to face conference in Hawaii!).

In the marketing material for this Virtual Symposium, a comment was made:

'Sustainability, the Engine that Drives Corporate Social Responsibility'

A given definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) taken from the British Standards Institute (BSI) no certifiable standard BS8900 (3): *A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates.* It could be argued that an organisation's desire to remain in business will be a driver, and hence sustainability will drive CSR. Corporate Social Responsibility will be observed therefore as an element of Sustainable Development - Not a driver. This again reinforces my contention that we are in danger of misusing terms and therefore confusing the issue.

Perhaps we have, in these two examples of recent communications or marketing relating to sustainability, uncovered one of the first challenges to which we must adapt;

'Defining the terminology and ensuring that we sing from the same song sheet.'

When I commenced my business life a number of years ago now, an elder colleague advised me: Keep it simple boy, just a variation on the KISS principle. This is a mantra that will be referred to throughout this paper. Perhaps a principle to assist us in meeting all challenges for the future and not just the challenge of sustainability.

Yet in the spirit of recognition of excellent contributions by all of the 'leaders' of this Virtual Symposium event, it must be acknowledged that the expression that sustainability has a major impact

on how we live our lives and do business has a direct link to safety. After all what is more important for you as a safety professional than to sustain life in a safe and healthy environment?

I certainly applaud the initiative and believe that professional bodies understand the difficulties that their members have in the field and they are attempting to address but looking to the future. They know where we should be and know where we are so they have a plan for the way forward.

One of the troubles with most of us in safety work is that we tend to complicate the problems with which we are concerned. We attempt to build importance through the development of an organization. We assume responsibilities that are not rightfully ours.

Merrill C.M. Pollard – *The Journal of the American Society of Safety Engineers* November 1959, reprinted in *Professional Safety* - November 2011. (4)

Why on earth would any paper which is to advocate in some respects safety professionals expanding their role within business organisations include a ‘warning from history?’ Have things changed that fundamentally that we can ignore this very clear expression of ‘keep it simple?’

The answer is no and no. The message is still the same; don’t complicate the issues at hand. The role or function of a safety professional has not changed; they must still work to reduce loss to the business. In essence the challenges are broader and more complex as business develops.

The nature of the loss has changed in respect of the move from injury-oriented to accident oriented prevention strategy and in order to still be effective in the organisation, the safety professional must change and adapt. Many safety professional are primarily driven by the need to reduce the losses to the ‘human’ element of the business, to prevent the loss caused by accidents, the injuries. There are of course other losses which are equally demanding of attention but regret fully we as a professional spend little or no time or even have the enthusiasm to address. Perhaps thought provoking is the concept of the understanding of our profession by business leaders and the other stakeholder groups that we serve.

But perhaps the subject of a separate paper?

A word of justification is perhaps required in respect of this changing paradigm of prevention approach. To quote Frank E. Bird and George L. Germain, *Practical Loss Control Management* (International Loss Control Institute 1991), (5) an accident is defined as an unplanned event which results in harm to people, or damage to property or loss of process. We have taken the best part of twenty years to commence some process of expanding our prevention strategies to encompass the last to parts of this definition but there is still further to go. Not only in achieving a complete strategy for the accomplishment of this definition but to embrace what can only be described as all life, our eco-systems our environment our planet.

It is probably the case that in the world in which we now exist it is no longer acceptable to just do no harm, now you must do some good for your employers, the environment, and your community. Safety professionals have always understood this fact but it is becoming a cause celeb for the media and thus public acceptance of this has never been more intense.

Is a reason that the profession is not in the high regard, by business leaders, by the media is that we as a profession have not changed, risen to the concept of ‘doing some good’ or that the complexity of the subject is not understood and therefore does not command the respect that it should demand?

To quote Frank E. Bird and George L. Germain (again):

What is most likely to occur regarding management of safety and health during the remainder of the 20th Century? Although predicting in print is an open invitation to contention, there are some trends which strongly suggest the direction. Of the fourteen principles outlined: Number 14;

Greater numbers of managers will realize that a modern well-managed safety / loss control program maintains the basic foundation of a complete management system; that it is the only discipline within a company that systematically accomplishes this goal if it is managed with such intent.

Is this still true in the second decade of the 21st Century? I regret that I have no evidence to substantiate neither the positive answer nor even the negative. However I would offer the thought that while many managers do value the philosophy of a well managed 'safety' program, as far as loss is concerned that is a 'dark art' which has been removed from the influence in many cases of the safety professional and regrettably results in a disjointed approach to assist the company in doing what it really must do; To be in business tomorrow.

