Achieving Sustainable Business Excellence
A Proven, Complex Adaptive Systems Leadership Approach
by

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The Problem:

Many managers crave reliability, predictability, stability, and control. These are desirable characteristics for a machine, but organizations are not machines. They are more like living systems, so this machine-like approach to leading creates huge waste by suppressing the people, their morale, and their energy while building cynicism and resistance to change. At best, this can drag the organization down; at worst, people will self-organize against this oppression using social media and create huge problems for the organization.

The Solution:

Open the flow of information up, down, and between the stove-pipes, build trust and interdependence, and help people to see how important they are to the success of the whole business venture, thus creating coherence across the organization and freeing up creativity, energy, and commitment, leading to sustainable personal growth and business excellence. In this process, a container is co-created consisting of the mission, vision, principles, and standards that provides order and focus while making the space within it for the people to self-organize, develop solutions, and thus create a more profitable, healthy business.

Best Practice:

The leadership team needs to engage in focused, purposeful, and intense discussions together to become aligned and clear on its desired outcomes and goals. The best tool to do this is the Process Enneagram™, which enables everyone to see the whole, the parts, the interactions of the parts, and the processes of how things actually work. Then they need to have the courage, care, concern, and commitment to go into their organizations sharing and upgrading their thinking, getting to know the people, listening, talking, and learning together, teaching each other, providing clear, consistent messages, and building coherence across the organization. As they do this, the container to hold the organization together is co-created, providing order and focus as well as the freedom and space for the people to self-organize, create new ideas and possibilities and become more accountable and responsible, growing themselves and the business.

A Note to the Editor

I am Richard N. Knowles, Ph.D. (chemistry). I have experience in research (14 years and 40 U.S. Patents), development (5 years), manufacturing plant management (16 years) and international consulting (20 years). In my exploration and use of complex adaptive systems ideas to improve the processes of leading and the way in which people worked together, I found the earnings of the business and the effectiveness, productivity, safety, morale, commitment, and the well-being of everyone vastly improved. I created a new tool, called the Process Enneagram™, which seems to be the missing link between complex adaptive systems theory and practical application (See McCarter and White; Footnote 7). A central idea in this work is the shift from doing things to people to doing things and co-creating the future with people. This paper describes the problem of the traditional way of leading, introduces the Process Enneagram™, and provides solutions that open up creativity and increase productivity and earnings, co-creating the container that holds and focuses the self-organizing processes and provides best practices to illustrate this way of leading. The ideas and tools presented herein provide a credible answer to John H. Holland's quest to how to learn to steer complex adaptive systems (see Reference 1).

In addition to this I have written two best-selling leadership books, which are included in this paper as references 4 and 5. This paper closes with a specific case study and several stories.

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Introduction:

In my early days as a Plant Manager of a large chemical plant, I regularly received information and exhortations intended to get the people to work more productively and effectively. Everyone had an opinion; most of the advice boiled down to being tougher on people and making them "do it right"! We were also pushed to make things quicker, cheaper, and better. It felt like we were living in a machine. People were seen as empty-headed objects that could be pushed around and forced to do the work safely, quickly, and well. Business magazines and books were full of top-down guidance and information.

In my 55 years of working, a lot of procedures, processes, equipment, and instruments have been improved. More precise, sophisticated leadership approaches have been developed. Some of the approaches are very precise and complicated. Essentially, all of this top-down work is focused on doing things *to* the people to *make* them work more effectively and productively, which supported the guidance from business magazines and books. There are also a lot more competitive pressures to obtain better margins and quarterly earnings reports for Wall Street. Furthermore, over the last 10-15 years, there has also been a significant shift away from using experienced production people with deep manufacturing experience to using more MBAs with more business experience to drive the performance. While most MBA programs are very strong on the financial, marketing, cultural, and technological aspects of managing a successful business, there is much less emphasis on the importance of working with and through people. In looking at the curricula of various schools, the emphasis seems to be on top-down processes designed to improve the effectiveness and productivity of the workforce. The level of understanding of and interest in the people side of the business is limited.

