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December 3rd: Day One Write Up



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Visible Felt Leadership

The morning session kicked off with a Keynote talk from Dee Arp, Chief Operating Officer for NEBOSH, talking about Visible Felt Leadership.

Dee emphasised the critical importance of authentic leadership and quality focus in creating a robust safety culture within organizations and highlighted several key aspects: Authentic leadership plays a crucial role in championing health and safety within an organization. Leaders must be visible, communicate openly, and prioritize employee well-being.

This approach fosters trust, improves job satisfaction, and ultimately contributes to a positive work environment. The presentation also stressed the significance of maintaining a relentless focus on quality, especially during periods of change as Quality management is directly tied to an organization's growth and performance, serving as a key differentiator in the marketplace.



Key Action Points from the session were;

- Cultivate authentic leadership behaviours to improve workplace safety outcomes
- Implement strategies to enhance the perception of safety climate in organizations
- Prioritize open communication and employee engagement to address safety concerns
- Align organizational strategies with overall direction and follow through on communicated plans
- Invest in employee development and learning to build a strong organizational culture

Overall, the speech emphasised that creating a strong safety culture requires commitment from all levels of the organization, from frontline employees to senior leadership. By focusing on authentic leadership, quality, and employee value, organizations can build resilience and achieve world-class workplace safety standards.





Culture change: A conversation

Next up was a fascinating discussion between James Pomeroy, Director and Global Safety Leader at Arup, and Gill Kernick, the author of *Catastrophe and Systemic Change*, where they challenged the existing approach to culture change.

Gill and James both emphasised the importance of viewing culture change as a complex, non-deterministic process rather than a linear, cause-and-effect approach. They highlighted the value of perception-based reviews over traditional measurement methods, stressing that the process of inquiry itself can drive change. The conversation also touched on the importance of shifting accountability for safety culture from safety teams to the broader business, and the significance of curating experiences to create safe spaces for engaging with dissonance and fostering long-term changes in thinking. Gill and James emphasised that to create real change, Safety leaders need to adopt a complex, emergent approach to culture change rather than linear models as well as;

1. Using perception-based reviews instead of traditional surveys to drive change
2. Shifting the ownership of safety culture from safety teams to the broader business
3. Curating experiences that allow people to safely engage with dissonance
4. Focusing on changing how people think rather than managing behaviours directly

In summary, the discussion underscored that genuine culture change in safety requires a strategic shift in thinking, ownership, and engagement across all levels of an organization.

Panel discussion:

Strategies for Authenticity and Empowerment – Safety Leadership and Culture

Following the morning's two keynotes, a panel discussion then took place featuring Mike Keating, Group Head of Health & Safety at Finlays, Melissa Mark Joyce, Group VP of Health, Safety, and Environment at Smiths Group, Nick Turner, Regional Account Director at JLL, as well as inviting back Gill, James, and Dee. The aim of this discussion was to explore the intersection of Safety Leadership and Culture.

The discussion focused on the importance of authenticity and empowerment in creating a safety culture within organisations. All of the speakers emphasised the need for trust, open communication, and a flat organisational structure to foster effective collaboration. They also critiqued the traditional notion of empowerment, suggesting that it could perhaps imply a power imbalance, and advocated instead for a focus on changing power dynamics. The conversation highlighted the evolving nature of leadership and the significance of adapting to technological changes while prioritising employee well being and safety.

Key action points from the discussion included;

- Fostering trust – building relationships through open communication to establish trust among team members
- Flattening hierarchies – encouraging a flat organisational structure where all voices can be heard without needing permission to speak
- Reframing empowerment – shifting the focus from “empowering” individuals to changing power dynamics within the organisation
- Understanding power types – Identifying and acknowledging different power types within the organisation to enhance decision-making processes
- Promoting authenticity – ensuring that leaders are genuine in their actions and communications to foster a culture of authenticity
- Embracing change – adapting leadership styles and practices to align with evolving workplace dynamics and technological advancements
- Prioritising wellbeing – Focus on employees well-being as a fundamental aspect of safety culture

Overall, the participants in the panel stressed that genuine engagement and understanding are crucial for effective leadership and cultural transformation.



