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PROFILE
Neil Dine on leading safety from the frontlines
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The training toolkit
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Cover story
How OHS professionals can benefit from neuroscience learnings to improve leadership and communication

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ASSE IPS Safety Professional of the Year Neil Dine on his professional achievements, challenges and goals

Regulation
How the ACT government is using procurement to drive safe outcomes in the construction industry

Event review
The Safety in Action 2013 Sydney Safety Conference brought together a range of speakers and delegates
OHS: a journey of continuous improvement

This issue of OHS Professional magazine underscores the many ways in which OHS as a profession is on a journey of continuous improvement

Neuroscience has made quantum leaps in the last few years in leadership research, and there are a number of important implications in this for safety professionals and softer skills such as leadership and communication.

Leaders in many other organisational functions have benefited significantly from a variety of neuroscience-derived leadership and communication methods.

OHS professionals must lead as well – if not better – than any other profession because of the potential costs of not doing it right. The cover story for this issue (page 18) explores how to apply some of the latest learnings from neuroscience in the workplace, with a practical focus on how safety professionals can become more influential and effective leaders and improve safety outcomes through better communication and stronger workforce engagement.

Also in this issue, we profile Neil Dine on (page 14), who was recently recognised as the ASSE’s International Practice Specialty (IPS) Safety Professional of the Year for the second time. Neil is an inspiring and dedicated safety professional who has made a significant contribution to this profession, and in this feature he discusses some of his greatest personal achievements, challenges and learnings. He has observed that the OHS profession in Australia is leading the way in so many areas, and importantly, notes that it only takes one or two instances where a ‘leader’ condones or accepts unsafe work practices before it becomes the norm.

“It only takes one or two instances where a ‘leader’ condones or accepts unsafe work practices before it becomes the norm”

Craig Donaldson, editor, OHS Professional

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A pivotal time to shape the future of the SIA

The Safety Institute of Australia is entering into an important part of its history, and it is important that members make and take the time to contribute to this process

new era in governance for the Safety Institute of Australia Ltd. The primary effect of the changes is to introduce a three-year term for Directors of the incoming Board, remove the requirement for a candidate’s nomination to be endorsed by a branch and to allow us to appoint external Directors. The change to a Company Limited by guarantee in 2010 was the single most significant change to the organisation in our long history. These changes run a close second. For that reason, I need to share the following with you and to ask for your personal commitment to the future of the profession and the institute.

“The decisions we make together at this election will literally shape the future. Be involved”

Only 90 members out of our membership of more than 4,500 took the time to vote on constitutional changes that will have a significant impact on the way this organisation operates and the way the membership is represented on the Board.

This is likely to be the last column I write for this magazine as I am not standing for election this year. After almost ten years of being involved as a committee member and an office bearer at branch and national level – including seven consecutive years as a Branch Vice President, Branch President (twice), National Secretary, National President (once) and Board Chair (twice) – I’m going to ask you to make and take the time to contribute to decision-making about the profession and your peak body.

Nominations for the election of a new Board of Directors have been called. An information paper highlighting the skill-set required of contemporary Directors (information derived from the Australian Institute of Company Directors) and the SIA Ltd roles (per our By Laws) was issued on 13 August. Its purpose is to allow prospective candidates for the role of Director to make an informed decision about the position before nominating and to allow members to understand the capabilities a candidate should possess.

The outcome of this forthcoming election will dictate the direction of the Institute and the profession for the next three years and beyond. It is therefore imperative that we as members do three things in relation to this election:

1. If you consider that you have the capability, the vision and the drive to make a difference to the Institute and the profession please consider nominating for election as a Director.
2. Take the time to objectively consider the ability of individual candidates to contribute to the Institute and the profession.
3. Cast a vote to ensure that your interests as a member of the profession and the institute are properly represented.

The decisions we make together at this election will literally shape the future. Be involved.

Finally, at this time of year we transition to new branch committees so I would like to particularly acknowledge and thank all committee members for their contribution to members in their state or territory in the past twelve months. We have had some terrific activities organised by sub-branches in regional areas this year – thank you to all of those responsible for bringing those activities to our members and others interested in the profession. We also thank those members who Chair our conference committees and branches for their leadership of their teams.

All of you have made meaningful contribution to the members of the Institute and we appreciate your work.

Sue Pilkington, CFsIA, FRMIA, MAICD
Director and Interim CEO
Safety Institute of Australia Ltd

Sue Pilkington, Interim CEO, Safety Institute of Australia Ltd

The Safety Institute of Australia Ltd continues to grow its influence and expand its ability to represent the members of the profession. In the last quarter we have been engaged in effective consultation with a broad range of our key stakeholders including Safe Work Australia, State regulators, our peer professional bodies, Standards Australia and Treasury and have some initial successes to report.

As was recently announced, in an outstanding development for the profession Safe Work Australia will fund the development of another four chapters of the Body of Knowledge. We thank the Accreditation Board and Safe Work Australia for their recognition of the importance of this work to the profession.

Submissions to Treasury from individual peak professional bodies in July resulted in the government deferring a decision on the proposed cap on tax deductible self-education expenses. Our submission focused on the impact of such restrictions on the ability of workplace health and safety professionals to maintain their knowledge in order to provide contemporary, informed and effective professional advice to Australian industry. Every profession would be similarly affected however we were able to make a direct link between our capability and the achievement of sustainably better performance in workplace health and safety in Australia, which in turn reduces the economic and social burden of workplace injury and disease. We will maintain our focus on decision makers on this matter before it is scheduled for review in May, 2014.

The recent member ballot of proposed changes to the constitution has introduced a
Chair’s note

SIA strategy on sure and steady track

The SIA Board is well on track to realising a number of important strategic outcomes

In June the Board of Directors met in Brisbane ahead of the Queensland Safety Conference and Safety Show. The Board held a strategic planning meeting on Sunday 16 June at which the board reviewed the SIA Ltd strategy and progress towards the desired outcomes. It is with pleasure that I inform members that we are well on track to achieving the majority of our planned strategic outcomes.

During the scheduled board meeting on 17 June the Board reviewed the current staffing in national office, During this review the Board recognised the exceptional role that is being played by our interim CEO Sue Pilkington, and Sue’s contract has been extended till 31 December 2013. With Sue taking this role on, she has resigned her position as Chair of the Board though Sue will remain as an active member of the Board to see out her nominated tenure. With Sue stepping down as Chair I have stepped up from Deputy Chair to take the role as Chair, and Patrick Murphy has accepted the role as Deputy Chair. I would like to thank Sue, Patrick and the Board for their ongoing support.

As you are aware, this time of the year is for annual renewal for memberships and I am pleased to see the large number of members who have renewed their membership and thank you for your ongoing support. Our national office staff are very busy processing the renewals and this task is often a thankless one, so I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to them for their ongoing assistance.

Accessibility to conferences, seminars and technical presentations for members in regional and remote areas is an area that has been under review for some time, and I am pleased to announce that the Board are in a position to trial some technology in September that looks promising in assisting us to make content from these events available to members living or working in areas which prevent them attending in person.

Malcolm Burgin, Chair, Board of Directors, Safety Institute of Australia Ltd
Many organisations are applying the model Work Health & Safety (WHS) laws as the benchmark for due diligence for directors and officers across all jurisdictions, even though full harmonisation of the country’s OHS laws has not been achieved, according to Herbert Smith Freehills’ work health and safety practice leader, Steve Bell. There are a number of issues arising out the implementation of the model WHS laws, and due diligence and compliance with WHS laws is one of the most pressing for boards. “Some companies have operations in Victoria, for example, where there aren’t due diligence obligations because they have not adopted the model laws, but those same companies also have operations in New South Wales or Queensland, where there is an obligation,” he said.