Total business performance requires many dimensions of expertise: finance, sales, marketing, customer service, IT, research and produce innovation, manufacturing, human

resources, shipping and distribution, and workplace safety and health are some examples. All of these areas are in constant flux and change. The complex adaptive systems approach applies to all these areas of work through openly sharing information, building trust and interdependence, and helping people to see how important their work is to the success of the entire business venture. This paper is focused on just one area, workplace safety and health, in order to provide more clarity to this new approach to leading. However it is very easy to broaden one's focus to all the other areas of work and to apply this way of leading to all the other challenges effectively. The basic fundamentals of working with people developed in this paper apply to all aspects of the work, because the principles, relationships, and agreements they make about how to work together are the same.

The Problem:

There are three big mistakes that many managers make that can lead directly to disaster. These are:
1. putting production first;
2. allowing the technology to drift; and
3. tolerating structural and cultural blocks to communication.

First, while it is normal for managers to push for more production, we need to remember that no one has all the information; nor does anyone see all the safety implications of their decisions. There needs to be a culture that allows people at all levels to speak up and stop production when necessary, until it is safe to resume. To work well, the system needs a lot of trust and feedback, especially in an environment advocating continuous improvement.

Second, while continuous improvement is desirable, allowing the technology to drift is very dangerous. Technology drifts when someone makes a small change to improve a process. Then someone else makes another small change, and so on. With these changes without documentation or review of the changes, the process can drift away from the original design conditions. This can lead to improper maintenance, changed piping, lost knowledge of how the process should run properly, and sooner or later, a disaster. Changes need to be encouraged as long as they are carefully considered for possible impacts on both production and safety and the proper documentation is put into place. We need to use good management of change procedures and processes such as those in the OSHA Process Safety Management Standards (Section 1910.119). Thus, communication is essential for the people to understand and embody change management and process instruction governance.

Third, in most organizations communications flow up and down isolated stovepipes. Skipping a level or crossing into another stovepipe can lead to criticism and punishment. Organizations need to be more open, and to allow the free flow of information so that people can talk to those who have the information they need for their work, regardless of their level or stovepipe. In addition to structural blocks to communication, there are cultural blocks like tolerating bullies who, by picking on those who do try to make a difference, can be highly destructive to open communication.

While there has been a lot of improvement in safety performance over my 55 years of work experience, the problems discussed here have significantly retarded further improvement. When management processes and implementation practices are top-down driven, the management fails to institutionalize, recognize, or value the contributions of the people. This

compliant-focused approach with rule-based processes blocks opportunities for people to give their best. Without the active support of the people, the organization is merely an empty shell producing no sustainable products, services, or financial gain.

The Solution:
Safety is Complex Adaptive System:

Occupational safety, occupational health, and process safety management procedures and processes constantly interact with people, as well as the changing demands of management, customers, competitors, the environment, and the community as a whole, as well as all of the new regulations which flow from the state and federal regulators. Together, these make **safety a complex adaptive system.** Our thinking needs to shift from seeing the world as linear, or a step-by-step system, where we believe we can establish clear cause-and-effect relationships, to seeing the world as it actually is with all of its dynamic, interacting networks and webs---seeing it as a complex adaptive system (in the bibliography is a list of a few references about organizations as complex adaptive systems).

In Signals and Boundaries, John H. Holland points out that even though a lot is known about complex adaptive systems, there is little known about how to steer these systems.[1] This paper introduces new ideas and tools that enable the people to steer the organization, to see themselves, the whole, the parts and the interaction of the parts as well as to have the important conversations and make the connections they need to create the container to hold everything together. Holland feels that these are critical components of complex adaptive systems.

The issues of accountability, responsibility, trust, and compliance swirl around chaotically. The use of more traditional training and consultants, more manuals, admonitions, and threats will not achieve our goal of reaching safety excellence. Pushing these things relentlessly only gets us to compliance. But that is not nearly good enough! Too many people are still getting hurt. For example, in 2013, 4,585 people were killed at work and over 4,000,000 were hurt too seriously to return to work the next day[2]. Process upsets such as fires, explosions, and occupational health exposures are still prevalent throughout organizations as well. Traditionally, it appears that everyone expected the plant manager to have all the answers regarding these safety issues, as well as to improve the faulty processes. If employees would just follow directions, then these processes would no longer pose a safety risk or problem. But, as the plant manager, I did not possess the tools to improve processes beyond compliance given the current business literature and practices at the time!

Getting to the level of compliance is a good start, but it is not good enough!