After a well deserved coffee break for coffee, pastries and networking, everyone re-grouped for the second session of the morning, kicking off with a presentation from Paul Davison, CEO and Founder of PPWD.

What if they are right?

Paul's presentation centred on integrating compassion and empowerment into safety cultures, emphasising the importance of putting people at the heart of Health and Safety. Paul highlighted the need for compassionate safety and sticky learning, as well as discussing the concept of power dynamics and the importance of giving control to those with relevant knowledge and information. Action points from the session included 1) fostering a culture of trust and open communicating by flattening hierarchies and 2) shifting focus from empowerment to altering power dynamics within organisations. Ultimately the conversation echoed a lot of the themes of the morning, and underscores that safety is a complex, evolving challenge, requiring collaborative efforts.

The Incremental impact:

How the One Percent Safer Foundation enhances Global Safety

Next up was a fascinating session from Tim Walsh, Non-Executive Director and Trustee of the One Percent Safer Movement discussing how marginal improvements in workplace safety protocols lead to significant reduction in accidents and fatalities across industries worldwide.

Tim explained how the One Percent Safer Movement was inspired by the philosophy of making small, incremental improvements, and that the movement encourages organisations to focus on achieving a 1% increase in safety. This approach is detailed in the book "One Percent Safer" featuring insights from 142 experts and emphasises the importance of making workplaces safer by applying these principles. The movement has gained traction globally, with profits supporting safety initiatives worldwide.

The key things to take away from the One Percent Safer movement, is to focus on implementing marginal gains and encouraging organisations to adopt these small, incremental improvements in safety practices. Tim also emphasised the need to engage in training, developing training programmes to educate safety offices and community leaders on managing risks effectively, as well as promoting community involvement. Tim states that supporting initiatives that integrate safety education into community activities, such as school curriculums and public health campaigns is important and will help drive these incremental gains. He also focused on the need for us to expand our professional networks, facilitating international collaboration among safety professionals to share best practices and resources.



Overall, the One Percent Safer movement underscored the real power of collective small changes to significantly enhance workplace safety globally. More information can be found here: <https://onepercentsafer.com/>

Rising to the challenge:

The Future of EHS in a constantly changing world

Our final session before lunch was from Al Hocking, Regional Service Leader for ERM, who led a captivating discussion on the insights of the 3rd edition of ERM's Global H&S Survey.

In this session, Al discussed how the insights from their survey had really highlighted the evolving expectations in Health and Safety Roles. He emphasised that the need organisations to adapt to increasing stakeholder demands, which have shifted significantly over recent years. The survey revealed that while investments in safety processes have been made, performance improvements have not kept pace with these rising expectations.

A major finding is the importance of leadership at all levels in driving safety cultural change and addressing challenges such as contractor safety and capacity issues. The survey also showed that in the last three years there has been significantly less belief as to whether H&S Teams are equipped to address changing needs – Al wondered if this was because of increased expectations of teams and their capability – and that over half of respondents felt that their H&S function was under resourced.

Al suggested some key action points that we could address as Safety professionals such as;

- Enhancing leadership skills – investing in developing both technical and non-technical skills among leaders to improve engagement and influence.
- Focusing on capability development – prioritising training programs to boost the competence of health and safety professionals
- Adapting to technological changes – equipping teams with skills to handle new technologies impacting workplace safety
- Improving contractor safety – implementing strategies to ensure contractors are adequately trained and integrated into safety cultures

Overall, Al demonstrated that the results of the survey really underscored the need for continues adaption and investment in people to meet evolving safety expectations effectively.

Leadership Beyond Bureaucracy

After a fantastic lunch provided by EHS Congress, and co-located with the Safety and Health Expo at Anticipate 2024, we were back for an afternoon of further debated and development, starting with an amazing talk from David Bryson, Former COO of Unipar, who came to discuss Leadership Beyond Bureaucracy.