Electricians warn over licensing regime

The Federal Government’s plans to introduce a national licensing regime for electrical contractors could be the country’s next insulation disaster and lives may be lost as a result, according to Master Electricians Australia CEO Malcolm Richards. The proposed scheme, which has been under development for three years, would represent a significant reduction in professional standards in the electrical industry, he said. This would reduce safety levels for electrical contractors, any workers who had to operate in ceiling spaces and around electrical fittings, and ultimately for home owners and the general public. “Sadly, we believe this will – if implemented – result in electrical fatalities. It may not occur immediately, but shonky electrical work is a ticking time bomb,” said Richards.

How to minimise the risk of dust explosions

There are several factors that contribute to dust explosion incidents, according to Graeme Cooper, managing director of Tecpro Australia and an expert in dust suppression. “History is littered with incidents of catastrophic dust explosions. “To many, dust can seem harmless. But if certain conditions prevail, it can pose a deadly problem,” he said. For a dust explosion to occur, several contributing factors must be present, according to Cooper, who said the first factor is airborne, combustible dust in high concentrations. The environment will also contain an oxidising agent such as oxygen, and explosions are triggered by a source of ignition such as a flame or static electricity. “Over the centuries, dust explosions have claimed many lives and caused significant injuries.
and property damage,” he said. Typically occurring in contained environments such as underground mines, mills and storage facilities, a wide range of dust types are combustible, including coal, grain, flour, sugar, sawdust, magnesium, cotton and even powdered metals such as titanium and aluminium.

Call for stronger oil rig safety regulation
The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority needs to be tougher and more proactive in its approach to safety while safety regulation of the offshore oil rig sector also needs to be stronger, according to ACTU assistant secretary Michael Borowick. Following the 25th anniversary of the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster in the UK, Borowick said the lesson of Piper Alpha was that vigilance was always needed to ensure workers were safe at work. “The deaths of two workers on the Stena Clyde rig during drilling operations in Bass Strait last year shows that offshore oil rig work remains dangerous. Stronger regulation is the key to ensuring that major disasters, like Piper Alpha, do not happen in Australia,” he said. The Piper Alpha disaster remains the world’s deadliest oil rig incident, killing 167 of the 228 workers on the rig at the time.

Coroner slams home insulation program safety
Three Queensland employees who died while working under the Federal Government’s home insulation program had not been provided with adequate training or appropriate supervision, according to Queensland Coroner Michael Barnes. He recently released his findings following an investigation into the deaths of the three men, Rueben Barnes, a 16-year-old carpentry apprentice, 25-year-old Matthew Fuller and 22-year-old Mitchell Sweeney. Barnes also criticised the Federal Government for rushing through the home insulation program, and observed that there were “process failings” by federal agencies which led to inadequate safeguards. “The scoping of the risks likely to be generated and the safeguards that would contain them were miscalculated and inadequate,” said Barnes in his report. “Undoubtedly, a major contributor to the failure to put in place adequate safeguards was the speed with which the program was conceived, designed and implemented.”

Master Builders concerned over asbestos removal plans
Asbestos-related diseases are shifting away from heavy exposures experienced in the mining, milling and manufacture of asbestos, to diseases resulting from exposures during the abatement of loose asbestos and the use and removal of asbestos containing materials, according to Wilhelm Harnisch, CEO of Master Builders Australia. “The occupations that account for the greatest number of mesothelioma cases have changed over the years from miners/millers, product manufacturers and insulation workers to other end-users of asbestos-containing materials, in particular workers in the building and construction industry and in shipyards,” said Harnisch. “Although the level of individual risk is lower for such end-users, the higher number of workers in building and construction means that these workers contribute greater absolute numbers to the national mesothelioma toll.”

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Raising the professional OHS standard

OHS Professional magazine’s editorial board examines the greatest achievements as well as the biggest challenges facing the OHS profession

Duncan Thompson
Duncan Thompson, executive director, Safety, Environment & Sustainability, Amcor

What are the greatest achievements of the OHS profession?
One of the most significant achievements for OHS in Australia is a strong regulatory framework and a watchdog with serious teeth. I believe this really helps any safety professional in their job. Yes, it can create extra work and some may complain about over-regulation and too much paperwork, but if you compare our strong regulatory framework to those of other countries we’re lucky that there is a stick that can enforce change for those who don’t see safety as a priority.

Having regular interaction with safety professionals across Asia, Europe and the Americas I can say with conviction that the broad and detailed expertise that many Australian professionals demonstrate is, at the very least, the equal to any other jurisdiction. The education level of safety professionals in Australia is very high and I’m constantly impressed by their knowledge. From understanding legislation and best practices, through to change management and other initiatives, I am always learning from my peers.

Having regular interaction with safety professionals across Asia, Europe and the Americas I can say with conviction that the broad and detailed expertise that many Australian professionals demonstrate is, at the very least, the equal to any other jurisdiction. The education level of safety professionals in Australia is very high and I’m constantly impressed by their knowledge. From understanding legislation and best practices, through to change management and other initiatives, I am always learning from my peers.

What are the greatest challenges facing the OHS profession?
One of the most significant challenges for OHS is ensuring that regulation continues to evolve and improve, so that it remains a powerful tool for preventing injuries. There has to be a balance between a regulatory framework which supports OHS professionals accept risk that they don’t even see the danger that they’re subjecting themselves or colleagues to.

Similarly, it’s important to empower people to speak up and challenge the risky behaviour. People need to have the tools and confidence to improve their own workplace, including business process, training and management support. Think of the ‘Andon Cord’ system in Toyota manufacturing plants.

I think there’s an element of Australian culture that makes people reluctant to confront or challenge when needed. People need to feel confident to speak up and say: “Hey, you shouldn’t do that because you’ll hurt yourself or might hurt others.”

Patrick Murphy
Patrick Murphy, global HSE manager – corporate functions, Rio Tinto

What are the greatest achievements of the OHS profession?
The OHS profession has come a long way over the past thirty years. It is an important profession and one that business leaders have come to appreciate given the impact safety and health performance has on a company’s ability to operate in a socially acceptable way, its share price and most importantly its culture and people. We are fortunate as our profession has a real sense of purpose. This is evident by the fact that safety

“The ‘she’ll be right’ attitude often results in injury”

I would also say that in the many manufacturing plants I visit in Australia, safety systems go well beyond simple compliance and can be truly recognised as best practice. I think this shows that people really care. While you can comply with the law and get your AS4801 certification for whatever purpose, more often than not compliance is just seen as the baseline for many safety leaders and management teams, as they strive for the highest possible standards in their safety systems and processes.

in what they do, and paperwork and red tape which does not add any value in terms of controlling risks and reducing injuries. So the challenge is that legislation needs to make practical sense, rather than having legislation and regulation for the sake of it.

Another challenge for OHS is a cultural tendency towards a high tolerance for risk in the Australian workplace. The ‘she’ll be right’ attitude often results in injury. I don’t think that people are deliberately disobedient or don’t care, but they are so ingrained to
is now being discussed within boardrooms all over the country. There is no doubt the OHS profession has grown and evolved as a result.

This is evident by the work surrounding the OHS Body of Knowledge. The OHS profession has become more sophisticated in its knowledge base and has worked hard to get the right balance between the ‘science’ of safety and the behavioural or emotional elements of safety. The achievements around world class systems, and seeing reductions in injury rates across multiple industries, are achievements that cannot go unrecognised. There is certainly a greater focus on designing hazards out and this has been a significant shift and achievement.

**What are the greatest challenges facing the OHS profession?**
There are challenges for the profession moving forward. Firstly the way people work and the environments we work within continues to change more rapidly than before, and as a profession we need to become even more dynamic and flexible to such changes.