A new way to think about all this was needed. In realizing that the organization was a complex adaptive system, with everything connected to everything else and changing all the time, digging out of the compliance way of thinking began. Either/or thinking was inadequate—both/and thinking was needed. This is the shift in thinking was the focus of Sydney Dekker's key

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[1] John H. Holland, 2014. *Signals and Boundaries, Building Blocks for Complex Adaptive Systems.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN: 978-0-262-52593-0

[2] Ginger Christ, EHS Today. April 28, 2015. *7 Workers Who Didn't Make It Home.*

note address at the June 2014 American Society of Safety Engineers Annual Professional Development Conference in Orlando, FL. In his speech, Dekker pointed out that the old cause/effect analyses like root cause and the multiple layers of protection approaches are simply inadequate to helping the people in the organization to make lasting, positive improvements and changes. Opening up the deeper patterns and processes below these cause/effect models enables the people to make more fundamental, sustainable improvements in safety, production, and all other aspects of their business. Opening up this deeper analysis is the purpose of this paper.

I was first confronted with this complexity and the need for new thinking years ago when we had a fire in our plant. The way people worked changed instantly. They put down all the old, dysfunctional behavior and became a high-performance team that worked quickly, effectively, and well. It was beautiful to watch. People worked hard, accomplished a lot, and felt very good about their performance as we brought the plant back into production. But when normal operations resumed, their collaborating behavior shifted back to the dysfunctional individual and group behaviors, including cliques and bullying, us vs. them, change resistance, and the avoidance of responsibility and accountability. But the crisis showed us what was possible if only we had the courage to open up and the willingness to change.

When we learned to work together as a complex adaptive system it made a huge difference. We shifted from doing things <u>to</u> people and learned to work <u>with</u> each other in a new, more productive, healthier way. People were working for the good of the whole organization. My thinking has evolved and developed to where I call this way of working and leading **Partner-Centered Leadership™.**

We began to open up the flow of communication so that everyone knew what was going on and how important their part was in achieving safety excellence. Things began to improve quickly. When we began to get to know the people in the plant better and to treat them with respect and dignity, to listen to them, to learn together, and to give their ideas serious consideration, things got even better. When we encouraged people to take the lead in developing their ideas and thoughts, things got better yet. People gave their gift of what I call discretionary energy. This is the energy that people can give over and above the minimum required just to keep their job. This was not a linear, step-by-step process; we did all these at the same time!

Partner-Centered Leadership™
<u>The Opening:</u>
Partner-Centered Leadership™ is the best way to achieve sustainable safety excellence in occupational safety, occupational health, and process safety management. I base this assertion on my experiences of living, working and learning in many aspects of safety over the last 55 years in manufacturing, research, offices, and construction, as well as consulting globally. My range of experience includes leading, managing, observing, auditing, being audited, emergency response, struggling through fires and injuries, community awareness, writing papers and bestselling books, and delivering conference presentations. I have lived and breathed safety. I have spent many years listening, learning, and talking with people about all aspects of safety.

The top-down systems and processes can get us to levels of compliance, but only rarely to levels of excellence. It is very hard to push injury rates down below a Total Recordable Injury Rate (TRIR) of about one and sustain it for years, let alone drive occupational illnesses, waste, emissions, and process upsets towards zero as well. I define performance below a TRIR of one to

be in the level of excellence. TRIR is a standard OSHA safety metric based on the number of employees and their work-related exposure hours over the course of a year. A TRIR of less than one means that fewer than one person in about 100 is injured in an year. The top-down processes, with roots in F. W. Taylor's Principles of Scientific Management[3] and B. J. Skinner's behavioral psychology and operant conditioning,[4] have greatly reduced injury rates, but we seem to have plateaued at the level of compliance (TRIRs in the range of one to five). Very few companies have achieved sustainable safety excellence with TRIRs well below one. In my own experience, when we did get close to excellence in facilities that I managed, it was very hard to sustain and we found it necessary to drive people constantly. Unfortunately, there were several serious injuries on my watch; I can assure you that you never want to experience this sort of failure.

But over the years I learned that partnering with people makes all the difference and, indeed, sustainable excellence can be achieved. We did it together! Everything we do in safety leadership and management is done through people. Safety excellence requires a very high level of commitment and responsibility by everyone involved giving his or her gift of discretionary energy. I could not achieve this by driving from the top. I know because I spent years trying and never got to safety excellence that way. In a culture that drives people, discretionary energy is withheld. The more I pushed, the more people held back.