Leaders often find themselves navigating a labyrinth of bureaucratic systems and rigid metrics, yet a transformative potential emerges when leaders pivot. David shared a powerful narrative about leadership and safety culture, centred around a serious workplace incident that became a transformative movement. A serious workplace incident prompted a thorough investigation, where critical shortcomings in safety practices were revealed, leading to a major cultural shift within the organisation.

David also shared insights on leadership and bureaucracy in Health and Safety and as a non Health and Safety professional he emphasised the importance of authentic leadership and the need for effective processes. He argues that while bureaucracy is necessary, it should not hinder the creation of high-performance teams.

Also highlighted was the power of role modelling and authentic communication in driving change, illustrating how sharing experiences with authenticity can influence safety practices.

David emphasises that the key things to remember are;

- To promote authentic leadership, encouraging leaders at all levels to model behaviours that prioritise safety and transparency
- Investing in training, developing training programs focused on both technical skills and soft skills, such as communication and facilitation.
- Fostering a learning culture – creating an environment where lessons learned from incidents are shared and implemented to prevent future occurrences
- Streamlining bureaucracy – ensuring that necessary processes do not impede effective safety practices and team performances

In summary, effective leadership in health and safety requires authenticity (a definite theme for the day), a commitment to learning from incidents, and the ability to navigate bureaucracy to foster a culture of safety.



Peer to Peer Culture of Safety – powered by Viral Change

Switching gears slightly, the next session was presented by Dr Leandro Herrero, Chief Organisational Architect for The Chalfont Project, a psychiatrist who blends behavioural science with practical leadership and culture change.

Dr Leandro Herrero, a renowned expert in the field of Safety, empathises the importance of peer-to-peer connections in driving safety cultural change. He introduced to the attendees the concept of “viral change”, where positive behaviours and attitudes spread organically through social influence.

“Viral Change” is a groundbreaking methodology pioneered by Dr Leandro, that redefines cultural and behavioural transformation. Unlike traditional top-down approaches, Viral Change harnesses peer to peer influence, storytelling, and backstage leadership for enduring change.

Dr Leandro highlights the limitations of traditional approaches such as training and communication, arguing that they often fail to create lasting change. Instead, he advocates for this focus on the peer-to-peer interactions. By identifying and empowering influential individuals within the organisation, it's possible to create a ripple effect of positive change.

The key areas to focus on to create viral change, are identifying those influential individuals who have strong social connections and positive influence within the organisation, as well as creating opportunities for employees to interact and learn from each other. This can be achieved through team building activities, social events and online forums. Following these steps you can encourage positive behaviour modelling, highlighting and rewarding positive safety behaviours to inspire others.

Dr Leandro also suggested that companies leverage storytelling, sharing stories of successful safety initiatives and personal experiences to connect with employees on an emotional level, and creating a supportive culture, one of trust, respect, and open communication, where employees feel safe to share ideas and concerns.

By understanding the power of this peer to peer influence and implementing strategies to foster positive social connections, organisations can create a more effective and sustainable safety culture.



The next few sessions focused on wellbeing – an important topic that has remained top of most Safety leadership conversations for the past few years. First up, was a panel discussion on the topic;

Wellbeing – how do we create measurable results?

This panel, facilitated by Heather Beach, Managing Director of The Healthy Work Company, featured 4 panellists, Marie-Louise Chandler, UK Safety Director for QinetiQ, Lisa Ward, Head of Health and Wellbeing for Heathrow Airport, Dr Rachel Lewis, PHD Organisational psychology, and Caroline Sidell, Corporate Health and Wellbeing Director from Via Vita health.

The panel discussion focused on the importance of workplace wellbeing, and its impact on employee health, safety, and productivity.

Key points included;

- **Measuring wellbeing.** Organisations should define clear objectives and metrics to measure the effectiveness of wellbeing initiatives.
- **Manager training.** Investing in manager training is crucial to create a supportive work environment and address employee concerns promptly.
- **Peer to peer support.** As mentioned earlier by Dr Leandro, peer to peer work is extremely influential, and encouraging peer to peer support can significantly improve mental health and wellbeing
- **Taking a proactive approach.** Focusing on prevention and early intervention is more effective than reactive measures.
- **Data driven insights.** Using data and analytics can help identify trends, measure impact, and make informed decisions.