**“We need to be focused on running effective and efficient OHS functions in our businesses”**

Secondly, we may well need different strategies and tactics and an ability to think out of the ‘outside of the box’ in regard to eliminating fatalities and PDIs as distinct from eliminating injuries in order to sustain performance into the future.

In addition, we must demonstrate that we continue to be pragmatic, simple, streamlined and risk based in our approach with systems, processes and practices and that we engage with leaders along the way so as not to run the risk of being perceived as the compliance based police who over complicate everything and cost the business more than any other function. Many processes and practices can distract our leaders doing what they do best which is being out in the field supervising, so freeing up their time so they can do this is important. We absolutely need to be solutions orientated – getting things done safely, and not serving as a hindrance or roadblock to getting things done.

Finally we need to be focused on running effective and efficient OHS functions in our businesses. I think we can do more to promote OHS as a career from within the school-based curriculum, continue to improve the quality of the education provided, and that we can work to bring greater diversity across the workforce within the profession.

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**What are the greatest achievements of the OHS profession?**
Since the 1970s or so, we have realised that a safety culture gets made and broken in many more places than just the operational sharp end (where people are in direct contact with dirty and dangerous work). The organisational blunt end is hugely important: it sets the constraints and creates the opportunities for doing things safely or not. It provides resources, rules, directives, production pressures, incentives and expectations, tools, technologies and lots of other things that directly impact on people’s ability at the sharp end to do things safely or not.

This has been an empowering realisation. It has pulled safety professionals away from merely behaviourist interventions that try to intervene at the level of workers’ actions without much consideration for, or interest in, the system surrounding them. It has also led to the conviction that we must seek the seeds of failure deeper inside an organisation – in its supervision, management, direction, its procedures, technologies, expected work practices, equipment design, and more.

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**What are the greatest challenges facing the OHS profession?**
This idea, though, has been accompanied by burgeoning safety bureaucracies. In pursuit of safety culture, we now deploy vast systems that hunt for all kinds of organisational and behavioral wrongs in all those organisational aspects – before they supposedly line up to cause trouble. We see safety as an absence of risk, an absence of negative things, an absence of bad news. In turn, we risk becoming preoccupied with counting and tabulating high-frequency/low-consequence things: not wearing safety glasses; having coffee in a lidless cup, suffering a paper cut. And then we mistake low counts on these things for a safety culture.

**“The biggest fiction, though, is that we have a safety culture because we have the paperwork to show the low numbers”**

There is a kind of zealotry in zero visions: safety nirvana is reached once we have obliterated all evidence of (potential) harm. The moral and monetary conviction that zero is good has some negative side-effects. It leads, as we all know, to fudging numbers like lost time injuries, to suppressing bad news, but also to the stigmatisation of those who are still involved in incidents, and to a waste of investigative resources (if we take everything to be preventable, everything deserves to be investigated with equal zeal – including paperpuct).

And interestingly, people are still seen as a problem – a problem that needs to be controlled with more rules, stricter supervision, checklists, sanctions and more. The biggest fiction, though, is that we have a safety culture because we have the paperwork to show the low numbers. And then we blow stuff up or injure or kill someone.

Rather than seeing safety as an absence of negatives (which are invariably the things we can count, not the things that count), we might want to consider safety as the presence of the capacity, capability and competency to make things go right. This is a significant paradigm shift, but a necessary one.

For in many cases safety gets created because of people’s adaptive capacity – their ability to recognise, absorb and adapt to changes and disruptions – some of which may even fall outside of what the organisation has trained or equipped them to do. That sort of resilience is not about reducing negatives (incidents, errors, violations) but about identifying – from the bottom up – and enhancing the positive capabilities of people and organisations that allow them to adapt effectively and safely under pressure.
Leading safety from the frontlines

Craig Donaldson speaks with Neil Dine, the ASSE’s International Practice Specialty (IPS) Safety Professional of the Year, about his greatest professional achievements, challenges and goals

How did you get involved in OHS?
My experience as a fire fighter set in train a career in occupational health and safety that has spanned more than 40 years. I joined the Tasmania Fire Service in Launceston in 1968 and this became a catalyst for my professional interest in health and safety issues. Whilst I was a firefighter with the Launceston Fire Brigade I met a volunteer firefighter, Stan Porter, who was the safety officer for the Tasmanian Railways.

Once a month the volunteers (including Stan) would come to the fire station for a training session and over the next four years I got to know Stan during these training nights.

In 1972 a position was advertised with the Department of Labour and Industry (DLI) as an industrial safety officer for the northern region of Tasmania. From the early 1960s to the 1980s the DLI employed five industrial safety officers around the state whose primary role was to assist small business and the forest and rural industries in promoting safety and helping with safety-related problems.

I asked Stan if I should apply for the job, and he said I would be “mad” not too, and that it would open up a different world of opportunity and he also offered to provide a reference if required and to help me wherever he could. I left the fire brigade and joined the DLI and over the next two years I was a regular visitor to the railways safety office to seek advice from Stan and his safety crew, who were on all occasions forthcoming.

It was an enormous privilege to work with people like Stan Porter. Stan is a rarity in today’s world of safety, and years and many, many hours spent with Stan at the Launceston railways safety office during the 1970s and 80s taught me many lessons and the “Porter Way” as we jokingly used to call it or the “gentle touch of Stanley Porter. This has had an impact on my life in OHS as I am sure that it has on many others in the safety profession in Tasmania. Stan’s practical approach to safety has allowed me to pass on this knowledge to my peers, colleagues and associates around the world.

What would you say are your greatest achievements in OHS?
In the mid-1980s I also followed Stan’s advice to get some safety education, to supplement the practical skills that I had learnt and was still learning, and this is where the Ballarat College of Advanced Education (now the Ballarat University) came into my life. In 1988 I completed tertiary qualifications and gained a Graduate Diploma in Occupational Hazard Management, which I consider one of my greatest achievements, as it has allowed my career to be supported by the knowledge gained at Ballarat. Ballarat University has provided an academic focus on my career over the past 24 years.

During my time with the Forestry Commission (1974 to 1990), I was responsible for many innovations in forestry safety in Tasmania, and in June 1972 I joined the Tasmanian branch of the Safety Engineering Society (now known as the Safety Institute of Australia) and was a member of the executive committee in Tasmania from 1975 until my move to Melbourne in late 1990.

In Tasmania and Victoria I was responsible for the organisation of many OHS conferences and seminars and I have continued with this involvement with the safety in action conference each year for the SIA. I am a Fellow of the institute and have also served in various positions on the Victorian & national executives of the SIA. I have also been a member of the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) since 1998 and I was the Asia Pacific membership liaison member until June 2013.

I have presented many papers as an International speaker at the ASSE annual Professional Development Conferences in the United States and have also spoken at International Practice Specialty Workshops in the USA and UK. In 2005 I was awarded International Safety Professional of the Year by the International Practice Specialty of the ASSE; this was the first time such an award has been made outside the USA. I was again awarded this honour in June 2013.

What do you consider your greatest professional challenges?
In February 2001 when I was appointed the director, corporate health, safety & environment for the CSL Group of Companies. The challenge given me in this role was to introduce a global health, safety & environment management system for all of the CSL Limited and CSL Behring Companies in Australia, the USA, Germany and Switzerland.
Either I was to develop a system or I should find a system that could be adapted for each jurisdiction. I found such a system and with the assistance of Isaac Lahav of Management Systems Australia in Melbourne. We firstly developed the Australian model for CSL, then over the next two years developed a USA and a European model for CSL Behring. The USA model was based on the OSHA US OHS regulations and codes and for the German and Swiss model was based on EU OHS directives and codes and local Swiss OHS requirements.