The Three Elements of Partner-Centered Leadership™
Sustainable levels of safety excellence are achieved only when everyone is giving their gift of discretionary energy, and pulling together as partners, to make their work as safe and productive as possible.

Partner-Centered Leadership™ is a robust, proven way to bring people together to achieve sustainable levels of safety excellence.[5] The first of the three elements consists of deeply held, shared, co-created beliefs and values such as:

- People want to be treated as people.
- People want to be treated fairly.
- Most people have good minds and can think quite well.
- Most people want to know what is going on.
- Most people want to be successful and want to work safely.
- Most people love their kids and want to go home safely, every day.
- Most people want to participate, to come together as partners to co-create their shared future in a structured, focused, intense, disciplined dialogue (I use the Process Enneagram™, a tool of complexity, to accomplish the aforementioned participation attributes[6]).

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[3] Frederick W. Taylor. 1911. *The Principles of Scientific Management.* New York: Harper and Brothers.
[4] B. F. Skinner. 1974. *About Behaviorism.* New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
[5] Richard N. Knowles. 2012. *Partnering for Safety and Business Excellence.* Niagara Falls, NY: Center for Self-Organizing Leadership. ISBN13: 978-0-9721204-1-8.
[6] Richard N. Knowles. 2002. *The Leadership Dance; Pathways to Extraordinary Organizational Effectiveness.* Niagara Falls, NY: Center for Self-Organizing Leadership. ISBN: 0-9721204-0-8.

- People self-organize all the time, openly and freely sharing information, building relationships of trust and interdependence through their agreements about how they are willing to work together and create meaning in their work.
- People want to be heard, listened to, valued, and respected.

These kinds of beliefs and values are critical in helping people resolve the conflicts of either/or thinking.

Many of the challenges in business are set up as either/or dyads like production or safety, quality or cost, quality or speed, customer service or speed. Dyads push people apart, producing conflict as the proponents of one side or the other defend their positions. These are "settled" usually by compromise or power, with the resulting decisions being less than the best.

Dyads are related like two ends of a stick. When people move away from either/or positions to both/and positions, then both ends of the stick can come into dialogue together, new information is discovered, and solutions to their dilemmas emerge. These decisions are usually far stronger then than those coming out of compromise and power. Openly sharing information, respecting each other, and telling the truth as best you can enables these dyadic discussions to find creative, new, emergent solutions.

The dyad of safety and production encompasses the two ends of the same stick. We have to make product to sell and do it safely. Both safety and production are in all the discussions when it is set up as both/and, not either/or. When production is running smoothly, the discussions are more about production. If there is a process upset, the discussions are more about safety. Anyone can stop the process if he or she sees a safety problem, and then the people come together to get it straightened out and running again. It is critical for both safety and production to avoid injuries, fires, and explosions.

Everyone at all levels in the organization contributes from their unique roles and perspectives and do realize that they are in this together. *Working with people* in partnership is fundamentally different from *doing stuff to people*, as is the case with most of the current approaches to safety, including many aspects of the transformational leadership processes. Since organizations are complex adaptive systems, the best way to work with them is from the complexity perspective. People, the internal and external environments, the technology, etc. are all evolving and interacting all the time. Nothing is sitting still. Every day is really a new day.

The Best Practice:

The best tool to work in this environment is the Process Enneagram™. It seems to provide the missing link between complexity theory and practical application,[7] guiding an intense, focused dialogue on an important safety question by looking deeply at nine separate, but inter-related aspects of an organization. This dialogue takes place in a Safety Excellence Workshop with a cross-section of people in the organization who co-create their agreements about the "who" and "what" they are, and the "how" and "why" things work the way they do. Everyone participates and as the dialogue develops in these Safety Excellence Workshops, the

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[7] Beverly G. McCarter and Brian E. White. 2013. *Leadership in Chaordic Organizations.* Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press. ISBN13: 978-1-4200-7417-8.

whole of the organization, the parts, and the interaction among the parts open up. Individual and organizational transformations occur. The people are amazed at what they see and learn. Through this process they are able to co-create a living Strategic Safety Plan. Opportunities for change and new potentials become clear. This enables them to solve complex problems, make the personal connections they need to do the work, and release the emotional energy and commitment for the work to happen quickly and well, all at the same time.