I believe that a complete management system will look at the 'practical' elements of a loss-making situation. In other words, be it a Loss to people, property or process or as is often being stated in the current maxims of People, Profit and Plant.

Introduction to Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is not new. As a 'Safety Professional' you have been involved in this type of business activity since you first start in employment. Perhaps an explanation of this is the fact that no matter when you joined the workforce as a 'Safety Professional' your task was to assist in ensuring that the employees of a business were available for work the next day. In other words; that they, the workforce were sustained in a state of availability. Perhaps in this paper the challenge will be outlined as 'a new way of thinking,' an expansion perhaps of the various activities which you now could be undertaking to assist your employer in providing employment tomorrow. One could even argue that this author is advocating safety professionals being more involved, taking control of a holistic program that benefit all the stakeholders. We have the skills so, the main challenge is then embracing the future and utilising the skill sets that we are trained in to enhance both individual and professional status.

It must be commented that in many respects the US business community has been slower to embrace sustainable development than their European counterparts, there is now significant change afoot in the United States and around the world and safety and health can and will have a role if it is positioned as part of the sustainability models used by global organisations. It is up to the safety professional to drive that change and ensure that they have the understanding and desire to be at the forefront of this exciting development.

Definitions

Sustainable Development - *Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*

Environment - *surroundings in which an **organisation** operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, and their interrelation*

Quality Assurance - *The maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product*

Safety - *Secure from danger, harm, or evil.*

Corporate Social Responsibility - *A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates.*

These definitions are offered for the purpose of clarity.

Development

It often a source of amusement to me when I see a company expressing the thought: 'We put safety first' not least during one of my flights over to attend this PDC in Denver, 'Safety is our number one priority.' I thought comes into my mind: 'Rubbish!'

Any business that is being honest with itself, its customers and in fact all stakeholders would admit to the doctrine that the first priority of business 'is to be in business tomorrow.'

In the United Kingdom there is a legal requirement under the primary legislation for all companies employing more than five persons to produce, publish, display make available a 'Health and Safety Policy Statement' often called a statement of Intent. This requirement is not unique in some respects to the UK as many Countries within the European Union have a similar undertaking. Ireland and France for example drill down to making this a requirement which is in some respects a local statement for each business location and hence a 'large' corporation could have many statements of intent.

The real issue here is that these documents are of course written by safety professionals, they are a statement of what the Occupational Health and Safety (OHAS) team wish to see happening in the business. Of course the statement is always signed off by the Managing Director or CEO of the business. When reviewing many of such statements as part of contractor evaluations often the words 'Health and Safety is our highest priority' or we put 'safety first' are included.

This rhetoric does however cause a challenge, for it allows the safety professional the comfort of the belief that the company cares. Will always do the right thing and that as long as they, (the professional) reduces to occurrence of injury then they will continue to be employed.

If we are going to meet the challenges of a new business age then we must accept that safety is integral to the business, is part of an overall process and not utilise the comfort of words such as 'safety first' but accept the premise that 'safety is given equal priority as commercial issues.' We then have a foot on the ladder and can continue the journey to control of losses relating to People, Plant and Process.

We are as a professional multi skilled, used to analytic skills, problem solving planning, implementing monitoring and measuring the solutions to the everyday challenges that we see in the workplace.

Lorraine King (*Safety and Health Practitioner November 2010*) (6) commented; *One solution is to develop your business in a sustainable way so that it is efficient and effective as possible in delivering your products or services, and satisfying –if not exceeding – your stakeholders' expectations and needs.*

Efficiency and effectiveness have I would suggest been hijacked by the Quality Assurance team. Is it not their function to ensure that the business has effective processes to ensure a quality of product and service? The 'Let do it right first time' mantra. The safety professional has a role to play in the efficiency and effectiveness of the company. The reduction in 'Loss making events' is after all our reason for existence. I would offer hear the thought that perhaps we should be seeking to integrate the functions of Quality Assurance and 'safety.' After all they have the same overall objective. Our challenge as a safety professional to meet the new requirements of business is to raise our profile and ensure that our functionality is not absorbed but that the Quality function is.