The business of wellbeing

Continuing the topic of wellbeing, our next session focused on the business of wellbeing, and was presented by Dr Judith Grant, Chartered Psychologist and Workplace Wellbeing Strategist for The Wellbeing exchange.

Judith during this session argued for the economic benefits of investing in employee wellbeing. They highlight the importance of measuring wellbeing, using metrics like life satisfaction, worthwhileness, happiness, and anxiety. By understanding these factors, organisations can identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions.

Dr Judith Grant emphasises the link between employee wellbeing and organisational performance, citing research that shows happier, healthier employees are more productive and engaged. Additionally, she discussed the financial costs of poor well-being, including increased absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover.

Two key action points that Dr Judith encouraged attendees to focus on measuring wellbeing by implementing surveys and assessments, as well as investing in prevention by focusing on proactive measures to prevent issues like stress, burnout, and other mental health problems.

By prioritising employee wellbeing and investing in evidence-based interventions, Dr Judith concluded that organisations can improve productivity, reduce costs, and create a more positive and sustainable work environment.



Shifting the Lens: The impact of seeing Differently

The penultimate session of day one, led by Alastair Davey and Lisa Adams Davey, from IILSC, was focused on the idea of looking at things from a different perspective (such as a beginner's perspective) to reduce bias and open our minds to new possibilities.

Alastair and Lisa discussed the importance of imagination in leadership and organisation culture and how, by adopting a curious and open-minded approach, leaders can better understand and address challenges. Both also highlighted the power of storytelling (again a common theme throughout the day) and visualisation in shaping organisational culture and decision making. Lisa and Alastair were keen to emphasise to attendees that they needed to embrace beginners' perspective, encouraging open mindedness and a willingness to learn from others in an organisation, whilst leveraging the power of storytelling to create a share sense of purpose. By utilising these two tricks, leaders can foster a more innovative, resilient, and effective organisational structure.



Who makes the Tea & Why It Matters: Cultivating a Wellbeing Culture

Finally, to wrap up the day Hugo Metcalfe, Co-founder and Chief Psychologist at The Happy Mind tribe, got us on our feet for a session on cultivating a wellbeing culture,

Hugo discussed the importance of understanding and shaping organisational culture. He emphasised the need to move beyond traditional training and workshops and focus on creating sustainable cultural change.

He suggested that by paying attention to the subtle cues and behaviours within an organisation, individuals can gain insights into the underlying culture and identify opportunities for improvement. He encouraged attendees to be curious (a key word throughout the day) and experiment with small changes to foster a more positive and productive work environment.



Dr Andrew Sharman: His takeaways.

Day one complete, Dr Andrew Sharman gave us his key takeaways from a fascinating and knowledge filled day.

- Embracing Change and Challenges and recognising and embracing challenges as catalysts for positive change.
- Genuine authenticity and empowerment were highlighted throughout the day as crucial leadership qualities
- Moving beyond metrics – Andrew identified several speakers had mentioned the need to shift focus from traditional metrics to broader measures of human impact and performance
- Stronger stakeholder expectations – Andrew realised there was a theme throughout the day of the profession facing increasing expectations from stakeholders, necessitating a more strategic approach to H&S improvement
- And finally – cultivating competence, confidence, care, and curiosity. These four key qualities were emphasised throughout the panels and keynotes as essential for building trust and effective partnerships.



Finally attendees were taken across to the Sunborn Yacht Hotel, where they enjoyed an evening of networking, canapes, and drinks, where we could debrief and discuss the day and all of the knowledge gathered in detail, and prepare ourselves for another full and fascinating day to follow.



If you would like to receive the write up for day 2 of EHS Congress, please reach out to laura.aucott@hserecruitment.co.uk or for more information on the upcoming Berlin event, or future London events, you can visit <https://ehscongress.com/>



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