The Australian and American versions of the system were updated every six months and the European version was updated every year. Appended to the system was an audit procedure that allowed for each location to be externally audited every three years by safety professionals from CSL’s overseas locations. From 2003 until I retired these audits showed a high level of compliance in all locations.

What have been some of the most interesting experiences in your professional life to-date?

With a career spanning 40 plus years, being a member of the SIA and the American Society of Safety Engineers have added greatly to my experiences in safety and have allowed me to develop some lifetime friendships.

Sad reflections from yesteryears include being involved in the investigation of two fatal workplace incidents with a few weeks of commencing work with the Tasmanian Department of Labour & Industry in 1972, and three Tasmania Forestry Commission employees being killed in two workplace incidents in the space of six months. I knew these employees on a first name basis and their deaths are something that are not easily forgotten to this day.

In recent years, my experience of working on the installation and then removal of infrastructure for the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix in Melbourne has been a highlight. Working with an assorted band of young engineers and project managers along with a raft of contractors has been a challenge particularly when final timelines were getting very close. At the end of each of these events we have achieved enviable improvements in our safety results and with my safety team’s philosophy of “managing by walking about” this paid enormous dividends guiding everyone through the safety maze. This allowed them to manage their contracts and contractors with the knowledge that we, the safety professionals, were behind them if they needed help and advice.

How would you say the OHS profession in Australia compares to those overseas?

Having had a world focus on safety for many years I believe that the OHS profession in Australia is leading the way in so many areas. One area that the SIA has focused on in the past ten years is safety leadership; companies can have the world’s best practice and safety systems, but these can be compromised unless all leaders in the business from the CEO to the shop floor supervisors are committed to safety and visibly promote it – and this is where the safety professional is so vital to today’s business.

It can only take one or two instances where a ‘leader’ condones or accepts unsafe work practices and it becomes the norm. Safety professionals everywhere must be seen as a resource to assist rather than hinder their ability to get the job done. Safety professionals must be the advisers; not the regulators and not the enemy – for them coaching and mentoring is vital to workplace safety. Safety must be a core value, not a priority. If safety is a priority it can be moved up and down the priority list every day according to daily pressures within the business; priorities change daily.

What is your outlook for the safety profession?

Chris Patton, a past President of the American Society of Safety Engineers, once wrote in the ASSE Professional Journal that “strategic planning determines where we are going, how we will get there and how we will know when we have arrived.”

The SIA along with the ASSE have individually embarked on strategic planning for our organisations’ futures and through global cooperation with our British, Canadian and our international counterparts such as the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations (INSHPO), this planning will ensure that our collective voice in the world of safety will be heard.

In the economic times that we have experienced over the past years, and to some degree are still experiencing, tests the strength of companies and organisations that employ us with regard to their safety expectations. We know that a strong commitment to safety produces strong economic outcomes and the work of the SIA, ASSE, IOSH, the CSSE, INSHPO and others will contribute to those outcomes just as our strategic directions will support us individually in our work.

Being a safety professional is not easy, we constantly need to look ahead to identify future trends and needs that will help us succeed but we also know that the professional who continuously advances his or her professional skills will have the edge in any economy and our respective professional organisations gives us this edge.

“Safety professionals everywhere must be seen as a resource to assist rather than hinder their ability to get the job done”
How to win over workers and influence safety outcomes

OHS professionals need both resilience and an ability to deal with resistance in order to effectively communicate safety messages and make each safety interaction positive and productive, writes Carl Tinsley

All too often, we forget that “safety” on the ground is primarily a people role. The success of safety all the way up to the statistics displayed in the Boardroom is dependent on the quality of the safety interactions happening everyday all around us on the shop floor.

Neuroscience has made quantum leaps in the last few years in leadership research. Safety is leadership, targeted leadership, but leadership none the less. To lead individuals, teams, departments, businesses or organisations on that journey to interdependence, safety professionals must lead as well, if not better, than any other profession because of the potential costs of not doing it right.

Some findings from the latest neuroleadership research apply perfectly to the role of safety. Two key capabilities safety professionals must have to handle safety interactions harmoniously and more effectively are personal resilience, and dealing with resistance.

Resilience and safety

The topic of resilience has come into neuroscience focus since the advent of the Adversity Quotient in 1997 by Dr Paul Stoltzi. David Rock, author of Quiet Leadership, defines resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress”.

For many safety professionals, conducting a safety intervention, such as stopping a group of contractors doing the job they do every day, is a personally challenging and significantly stressful situation because of the potential for conflict. This is likely (though not always) to be a concern for the more introverted OHS professional. On the other hand, the extroverted and bold safety professional often relishes the chance to get involved, to demonstrate their knowledge and even their positional authority.

While these professionals may have the best intention, without proper guidance, mentoring and skill development, they can inadvertently harm the reputation of the OHS field and build resistance. It is not what they do, but how they do it, that determines this. Will the introverted OHS professional or the extroverted OHS professional...
Safety professionals must lead as well, if not better, than any other profession because of the potential costs of not doing it right.

“Safety professionals must lead as well, if not better, than any other profession because of the potential costs of not doing it right”

handle a stressful safety intervention better? Well both can do it equally well, because the success of the communication process depends on how it is handled, and not the personality of the person handling it. By knowing how to handle a stressful situation all OHS professionals can make each safety interaction positive and productive.

While resilience is focused on the bigger picture of a person’s life, the first two steps to developing resilience are invaluable for safety professionals.

1. Control. Recognise your own power in a situation. Recognising does not always mean using that power because often, using that power ineffectively results in greater resistance.

2. Ownership. What part of this issue are you responsible for? Define it and accept it.

Control and ownership
You are the safety professional, and like all other workers, you have a personal responsibility to keep people safe. How much authoritative control should you exert and what is your plan in applying it to make sure you reach the best outcome? When have you actually stopped and thought about how best to handle a situation? What part of the interaction process do you own? You, the OHS professional, own and are in control of the whole safety interaction. If it goes badly, you have to take responsibility for it.

Here are some tips to handling these interventions so you remain in control and own the process. Obviously this is risk-based; the greater the risk, the faster, swifter and more decisively you will need to act. Critically, you must consider how much rapport you have with the person/people you are interacting with, because rapport has a huge impact on the success or failure of any intervention.

1. Stop the job quietly (as quietly as the risk allows). No-one likes being embarrassed in public. What you consider to be doing your job may cause humiliation to the other party. Damage their self-esteem and you build strong resistance.

2. Stop people objecting to your requests publicly by discussing the situation discreetly and privately. A person who makes their stance known publicly is much less likely to change their mind because their self-esteem is now on the line.

3. Use second person language when discussing the solution such as “we, us”. Avoid the first person terms “I” and “you” as they lead to defensiveness. For example, “I think you need to …”, or the favourite: “Don’t you know what you are doing wrong here? Haven’t you been inducted?” Instead, try “What do we need to do to fix this?” When you are focusing on the solution, make eye contact and use “us” and “we”.

4. Use third person language when...
discussing the problem: “Okay this job is awkward, that's clear and there's still this rule to comply with (problem), so how can we do the job and comply with that? When you are focusing on the problem, avoid eye contact look at the problem and use “that” and “it”

5. Use a third visual point to focus their attention on. You need to reinforce that you are there for their benefit. You can do this by focusing their attention on a third point such as the job, a manual, a procedure or even a safety sign. It is the “rule” that is the issue (not you); you two are okay. Avoid eye contact when discussing the issue. Look at the third point or look at the job. If they keep looking at you while you are discussing the issue, just direct them to look at the job. Mostly, during conversations, people will look where you look.