As a safety professional you will know as do I that if a company is to be efficient and effective, it and do without a loss to its most valuable resource, the employee. That is not new; we have been of

course concerned with this for hundreds of years as a profession. We have had in existence for a number of year's efficient safety management systems and processes that are not just about Personal Protective Equipment and machine guarding but include job safety analysis and emergency preparedness. These however only go so far in protecting the people part of the business equation. In the philosophy of the 20th century the People part. The whole being People Property and Process. Now in the 21st Century we are being more inclusive to change to Profit People and Plant. This will require us to adapt and meet the challenge by including such elements as the Environment, Business Continuity, and Energy Management. That is the beginning of sustainable development for the organisation. But wait, I hear being shouted from the roof tops, is that not just complicating matters and going against the advice of Merrill Pollard from fifty years ago?

As we obtain a deeper understanding of sustainability, cutting across the jargon and rhetoric I think you will agree that sustainability, yes means being in business tomorrow, but in many respects is safety re-packaged to prevent harm to individuals and the environment alike:

To be ready with Emergency Preparedness plans.

To be aware of our place in the neighbourhood.

To be aware of how our business affects the community in which it located and the impact of our working life affects the environment in general.

It is an opportunity for the safety professional to put on a business hat and play a proactive role in the development of the business organisation.

This is perhaps a refreshing move on behalf of the oldest safety professional organisation, to encourage its membership to think beyond the traditional injury-oriented prevention strategies to a concept express during the 1990's by Bird and Germain. The question still remains to be posed 'Is this move from an injury to an accident-oriented approach' the first step on the road to sustainable safety or sustainable development? Should 'Safety Professionals' be striving to be more integral to the business and demonstrate in a broader sphere the benefits that a pragmatic cost effective safety programme can bring?

Should we be concerned with the jargon or just be pleased that we are 'doing a useful job'?

In addressing the latter question, the answer must be yes! In order that we can be successful we as a profession and as individual need to speak the language of business. If we talk to senior management only in terms of number of injuries, then we are of course only reporting on the failures of the systems that we have taken a long time to craft. Are we not then seen as the 'reporter of challenges'?

Oh, yes, this is the first thing to notice, we no longer have problems and issues, we have challenges to address and overcome.

If, however, we report on the financial impact of the actions of the company, if we are able to be seen as proactive, assisting in not only the operational aspects of the organisation but addressing issues which enhance the company reputation and the provision of positive tools for the sales force to provide a true denominator. Then we are addressing - Safety - Securing the company and all its stakeholders from danger, harm, or evil. Whatever that might be, legal, regulatory of adverse publicity.

Should we in fact embrace new terminology and discard the term 'safety' and whole heartedly embrace the term 'sustainability,' with all that that entails?

Once the fact that business does not put 'safety first or have it as their highest priority' is admitted and importantly understood and appreciated by 'Safety Professionals' then the real undertaking of being able to ensure that the organisation, its employees and customers are 'secured from danger, harm or evil' can be undertaken in a pragmatic way.

Perhaps this will also start to explain the general premise that ‘management talk the talk of safety but very rarely walk the walk’.

Let me be clear, I am not for one moment advocating that we consign to history the term ‘Safety.’ That is not my intent or desire. I am however suggesting that we rebrand, remarket safety to lose the negativity that it has become associated with it.

Adapting to this challenge will enable us as a profession to meet our objectives and broaden our influence. I perceive an opportunity by integrating safety as part of ‘Sustainability’ which in the current geopolitical environment would have monumental advantages.

As therefore with any field of study to reach a full understanding and appreciation of the present requires comparison with the past and of course being able to meet the challenges for the future it is imperative that we appreciate the present.

Let me be clear in so far as this is a basic management technique, understand where you are and where you need to get to and work on a plan to bridge the gap.

From a North American perspective we have an established, fairly long history of safety professional working to improve the working conditions and control the risks to employees. I must again hear pay due tribute to the hundred years of continuous work of the ASSE. Along with other professional membership organisations they have been influential in no small part in shaping our regulatory environment. It is there that we should perhaps commence looking at understanding and it is even worth mentioning the good old standby of safety professionals, ‘legislation’ (the US Occupational Safety and Health Act 1970 or the Ontario Industrial Safety Act 1972).

Being from Britain, I have to mention however that for us ‘safety legislation’ commenced with the Health Welfare and Morals of Apprentices Act was passed by the UK Parliament in 1802. Of course while Britain is now influenced somewhat heavily by the European Union in respect of safety legislation our primary legislation in respect of safety is the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Why do I make passing reference to legislation? It is of course where most safety professionals feel more comfortable being able to quote a statutory requirement in order to achieve their desired outcomes. But I would offer does not enhance either the corporate aims and objectives or individual ones. It is in my view worth remembering if you aim at legislative compliance and you fail, you have broken the law. Aim however at ‘Best Practice’ and you fail you will probably still have not committed an offence.

Complying with legislation is yes, on the ‘Corporate’ agenda but failing to do so is more about the risk or probability of being caught rather than actual breach itself.

This then leads to the conclusion that ‘safety’ is often viewed as a legal compliance issue by management but because the ‘risk’ of detection in respect of non compliance is perceived as being low, (Routine Inspections by enforcing Authorities infrequent, accidents infrequent) then the profile and opportunities for improvement to be undertaken by safety professionals also become infrequent).

Safety after all is a very difficult thing to prove as being cost effective. If you are not having the accidents and therefore the costs of Workers Compensation (or other equivalent) and are not having the enforcement actions, in these difficult economic times it becomes increasingly difficult for ‘safety’ budgets to be justified.

This becomes a fundamental reason for safety practitioner to become 'multi skilled' to seek synergies with other disciplines that can produce more in the way of a return for employing organisations.

Many health and safety practitioners do have the skills and the will to take on environment tasks and responsibilities but some, understandably, view it as a 'bolt-on' to their traditional job specification, and an extra burden in what is already a very busy role. But in the same way that good health and safety management is good business, so too can good environmental practice benefit the bottom line' (James Draper – Dual Purpose SHP September 2009). (7)

This multi skilled approach has I believe always been at the heart of the skill sets that all 'Safety Professionals' have demonstrated for a number of years. A very simple demonstration of this fact must be the everyday task of 'Risk Assessment.' In Britain that is not an unfamiliar concept but may be for some other jurisdictions so allow here some explanation.

In order that we are of course all at the same starting point let me define a;

Risk – The probability that something (harm) may occur

Hazard – Anything, (solid, liquid, gas, environment or physical agent) that can if uncontrolled can do harm to an individual or the environment.

(The challenge for the future is ensuring that we are all at the same starting point). You will note that in our definition of hazard we include the environment. Pollution of water courses a river contaminated which results in hundreds of dead fish is just as headline making in the media and sometimes more so as the serious injury caused to an employee or contractor.

Unless you were deeply involved in the event, most individuals when relating to the Gulf of Mexico events will not remember the number who tragically lost their lives, cannot even hazard a guess and that number of persons injured but will mention the environmental aspects or impacts.

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting your workers and your business, as well as complying with the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter in your workplace – the ones with the potential to cause harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks, for example, ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip or cupboard drawers kept closed to ensure people do not trip. For most, that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure your most valuable asset – your workforce – is protected.

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Workers and others have a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/fivesteps.htm>) (8)

This Risk based approach to safety, requires in principle for a five step approach to the control of hazards:

- identifying what can harm people in your workplace;
- identifying who might be harmed and how;
- evaluating the risks and deciding on the appropriate controls, taking into account the controls you already have in place;

- recording your risk assessment;
- reviewing and updating your assessment.

How is this, a multi tasking approach? Firstly the 'assessor' needs to be familiar with the work process, familiar with the effects of chemicals on the human body, familiar with the mechanisms of injury, aware of potential alternatives and various methods of working, analytical in determining the outcomes of such alternatives. It must be added of course that this is a systematic approach which is not misaligned to other systems approaches that will be discussed later in this paper.

I honestly do admire the professionals that undertake such work. So now that we have determined you have the skills, it may be appropriate to examine some of the synergies between 'traditional safety' and some of the other skill sets within the area of 'Sustainable Development.

Before turning to the elements of sustainability, I'd like to just again turn to those two, in my visionaries from the 1990's Frank E. Bird and George L. Germain (Practical Loss Control Management (International Loss Control Institute 1991) and I make no apology for quoting them at length:

An automotive truck-manufacturing company plant manager reported the direct costs of property damage in the previous 12 months to be \$4.6 million. This figure was approximately 10 times the cost of workers' compensation.

An oil company reported...damage-to-injury cost ratio of 99:1

Philosophically, there is nothing new about damage control as an important element in the overall accident prevention effort. Safety measures are on record as early as the middle 1800's...But while the injury-type accidents have been emphasized, damage-type accidents have been neglected.