6. Diffuse the confrontation. When discussing the issue, stand on their side at 45 degrees and avoid the chest to chest confrontational stance. Keep the job or the procedure in front of you to refer and point to. Smile if the situation permits it.

7. Let them talk, and try and avoid interrupting. Nothing builds resistance faster than not being allowed to finish what we are saying.

8. Use the word “and” instead of “but”. For example “I’ve seen you guys working here for three days now doing a fantastic job, and I am sure we can come up with a solution to this.” As opposed to: “Sure you’ve done well up to now, but this is not acceptable.” The word “but” cancels out everything said before it.

9. Remain calm and focus on the bigger picture. Even if you have to “pull rank” you should do so as appropriately as possible. Avoid words that intensify the situation (every, always) and use qualifying and softening words (perhaps, could, sometimes). Again, this is risk-based. In an emergency, you do what you must; apologise later if necessary.

10. Take a step back if things get tense. Step back and visualise that you have left your emotions aside and only the calm, assertive professional remains to deal with the situation.

11. Remember, you are in control of the interaction. The person who has the best, most flexible interpersonal skills will control the situation.

12. The behaviour is not the person. This is an old NLP presupposition. Because they are doing the wrong thing, that does not make them a bad person, or an idiot. They just did the wrong thing. Discuss it, find out why they did it first before working with them to fix it. Often their action is a safer choice and the safety professionals’ challenge is to find a way to make it happen.

Your power in the safety interaction allows you to control the process. You own its success or failure. Of course it won’t work with everyone or every situation, but treating people respectfully and managing their self-esteem will go a long way to improving any interaction, let alone an intervention. Neuroscience is proving that. Knowing that you took every step reasonable, in a professional manner, goes a long way in building your resilience to deal with these issues. Isn’t that something worth aiming for?

Dealing with resistance
Safety professionals have to sell the safety message through both influence and persuasion; in doing so they experience resistance daily.

In his work Approach – Avoidance Model of Persuasion: Alpha and Omega Strategies for Change, Eric Knowles identifies two types of persuasion strategies: alpha and omega.

Alpha strategies
Alpha strategies deal with motivating people towards a choice or decision.

Some alpha persuasion and influence strategies are well known in the safety profession, but are more readily grasped by reflecting on those horridly effective infomercials. For example:

- Make the message more persuasive (emphasise the pain: that dirty bucket and dirty mop)
- Add incentives (wait, there's more …)
- Increase the credibility of the source of the information (independent studies have found …)
- Provide consensus information (look at these satisfied customers …)
- Emphasise scarcity (only available if you call within the next ten minutes …)
- Engage a norm of reciprocity (30 day money back guarantee, yours to keep forever …)
- Emphasise consistency (our laboratory tests confirm …)

While alpha strategies are effective to some degree, even the successful programs wear off over time. People develop resistance to them. That is why omega strategies are important, particularly in the safety field.

Omega strategies
Omega strategies deal directly with overcoming resistance. There are four key categories of resistance that safety professionals encounter probably every day.

1. Distrust: A lack of trust that the source of the information is credible. “Wait, we’ve heard this before and you never delivered what you said you would!”

2. Scrutiny: A lack of trust that what you are suggesting will work. “Wait, we’ve tried this before and it didn’t work then, why should it now?”

“The person who has the best, most flexible interpersonal skills will control the situation”
3. Inertia: A lack of energy and motivation to apply what you are requesting. “You want us to do what? Yeah right! What are we going to get in return?”

4. Reactance: A resistance to being persuaded. This is like people just digging their feet in because they feel they are being manipulated. “You want us to wear safety goggles at all times, even when we’re not in the plant? Yeah right, no way that is happening!”

People don’t like being pushed and will push back. In the safety field, people resist when they feel they are being forced to comply with new policies. In essence, they desire restoring freedom of choice. Of course they have to comply eventually; that is what they get paid for and that is their duty of care. They will just comply more readily with less pain for you if you can overcome their resistance.

Overcoming resistance
These four types of resistance form two consequences: active resistance and avoidant resistance. There are numerous strategies to help overcome resistance and there are a suite of tools for each form of resistance listed above. Below is a snapshot of a key few techniques particularly relevant to the safety professional.

1. Sidestep the resistance: redefine it so as to not recognise it as resistance. That way, the safety intervention becomes a safety discussion or a safety conversation. While I know many companies do this already, it is interesting to note many don’t know they psychology behind there action. For example, you may notice a worker not wearing safety glasses when they are meant to. When you approach, they are waiting for you to pounce on the glasses issue, so discuss something else first. Sidestep their resistance. This pops the resistance balloon they have been building in readiness to argue with you. Then, when you leave, just mention, “ohh by the way, not sure if you noticed this is a glasses area.” Then you are addressing the safety issue when their resistance has disappeared.

2. Address the resistance directly: Listen to the resistance: their concerns will tell you the solution. Give them guarantees and acknowledge the resistance: often just being listened to is enough to defeat resistance. See the opportunities, not the threats. For example, “I know you guys disagree with having to wear glasses in this area, and I have to say I understand and am inclined to agree with your concerns, I also know it is a policy from above, so none of us have a choice in this matter. I guarantee to discuss it with management at our next meeting, in the meantime, let’s put these on.” Obviously, in this instance you must raise it at your next meeting. Be honest, and only say what you intend and what you believe.

3. Address the resistance indirectly: Find what they are comparing to produce resistance. Define the judgment that is giving them the comparison and causing the resistance. Change the timeframe of the comparison or use more choice of options to separate resistance and increase acceptance. For example, “Yes you’re right, the warehouse guys don’t need to wear long sleeves, and that’s because they don’t work in direct sun. You guys do. I guess an option would be for you to change into long sleeve shirts each time you have to unload your truck? Or you could just wear them all the time, actually, they are better quality and cooler material than the warehouse shirts, and they are B.O. resistant (smile).

4. Reframe the resistance: “Your reluctance to agree to this proposal immediately shows that you are really concerned about it. We are too, so we are going to work closely with you over the next week, to come up with a solution, that when we’ve implemented, will demonstrate how together we can come up with great solutions.”

Reframing is a critical skill for safety professionals. Changing the frame of reference that drives a person’s resistance is critical. For example: “I know you guys are keen to knock off on time to see your kids and do your things at home and I understand that. And because of reckless actions of some of you, one or a number of you may not make it home in one piece one day soon because of continual breaches of the personnel transport safety procedures. How important do you think those extra five minutes will be then? I won’t accept that. Will you?” (making eye contact).

Overcoming resistance is a skill that is relevant to the supervisor on the shop floor, to the OHS professional and the senior OHS manager.

The consummate communicator
Neuroscience is now providing information on techniques that we can use to improve our communication. OHS professionals need to be the consummate communicator. Whether you are intervening with contractors or making a presentation to the Board of Directors, planning for and handling resistance is a critical skill you must possess. After all, how can you keep people safe if you can’t overcome their natural tendencies to resist? When you add personal resilience to your ability to handle resistance, you start to truly influence those around you. They unconsciously perceive you as being a leader and possessing authoritative charisma. This is the ultimate goal for an OHS professional, to be perceived as a charismatic leader in the OHS field.

When others perceive you as being that charismatic OHS leader, they have a natural and unconscious tendency to believe, respect and follow you. This applies whether you work on the shop floor or in the management Team. How much easier would your role be when people follow you with less or no resistance? You can start your own journey to being perceived as a leader with authoritative charisma now by developing your skills to overcome resistance and by increasing your resilience when facing resistance.