I would offer the thought that we have indeed heeded the warning of Merrill Pollard, we have concentrated on not assuming responsibilities and have taken comfort in the fact that our efforts are protecting individuals and have therefore not sought to embrace a large even more exciting world.

The effectiveness of the safety professional in the business community has been alluded to but without wishing to overstate the case and with the firm view that understanding is the key we must recognize that by extending our activities into this divers area it is challenging and rewarding but it is not just 'going green' is not an incentive to change. It also doesn't serve the needs of the business in the long term unless it is considered as part of a broader approach that addresses people and commercial requirements as well as environmental concerns

A Context for the Elements of Sustainability

Agenda 21, established at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or "Earth Summit", in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is the blueprint for sustainability in the 21st century. Agenda 21 is a commitment to sustainable development, which was agreed by many of the world's governments. Nations that have pledged to take part in Agenda 21 are monitored by the International Commission on Sustainable Development, and are encouraged to promote Agenda 21 at the local and regional levels within their own countries. Agenda 21 addresses the development of societies and

economies by focusing on the conservation and preservation of our environments and natural resources

Sustainability therefore is not a 'new' concept many large or 'blue chip' organisations have been involved in the development of the sustainability agenda for a number of years.

Launched in 1999, the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes were the first global indexes tracking the financial performance of the leading sustainability-driven companies worldwide. Based on the cooperation of Dow Jones Indexes and SAM, (the investment boutique focused exclusively on Sustainability Investing), they provide asset managers with reliable and objective benchmarks to manage sustainability portfolios.

This index was perhaps, the benchmark or leader in its particular field. Since the launch of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index other indexes have been developed including the Wal-Mart Sustainability Index and the Social Media Sustainability Index (this includes such companies as General Electric, IBM, Starbucks, Ford and Dell).

Within Europe, the FTSE KLD Global Sustainability Index (GSIN) is a broadly diversified, sector-neutral global benchmark based on environmental, social and governance (ESG) rankings.

It must be stated that while not a primary driver inclusion in such indexes are an element in the procurement policies of organisations already participating.

One positive perhaps that any matrix or indexes gives is a measure of 'how are we doing in the market place.' Certainly in the United Kingdom, in order that companies can be included in a lot of tendering exercises, ways have to be sought to not be excluded. With the general public be more aware (but perhaps not understanding fully), environmental issues and social inclusion the need to have a more integrated approach to 'Loss' and Corporate image must be found.

This Corporate image becomes all consuming in times of financial hardship and being seen as a 'good neighbour' becomes in effect a marketing tool in order to 'sustain' the company in business.

Here we should perhaps consider another challenge for the safety professional. It has nearly always been the case that safety is considered an element of the way in which we do business. Operations functions of the organisation have been the strongest supporter of the safety function. Perhaps even with a real deal of support from the Property team. It must be argued that these function while being the prime customers of the 'safety function output' are not the correct departments to achieve the greatest influence in the business environment. Consider who has the greatest influence within our business, is it the Financial Department or the Sales organisation? While it can be argued that 'Safety' is the first part of a comprehensive Risk Management program (the prevention) in prevent, mitigate transfer. And could therefore be a correct organisational alignment. The department which in effect drives the corporate strategy the corporate objectives is the sales department. Get these teams 'on board,' make them your best friends and the influence that you will achieve will be enhanced. How do you do that? Easy, provide them with what they need, documentation for bids and tenders, easy to understand graphs and charts to explain safety performance. They will need it as part of the tendering process to have it to hand, pre-prepared. It is the nature of the sales beast that they need everything yesterday so be ready, be seen as valuable.

At the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2011 Conference held in London (15-16 November) (9) Delegates heard from companies such as National Grid, Thames Water and Transport for London working on major infrastructure projects and achieving limited environmental

impacts. It was openly stated that such strategies had become essential to keep stakeholders ‘on side’; Insurance Companies, investors, employees and of course regulators.