Carl Tinsley is founder of consulting firm Breaking Ground and has more than 25 years’ experience delivering leadership courses in the police, emergency services and the Australian resources and mining sectors. www.advancedleadersh...
“Under the proposed changes, government would move from certification of safety on granting of pre-qualification status, to active certification”
How procurement can drive safe outcomes

**In response to safety issues with the ACT’s construction industry, Peter Murray, Mark McCabe and Andrew Parkinson explain how a government procurement function is helping to drive safer outcomes on worksites**

By the middle of 2012 it was becoming increasingly clear that safety on worksites in the Australian Capital Territory was a pronounced and chronic problem. By the end of 2012 there had been four fatal accidents on ACT worksites over the previous 12 months, in addition to a number of near misses and serious injuries. By comparison, in the same period there were six fatalities of Australian service personnel in Afghanistan.

In consultation with WorkSafe ACT, the Commerce and Works Directorate sought to evaluate new ways of capital works procurement, with a particular focus on how a government procurement function could in its own right help drive safer outcomes on our worksites. The impetus for change and the focus on procuring safety outcomes were intensified following a tragic fatality on a government procured worksite in March 2012.

The initial analysis on safety improvement focused on two areas:
- The Government’s ‘show cause’ contractual rights, and
- The administration of the national prequalification schemes

**Active certification – not control**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Active Certification</th>
<th>Control</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commerce and Works Directorate (CWD) prequalifies contractors</td>
<td>CWD prequalifies contractors</td>
<td>Internal safety inspectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHS third party accreditation</td>
<td>WHS third party accreditation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Independent safety audits</td>
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<td>Points system</td>
<td>Sanctions for poor performance</td>
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<td>Sanctions for poor performance i.e. suspension</td>
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As the process for issuing show cause notices was well established under standard contractual forms, the focus of analysis quickly moved to the government’s pre-qualification schemes. There are two national schemes developed by the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council:
- Civil road and bridge (all values)
- National non-residential (greater than $50 million)

**Development of a new approach**

The prequalification processes for contractors administered by the ACT Government include a requirement that Work Health & Safety systems are in place and these systems have been independently certified. Preliminary analysis suggested that the prequalification process could be reinforced without the need to move to controlling safety on external worksites.

It should be noted that the ACT Government does not maintain a public works office, but rather acts as a purchaser of capital works delivery services. Under the proposed changes, government would move from certification of safety on granting of pre-qualification status, to active certification. Under active certification contractors would be subject to ongoing checks to ensure that the systems they proposed would be followed and are being followed throughout the year.

With the concept of active certification accepted as a driving principle behind any new system, further thought was given to how active certification would be measured, managed and enforced. It soon became apparent that a point based system, not unlike those used for driver’s licenses would be a suitable precedent for measuring and enforcing safety performance.

The principle behind this system is that, as with driving offences, there are various...
levels of safety breaches, and the more serious breaches should attract higher point penalties. If the point cap of 100 points was breached then the contractor would have prequalification suspended for a period of six months. The contractor could then reapply for prequalification. The basis for identifying a safety breach would be an adverse finding from appointed safety auditors. Audits would be conducted every 13 weeks, or earlier if the client directorates had concerns arising from a serious incident or adverse action taken by the work health and safety regulator, WorkSafe ACT. The concept of safety audits was a new concept introduced to support active certification. Government would then be placed in a position where two remedial courses of action would be available to address poor safety performance:

- Suspension of prequalification: a non-discretionary process automatically triggered when 100 points was reached or exceeded
- Termination of contract: a discretionary course of action that would commence with the issuing of a show cause notice under the contract

**Getting Home Safely**

In September 2012 ACT Minister Simon Corbell commissioned an inquiry into WHS in the ACT. A range of submissions were provided to the inquiry, including the work undertaken to-date around active certification. In November 2012 the outcome of the inquiry was the release of the *Getting Home Safely* report. Within this report, recommendation 25 stated:

“The ACT Government should proceed with development and implementation of Shared Services Procurements’ (CWD) proposed ‘active certification’ approach following consultation with stakeholders. This should happen by 30 June 2013.”

This recommendation was subsequently accepted by the ACT government and became government policy for implementation by 30 June 2013.

Urgent consultation then quickly commenced with key industry stakeholders in order to progress the implementation of active certification. The consultations were to significantly influence the final form of the scheme as adopted by government.

**Driving performance**

The consultation process with industry resulted in a number of refinements to the proposed process prior to implementation. Firstly the range of safety violations was simplified into three categories:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of WHS Non-conformance</th>
<th>Initial Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Major Non-conformance</td>
<td>50 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Non-conformance</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
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<td>Minor Non-conformance</td>
<td>5 Points</td>
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Importantly it was realised that the key objective of the process should also be focused around driving human behaviours that lead to safe outcomes. Accordingly the focus of the system shifted from safety incidents themselves to how contractors dealt with these incidents. Where all the appropriate measures were taken the auditor may form the view that issues around the safety incident are adequately mitigated. Thus, appropriate performance is driven by rewarding practice in safety and penalising inappropriate responses.

Mitigating factors could include, by way of example:

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• If a Safe Work Method system (SWMS) was in place and communicated, but not followed
• If WorkSafe ACT was informed in a timely manner
• If injured workers were appropriately treated
• If corrective and/or preventative measures have been adopted

Conversely, actions could be undertaken which aggravate the safety incident by adopting inappropriate measures, for example:
• There was no SWMS in place for the task
• The worker was not inadequately skilled or trained
• Defective and/or uncertified machinery was in use
• The incident was not reported to WorkSafe ACT in a timely manner
• Appropriate first aid and or other treatments were not rendered
• No action taken to address non-conformance

The extent to which the incident has been mitigated or aggravated is assessed by the safety auditor in the closeout audit, and is also subject to an appeals process by the contractor. The diagram (see box on performance based points) outlines how the points scheme operates under this regime:

Under the points scheme, pre-qualified contractors are notified in writing where accumulated points equals or exceeds 100 points. On reaching (or exceeding) 100 points contractors are suspended from prequalification of not less than six months or when their points drop below 100 again; noting that points expire two years after the date of the audit when the non-conformance was identified.

### Performance based points

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<tr>
<th>Type of WHS Non-Conformance</th>
<th>Final Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mitigated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Non-conformance</td>
<td>25 Points</td>
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<td>Moderate Non-conformance</td>
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<td>Minor Non-conformance</td>
<td>2 Points</td>
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<th>Type of WHS Non-Conformance</th>
<th>Final Points</th>
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<td>Aggravated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Non-conformance</td>
<td>100 Points</td>
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<td>Moderate Non-conformance</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor Non-conformance</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
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### Summary

Active certification does not place additional burdens on contractors other than permitting safety audits onsite, and as such, the administrative burden and associated costs are borne by the government. The challenges for government is in communicating to industry its deep commitment to procuring safe outcomes on worksites and its preparedness to pay for safe work practices.

What distinguishes the proposed implementation of active certification is its focus on the behaviours around safety incidents, rather than the incident itself. This is intended to drive a culture of openness and quality in safety performance. In the final assessment, the success of the system will be demonstrated by measurable and sustainable improvement in safety outcomes in the ACT.

Peter Murray is executive director of procurement for the ACT’s commerce and works directorate, Mark McCabe is executive director of WorkSafe ACT and Andrew Parkinson is acting director of civil infrastructure in the ACT’s commerce and works directorate. The authors wish to acknowledge the contribution of Michael Whitehouse in the development of the active certification system.

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There have been a number of trends and developments in OHS training in recent times. One of the most significant changes has been the introduction of new Work, Health & Safety (WHS) laws across most jurisdictions in Australia, which has led organisations to look at how organisations can meet obligations and compliance requirements under the new laws.