In short they had adopted a proactive stance in respect of ‘Loss Control’

The British Standards Institution (BSI), published a non certifiable standard (BS 8900) Sustainable Development, (2006), (3) which outlines best practices in respect of the elements of a management system to optimise the effects and reduce the costs of Business Sustainability. The elements or functionalities include but are not limited to:

Quality Assurance, Environment, Safety, Business Continuity, Energy Management and Corporate Social Responsibility. These elements are grouped in three distinct pillars of cost areas:

People Profit and Plant

Profit	People	Plant
Quality Assurance ISO 9001	Social Accountability SA 8000	Environmental Management ISO 14001
Contact Centre Standards	Social Responsibility ISO 26000	Energy Management BS 16001
Customer Satisfaction ISO 10002	Health and Safety Management	Carbon Management ISO14064 (Carbon Footprint)
Information Security ISO 27001	BRC Global Standard for Consumer Products	Forestry management (FSC)
IT Service Management ISO 20000		Marine management
Business Continuity BS 25999		Direct Marketing PAS 2020
Risk Management BS 31100		

While I do accept that this is very UK centric, in so far as the numbering of the Standards, I would ask you to consider the equivalent standard in your own domain. The wording and principles are likely to be very similar. As is usually the case once one country in the International standards Organisation adopts a particular standard it takes some time for the ‘International’ approval to happen. No criticism just a fact of life in respect of committee structures.

You will no doubt observe in the detail of these standards many synergies with what we as ‘safety professionals’ have had at the heart of their functions for many years. It is worth taking time to examine the five other primary elements of Sustainable Development:

Quality Assurance (ISO 9001)

This International Standard does not include requirements specific to other management systems, such as those particular to environmental management, occupational health and safety management, financial management or risk management. However, this International Standard enables an organisation to align or integrate its own quality management system with related management system requirements. It is possible for an organisation to adapt its existing management system(s) in order to establish a quality management system that complies with the requirements of this International Standard. (BS EN ISO 9001:2008 www.bsigroup.com) (10)

At first a daunting task is one of the key requirements of ISO 9001 that of document control. In itself this can become all consuming for organisations but the basic principle is sound in so far as ensuring that the individuals undertaking the task have to hand and are working to the latest version of a process. Something is of course essential in high hazard environments. So immediately and superficially one can identify a synergy to our functional activity.

There are other clauses of the standard such as those concerned with management commitment and adequate resourcing that if adopted in an integrated system would certainly aid our underlying concern. Could this then be evidence of an alternative way forward? Adopting and embracing a management tool that has other objectives but can be beneficial to what we desire to achieve as safety professionals, an integrated system whereby loss to the business can be controlled.

What is Quality Assurance?

Quality assurance is the process of verifying or determining whether products or services meet or exceed customer expectations. Quality assurance is a process-driven approach with specific steps to help define and attain goals. This process considers design, development, production, and service.

The most popular tool used to determine quality assurance is the Shewhart Cycle, developed by Dr. W. Edwards Deming. (Dr. W. Edwards Deming (1900- 1993) is known as the father of the Japanese post-war industrial revival and was regarded by many as the leading quality guru in the United States). This cycle for quality assurance consists of four steps: *Plan, Do, Check, and Act*. These steps are commonly abbreviated as PDCA.

The four quality assurance steps within the PDCA model stand for:

- **Plan:** Establish objectives and processes required to deliver the desired results.
- **Do:** Implement the process developed.
- **Check:** Monitor and evaluate the implemented process by testing the results against the predetermined objectives
- **Act:** Apply actions necessary for improvement if the results require changes.

In many respects this model is utilised in many management system. Only terminology changes in an attempt to adapt the model to become more acceptable to the potential user of the system. An example of the being the UK Health and Safety Executive model contained in 'Successful Health and Safety Management' HS(G) 65. (11) The model outlines a process of:

- **Policy**
- **Organising**
- **Planning**
- **Measuring of Performance**
- **Auditing and reviewing performance.**

It is not the intent in this paper to undertake a comparison of these systemic elements. Suffice to comment that they are essentially the same and can be adapted as required. The only challenge in the integration is ensuring that in the event of certification a recorded rationale for the naming convention should be kept.

For easy understanding, however I include a very brief examination of an obvious synergy:

Plan - identifying what can harm people in your workplace

Do - evaluating the risks and deciding on the appropriate controls, taking into account the controls you already have in place

Check – Inspection and Audit

Act - reviewing and updating your assessment

It is worthy of note that this Plan do check act methodology has been adopted in most if not all ISO standards and also in other systematic devices not least he UK HSE model HS(G)65 – Successful Safety Management

Environment

ISO 14001 - This International Standard specifies requirements for an environmental management system to enable an organisation to develop and implement a policy and objectives which take into account legal requirements and other requirements to which the organisation subscribes, and information about significant environmental aspects. It applies to those environmental aspects that the organisation identifies as those which it can control

And those which it can influence. It does not itself state specific environmental performance criteria.

For a number of years there has been a slow but certain growth in the interest of environmental matters and not least in the area of ‘Environmental legislation.’

It was interesting to me coming from the United Kingdom to discover during the research for this paper that the United States Environmental Protection Agency has a whole section devoted to ‘Learn the Issues – Health and Safety’ <http://www.epa.gov/gateway/learn/health.html>

Such issues would be included within the remit of the UK – Health and Safety Executive. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

People may be knowingly or unknowingly encounter health risks in their place of work. Learn about the risks and the action plans for maintaining clean indoor air and safe work environments. This statement from the EPA web site I believe clearly demonstrates that environmental issues have a clear synergy with traditional safety elements.

A word however in respect of the Environment from a UK perspective. Our principal aims are to protect and improve the environment, and to promote sustainable development. We play a central role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government and the Welsh Government through our functions and roles..... It's our job to create a better place for people and wildlife. In doing so, we need to make sure we do our work in as environmentally sensitive way as possible <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

The Environment Agency is the Government department which regulates and advises on topics from The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (previously known as the Carbon Reduction Commitment) is a new, mandatory, energy saving and carbon emissions reduction scheme for the UK to The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE Directive) was introduced into UK law in January 2007 by the Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment Regulations 2006 and to the Registration of new or renewing licenses as a waste carrier/dealer, broker/dealer or carrier/broker/dealer.

Very closely aligned to this Environment issues that of not only the collection of data to ensure that the commitment to the Carbon Reduction (efficiency schemes) is achieved but also the sometimes contractual requirement to undertake a ‘Carbon footprint’ calculation. This subject is big, and could be the subject of a presentation in itself. Suffice here to say that undertaking such an exercise in not a

easy undertaking, not only from the data collection standpoint but also from the perspective of having to ensure that all the relevant scope information is obtained and the mathematics required to convert 'F-Gas' emissions to Carbon is time consuming.

However this data can be useful in the compliance of BS EN 16001 – energy management systems. This is another key component in sustainability and as the name suggests focuses on the identification of the data, the action opportunities provided therefore to achieve a reduction in energy usage and thereby reduce energy spend and the resulting reduction in CO2 emissions.

A lot of 'Safety Professionals' both in the United States and Europe will encompass the role of 'Environmental Permitting or Licensing' as a part of their existing role and I would offer the thought that if we are undertaking this role as part of a 'Legal Compliance' exercise it can not be argued that they are already admitting to some functional responsibility of a third of the elements of Sustainable Development.

Business Continuity

(Crisis management and business continuity planning) Unplanned events can have a devastating effect on small businesses. Crises such as fire, damage to stock, illness of key staff or IT system failure could all make it difficult or even impossible to carry out your normal day-to-day activities.

At worst, this could see you losing important customers - and even going out of business altogether.

But with good planning you can take steps to minimise the potential impact of a disaster - and ideally prevent it happening in the first place.

Identification of potential risks, make preparations for emergencies and test how your business is likely to cope in a disaster. (www.businesslink.gov.uk)

I would venture that most if not all audit protocols have an element of emergency preparedness or to us other words Business Continuity in them. It may be the case that while we as safety professional have limited our planning to 'what do we do when someone sustains an injury or what do we do when the structure is on fire?' Now with Business continuity we extend those 'what if' questions to the follow on: What do we do if the building is on fire, how do we ensure that the critical records are available to ensure that the company can continue trading, what do we do with the employees.

As I am certain that you are all aware, the UK will be hosting the Olympic Games in July of this year. Business continuity plans have to be in place not only for the horrific thought of a terrorist attack but more so in respect of; what if the employees cannot get to work on time because of road or public transport congestion? I would offer the thought that these are all skill sets that are not alien to those that we daily demonstrate as a safety professional.

It would be wrong of me to continue the next subject without a 'health warning.' I am not a great fan of BS OHSAS 18001. I can see and do believe that a systematic approach to safety management has been the focus and has achieved benefits over the past decade. As with Frank E. Bird and George L. Germain, I would open myself up to a lot if I was to make a prediction but I am going to attempt some clarity.

As the 21st Century develops, a systems approach to safety will be consolidated and become increasing more dominant in or for benchmarking to be achieved and comparisons made. This will be a positive force for good in respect of a prime aim of reducing the post in human terms of a 'lack of safety.' Will BS OHSAS 18001 become the norm? That will depend on education.