Simon Stuart, SAI Global’s leading OHS facilitator, says the objective of OHS training should be to ease the implementation of health and safety policies into specific job practices and to raise awareness and skill levels to an acceptable standard.

While all employees can benefit from health and safety training, he says special attention should be given to the training of supervisors, trainers and then workers.

“The assumption of knowledge due to age, time with the company/industry leads organisations to make the first mistake that certain individuals already have that knowledge and they target other workers,” he says.

Phoebe Lahey, general manager operations, HBA Learning Centres, notes that all companies are different when it comes to OHS training. “Companies in high risk industries are generally very aware of their obligations under the WHS legislation, as they tend to have experienced

“The ability to be flexible and work with the employer, and provide a high quality product is invaluable when you’re trying to show ROI”
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NRMA DriveSafe Pro is available to any organisation size or type and can be tailored to the specific requirements of individuals or your entire organisation.
WHS incidents or investigations and usually have implemented some form of WHS measures in the form of training, whether it is reactive or proactive,” she says. There are a number of issues that companies face when it comes to the above, and Lahey says the most common ones include: time available to put employees though training and education; budget; lack of knowledge of the severity of the fines and jail time that may be issued as a result of poor WHS; not being aware of legal responsibilities; the safety culture of the company/site; and management’s attitude to safety and remoteness of a company/site.

Jane Ahern, director of Laser Safety Services, says the 70:20:10 approach is a dominant trend in learning and development generally. Based on research, this approach promotes the idea that roughly 70 per cent of learning happens on the job, via practical experience; 20 per cent is through social networks (such as knowing who to ask, meetings and discussions) and the remaining 10 per cent is via formal training.

“Formal training seems to be a big focus for OHS,” says Ahern. “A lot of energy goes into making sure that people have received formal training and there is evidence to prove that the business has met its obligations. The risk is that the focus becomes about butt-covering rather than a real commitment to making the workplace safer.

“The model WHS legislation being less prescriptive and more outcomes-focused, organisations have the opportunity to design a 70:20:10 approach for OHS learning that ticks all the compliance boxes and embeds safe work practices within the organisation.”

Risk and compliance
With the new WHS laws having a focus on risk and risk assessment, organisations are beginning to understand the importance of risk assessment training, according to Stuart. “There is such a wide variety of understanding of risk assessment, and numerous methods of undertaking that the organisation and those that work in it can be very confused as to what is real risk, and how to implement effective risk management,” says Stuart.

A common gap in OHS training is the understanding of a true safety system and how it interacts with AS/NZS 4801:2001 as an auditable tool, according to Stuart. This is followed closely by the misunderstanding of the power of auditing, and he says organisations are normally fearful of audits. “They will rush around and tidy up aesthetically, thinking an auditor will be looking for non-conformance. External auditors arrive with ‘inspection sheets’ – a tick and flick document that states: ‘do you have this? yes or no’.

“True auditing is looking for conformance and is an accurate snapshot of the system at this time, point and place. When this is done honestly by both parties it will guarantee continual improvement.”

Stuart also says too many organisations fail to realise a safety system takes 18 months to fully implement. “The main reason for poor implementation is the lack of consultation and team building through the organisation and forging of a common goal. It must be treated as a project, given time lines and outcomes which are audited and agreed as successful before moving to the next criteria,” he says.

Building professional capability with the Body of Knowledge
The recent development and implementation of the OHS Body of Knowledge (BoK) have been driven by the needs of industry to have certified competent professionals, according to associate professor Sue Reed, course coordinator, OHS postgraduate programs in the school of exercise and health sciences at Edith Cowan University. “Before professionals can be certified there has to be an agreed knowledge base that all OHS professionals must have. In relation to the OHS generalist, this core knowledge is based is the SIA’s BoK. The development of the BoK has enabled universities to review and benchmark their programs and to identify gaps and make modifications necessary to ensure their courses cover the majority of the material in the BoK,” she says.

The other driving force has been the implementation within Australia of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), according to Reed. This has also driven the review of education standards in courses and in most cases has resulted in Masters level courses being extended to meet the minimum length criteria as well as the requirements to include some research training.

The need for the certification of OHS professionals is driving the developments and implementation of course accreditation for the general OHS professional. Reed says the advantage to any professional certification program of having accredited courses is the fact that learning outcomes and levels are established and the professional certification board then does not then need to review the knowledge level of individual applicants, as long as they hold a qualification from an accredited degree program.
New BSBWHS qualifications

In December 2012 the Innovation and Business Industry Skills Council (IBSA) released the new workplace health and safety training package. The main drivers for the review of the old BSBOHS OHS qualifications and implementation of the new BSBWHS qualifications were the release of the new harmonised WHS legislation, according to Lahey.

IBSA, through consultation with industry, reviewed the BSBOHS material to ensure that it was updated to meet the legislative requirements as well as the current and emerging needs of workers and employers in all industries.

IBSA states that changes in WHS practice and knowledge since the last major review of vocational education and training (VET) WHS qualifications and units of competency have been driven by many factors (1), including:

- Increased recognition and commitment to managing psychosocial hazards, fatigue, bullying and occupational violence
- Recognition that work health needs to address factors outside the workplace
- Advance in WHS knowledge regarding hazards, risks and risk management
- Location of the WHS function in organisation; for example, out of HR and into operations
- Legislative changes (work health and safety, industrial relations etc)
- Increased awareness of the roles, function, duties and liabilities of employers and managers
- More workplaces taking a systems approach to WHS management
- Increasing recognition of the ‘risk maturity journey’
- Greater focus on behavioural-based safety as a risk control strategy by some
- Declining membership of unions and impacts on effective WHS consultation and participation
- Changing nature of work organisation and work; for example, more subcontractors, casualisation, fly in/fly out, rise and fall of different industries and industry sectors, 12 hour shifts, less job security and job permanence
- Increasing professionalisation and other changes in the area of WHS employments
- Greater focus on being suitably qualified to work in WHS
- Increasing prevalence and use of mobile technologies (smart phones, tablets etc) in the workplace.

“The implementation of the new BSBWHS qualifications include and reflect the above drivers as well as the new legislation in the aim to develop and educate people in the area of WHS in the most current practice reflecting industry trends,” says Lahey.

A tertiary approach

Associate Professor Sue Reed, course coordinator, OHS postgraduate programs in the school of exercise
Driver training: rubber to the road

Recent changes to WHS legislation, especially around contractors being treated in a similar manner as employees, has led to companies taking a more holistic approach to risk management, according to Simon Tracy, head of NRMA safer driving.

“One of the biggest areas of risk is when your people are driving as part of their job,” she says. “Most people who drive professionally would say they’re pretty good drivers; I mean who can argue with 10 or 20 or 30 years’ experience, right? But just because someone drives a lot and hasn’t had an ‘at fault’ incident, doesn’t mean they’re demonstrating low-risk driving behaviours. The chance of having an incident isn’t high, but if one happens there is the potential for a really bad outcome – not just for the driver, but for the employer and the general public caught up in it as well.”

Employers generally understand their obligations around safety with the recent WHS legislative changes, but Tracy says it’s only starting to dawn on employers as to how the laws can and do impact everyone in the business. “At NRMA we say that we all have skin in the game, not just the person directly accountable, but everyone has input into developing a safety culture; when beliefs become behaviours, then culture is formed,” he says.

There has been a long-held opinion that the most effective training for experienced drivers is getting out on skidpans, because it allows them to feel what it’s like when the car is out of control, in a safe environment, according to Tracy. “Skid pan training can be useful, and a hell of a lot of fun, but unless you’re in a situation soon after the training to put your new skills to the test, then a lot of it can be forgotten,” he says.