The aim must be to have a safety management system which is pragmatic and brings benefits to the organization. A benefit of BS OHSAS 18001 is that it can be applied across all industries and internationally. It enables measurement. It is a great boost to procurement departments that do not understand a permit to work from a hole in the ground. It allows them to be able to express 'We engaged a contractor that has a certified safety management system.' We did our due diligence.

I would in truth say that any system that causes the creation of 'paperwork' and detracts the safety professional from applying what Saunders and Wheeler (13) defined as 'the Safety Mix'

Environment – Enforcement – Education – Engineering.

In other words, the corporate culture must be right with the optimum amount of discipline and adequate training with the correct tools to do the job.

Anything that takes the professional away from that to the creation of 'paperwork' is not in this author's view of benefit. Perhaps it is the education of 'buyer' that needs to be enhanced.

This only really leaves us a final topic to discuss in respect of sustainable development. Or as I define it 'growing the business to be in business tomorrow' and that is the element of Corporate Social Responsibility.

A lot of companies get involved in this element and do a great deal of good for communities in general. 'Stop hunger' campaigns, feed the homeless all that very positive effort.

I would seek a wider view. We all live in the community and therefore are members of the community but we should never forget that our role is the protection in part of the human asset of the company. If you take the bold decision to take an individual out of the office in work time and send them off to dig drainage ditches or paint the local Boy Scout Hut, should not the same level of diligence be given to those activities as to those in work? After all, the employee will be doing something that has the potential to cause them down time. So risk assessment is a fundamental. Should that not rest in the final analysis yes, with the person that is doing the task but with the oversight of the safety professional?

Companies are of course part of the community and therefore it is reasonable to assume that being a good neighbour brings benefits in respect of marketing and therefore sales. Now I'm not suggesting for one minute that the reason corporations get involved with CSR is that of increasing sales opportunities but there is perhaps a subliminal link that cannot be dismissed. While the marketing of course is done by the professionals, ensuring that it does not turn out to be a PR nightmare due to a member of the public or an employee being damaged has to, I would suggest include a large input from the safety professional.

I have an image of the headline in a local paper:

"One hundred year old tree knocked onto roof of house killing three by XX company employees doing a good deed."

This challenge in respect of CSR is of course one of corporate reputation. In so far as corporations value their reputation in the market place and anything that diminishes that reputation can have disastrous consequences for the organisation. Let me just comment here on the well know case in the UK of the jewellery chain 'Ratners.' A chain of shops throughout the country with a reputation of selling 'affordable' jewellery. It's chief executive and founder Gerald Ratner commented to a news paper business reporter that he never failed to be amazed at the amount of 'rubbish' jewellery that he

could 'off load' in his shops. The result of this comment being that customers did not go into the shops anymore, sales fell, profitability took a nose dive and the firm went into liquidation.

So reputation is all important, if your competitors are adopting a 'Sustainable Development' approach and you are not then that can be a reason to exclude your organisation from the tendering process.

Launched in 2007 by British Institute of Facilities Management BIFM and the University of Reading, the annual survey examines the key drivers, issues and best practices within Facilities Management (14)

In the 2011 survey examining sustainability: 91% respondents say their organisation now has a sustainability policy in place.

Corporate image (98%) was found to be the key driver for such policies, up from 59% in 2009. This has now slightly overtaken keeping up with legislation (96%) as the main reason for having a policy.

In addition, 90% stated that carbon footprint is a key issue in sustainability policies, up from 48% in 2009.

It must therefore be self evident that business has a desire to react to the general public view that 'environmental' or green business is good business and this is often seen as being Sustainable business.

In Conclusion

For over one hundred years safety professionals have been working hard to ensure a safety and healthy environment for employees of their employment organisations. As the focus of the public has changed, many of the skill sets that have been developed by the profession are now an integral part of management systems that we have not adopted or have lost control over. In order to ensure that our mission is achieved and the profession itself is sustainable we should embrace sustainable development the protection and enhancement of systems to protect People, Profit and Plant.

This concept is part of the mainstream agenda: When Sweden took over the European Union Presidency in July 2009 it was stated that not only would they seek to lead the EU in negotiations in respect of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change but would enhance the Lisbon strategy for jobs and growth which included the Sustainable Development Strategy. It is time for safety professional to take the lead in areas that we are competent in.

Our challenge is one of self awareness of being brave to embrace the new requirements, to market our desire for a safer workplace within the context of what drives business.

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