“Unfortunately it can have a negative effect for some young drivers, as it can lead to increased risk taking. DriveSafe Pro (NRMA’s corporate driver training program) teaches people low risk driving behaviours, such as the importance of stopping distances, slowing down and blind spots, using the principals of adult learning in practical and realistic situations. If you like, skid pan training teaches you what to do if you get into trouble; we teach you how not to get into trouble in the first place.”

Tracy acknowledges that it can be hard for WHS professionals to demonstrate the value of driver training in the business. Often, with large vehicle fleets and an accompanying workforce of drivers and contractors, he says the time and expense of training your people can seem enormous. “In that respect a quality provider can shoulder much of that responsibility for you, whether by completing a needs assessment and tailoring training to your needs, scheduling training around your rosters, travelling to you and offering a mix of in class theory and on road practical. The ability to be flexible and work with the employer, and provide a high quality product is invaluable when you’re trying to show ROI,” he says.
profession and/or their company they need to look at what programs will get them there. Many large companies are now requiring senior OHS managers to hold a Master’s degree.”

In saying that, Reed believes professionals who started and/or completed postgraduate programs before the recent changes still hold quality degrees which are and will be accepted in the future. However, the goalposts have changed for students starting now and Reed says this is for the better. “It will start to put the OHS generalist professional on the same footing as other OHS professions such as occupational hygienist and ergonomists as well as other allied health professions and professions such as engineers,” she says.

**Gaining training traction**

There are a number of ways in which OHS professionals can best go about gaining traction and improving the results of OHS training. Ahern says it is important to encourage individuals and team leaders to make sure there is an opportunity to practice relevant content on the job.

“Cultural OHS programs like zero harm are a great support to formal training around OHS, encouraging all employees to practice OHS every day – at home and at work (the 70 per cent) and openly discuss safety issues and opportunities with their colleagues and managers (the 20 per cent),” she says.

Lahey says management and companies should start by sourcing a reputable WHS training provider in order to get the best training results. “There is a huge amount of value in organising an in-house course for your organising as the RTO can tailor the training to suit the company’s needs while delivering all the requirements of the qualification,” she says.

“Personally I believe that face-to-face training where possible always gets the best results as the trainer is there every step of the way, as well as a number of other participants that you can consult and share experiences with.”

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**(1) Armstrong, March 2013, Innovation and Business Industry Skills Council, The new WHS Qualifications – Learner, Focused and Up-to-Date, BSB07 Professional Development Workshop Participant Notes, Melbourne, p5**

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**“Companies in high risk industries are generally very aware of their obligations under the WHS legislation”**

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Sydney conference puts spotlight on safety

The Safety in Action 2013 Sydney Safety Conference will bring together a wide range of recognised speakers and delegates from across the country.

To be held from 3-4 September 2013 at Sydney Olympic Park, the Safety in Action 2013 Sydney Safety Conference will bring together a number of nationally recognised OHS experts and other speakers, including NSW Minister for Finance and Services Andrew Constance, WorkCover NSW’s John Watson, Comcare’s Andrew Morgan and Safe Work Australia’s Wayne Creaser.

Driving a culture of safety leadership
Speaking ahead of the conference, leadership expert and CEO of Serenidad Consulting, Nola Hennessy, said that the view that OHS professionals are responsible for safety is potentially the most significant barrier to building a positive culture of safety leadership within organisations.

“Safety leadership is the responsibility of everyone in an organisation,” she said. “Changing the mindset of organisations and their people is not an overnight event. Changing perceptions, educating and empowering individuals at all levels is critical to changing from a culture that supports pure rhetoric, to a culture that ‘does as it says/advocates’.”

Hennessy added that OHS practitioners are in a unique and powerful position to reposition their organisations as more receptive, proactive and positive places. “They are already seen as the subject matter experts,” said Hennessy, and when coupled with effective and positive use of their ability to inspire, influence, motivate and engender trust, she said they can achieve great outcomes through changing policy to resolve cultural and risk management deficiencies.

As much as organisational decision makers need to be honest about what they really want to achieve, and remain committed to that, she said WHS practitioners need to be honest in reporting WHS performance based on facts, not assumptions or fear.

Tackling alcohol and drugs in the workplace
Also speaking ahead of the conference was Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) head of workplace services Phillip Collins, who observed that few organisations adequately address the issue of alcohol and drugs in the workplace. As a whole, he said most organisations feel that a mention in their code of conduct or a clause in an employment contract is sufficient to cover off alcohol and other drugs.

In addition, Collins said little to no investment is being made in preventative measures such as training and education – a core element of a successful alcohol and drug strategy. “It’s true that the majority of alcohol is consumed at home, however the effects of that drinking plays out the next day when an employee either takes an Aussie sickie, or turns up to work tired and not focused,” he said.

“Additionally, corporate functions such as Christmas parties are often over looked as a high risk setting, and the organising of the party is often delegated to a junior staff member with no event management experience. “The management of alcohol flow, entertainment, a home-safe policy and security can be overlooked. Christmas parties, if not managed appropriately represent huge risks for organisations but are rarely acknowledged as such.”

Collins said there are three components to an effective “model for change” approach: (1) case for change – see it; (2) commitment – (own it); and (3) action – do it. “For any change program, the identification of the issue needs to be articulated by the key stakeholders, and a long term objective needs to be set,” he said.
Research on nanomaterials has identified some potential safety and health hazards, and she said that existing risk assessment methodologies are generally sufficient in managing potential occupational exposures to nanomaterials.

“However, it is understood that the current lack of information on specific aspects related to nanomaterials will present significant challenges in OHS,” said Davoren, who added that, at present, uncertainties exist regarding the methodology for both exposure estimations and hazard identification and “require further development and standardisation”.

“The current lack of information on specific aspects related to nanomaterials will present significant challenges in OHS”

“With the objective it needs to be owned by the entire organisation and communicated throughout with measurements assigned to the tasks so change can be monitored.”

Managing the safety risks of nanomaterials
Pacific Environment-Toxikos ecotoxicologist Maria Davoren, who will also present at the conference, said the increased production and use of nanoparticles means that the potential for worker exposure will be a growing and important concern in occupational health and safety.

“Given the existing limitations, the unanimous expert opinion at present is that organisations should take a precautionary approach by implementing appropriate controls and personal protective equipment (PPE), coupled with best practices to eliminate or minimise exposure to nanomaterials in the workplace,” she said.

Considering the increasing applications of nanomaterials, she also said environmental risk assessment is essential to understand the novel environmental impacts of their production, use and disposal.
While safety remains critically important in organisations, it is increasingly being recognised that factors that can impact or endanger employees’ health should be of equal concern, particularly with the rise in the prevalence and cost of psychological-based injuries, according to Paul Richards, head of workplace health solutions for Bupa.

Typically, the majority of OHS managers’ time, and measures of success, has been based around evidence that workers were being ‘protected’ from any potential safety hazards, said Richards.

“This has included the development of a safety culture that emphasised the importance of safety in every aspect of the work environment,” he said. “However, the fact that health transcends both physical and psychological factors means best practice OHS managers need to have an increased range of tools to help identify health risks and provide targeted solutions that relate at both a personal and environmental level.”

Richards said WHS/OHS professionals are well positioned to lead evolution, but may need to influence a different way in which health is perceived and managed in an organisation, especially where it has been used primarily as part of an engagement/reward initiative rather than WHS imperative.

“Sociologically, demographically, legislatively and economically, health and wellness is increasingly becoming a business differentiator,” said Richards. “WHS professionals should consider if they have the knowledge, skills, tools and partners able to support their ability to assess, design, implement and evaluate the business impact they are able to make through this opportunity.”

Richards spoke at the Safety in Action 2013 Brisbane Safety Conference, which was held from 18-19 June 2013 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.
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