The Process Enneagram™, Figure 1, guides and informs the conversations that are needed to move towards safety excellence.

The Process Enneagram©
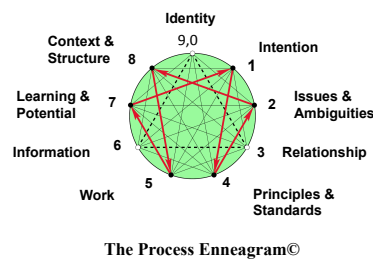
2/17/2011   Richard N Knowles, PhD (C)

Figure 1

The Safety Excellence Workshop begins with a question of importance for the people who are participating. For example, it could be "How do we achieve a sustainable level of safety excellence?" Each point is then discussed in depth, with the comments written onto the developing map. Thoughts and ideas emerge and are written down, forming a collage at each point. When all the points have been discussed, the people see who and what they are as a whole for the first time as they move their focus around the perimeter of the figure. They are often astonished at what they know as a group. The discussion then moves to the pattern of the inner lines where they discover how and why things are happening as they do. They can begin to see the problems, and thus can act to correct them, beginning their journey to safety excellence. This map is their living, Strategic Safety Plan. It is usually posted in their meeting room and discussed each time they meet to reinforce it and modify it as conditions change. In the Safety Excellence Workshop, people are able to make the genuine connections with those with whom they need to work, and this allows real commitment to emerge and the release of positive emotional energy. They begin to give their gift of discretionary energy. In this process of working together, people are co-creating their future, and resistance to change virtually disappears.

The second element of Partner-Centered Leadership™ relates to the environment in which everyone works. It is extremely complex: ideas, conditions, people, outside influences, etc. interact and change all the time. Every decision is made in these complex situations, yet no one has all the information, or can see everything. No one has his or her mind totally focused on the specific task at hand. These issues are opened up in the Safety Excellence Workshops so information flows more freely, a broader picture of the whole is seen, and people learn to help

and support each other so that the best decisions are made in the moment of taking action. Trust and interdependence build.

The third element of Partner-Centered Leadership™ is also created in the Safety Excellence Workshops. As people co-create their shared future, their vision, mission, principles of behavior, standards of performance, they are co-creating an important dimension of their culture, a container that holds the organization together. I call this the Bowl. The Bowl is open so energy and information flow freely in and out of it; it is an open system. It provides order and coherence for the organization. It holds it together so that the people within the Bowl can self-organize and have the freedom to make the best decisions possible. A major responsibility of the leaders and managers is to help everyone understand and maintain the integrity of the Bowl through continuous conversations and interactions. One of my messages to strengthen the Bowl was "I don't have a right to make my living where it is okay for someone to get hurt!" If someone becomes a problem, however, by not working this way or by violating the integrity of the Bowl, management must address and deal with the situation. Everyone has a responsibility to work within the Bowl, and everyone, including management, must be accountable for living up to their shared agreements.

A Specific Case:

Partner-Centered Leadership™ is what we did when I was the Plant Manager from early 1987 to early 1995 at the DuPont Belle, WV Plant. The people cut the TRIR from about 5.8 to below 0.3 in less than three years and then sustained this level of performance for 16 years. From 1992 to 1995 (I was reassigned to another position after this), earnings rose 300%, emissions dropped 87%, and productivity rose 45%. Similar improvements have also been achieved with many organizations during my consulting work over the last 20 years.

The people learned to make the products effectively and efficiently and to work safely at the same time. Setting safety up as #1, which is the traditional position in the safety community, put it into opposition to production and created needless arguments. Seeing safety and production as two ends of the same stick enabled people to come together, partnering for excellence in both safety and production. Depending on the particular situation, sometimes production dominated the discussions and sometimes safety dominated the discussions. However, both production and safety were in all discussions.

The same Safety Excellence Workshop design and process has been used successfully to address important problems in a variety of organizations and cultures as diverse as governments, schools, not-for-profit organizations, children's homes, businesses, and manufacturing in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, China, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The fundamental work in these Safety Excellence Workshops is about who and what the organization is and how and why things happen as they do. With this foundation, the people can co-create their agreements about how they will live and work together.

Figure 2 is a graph of the DuPont Belle Plant TRIR for 1983-2006. It shows the 1987-1990 results of the harsh, top-down management process I used to get to the level of compliance, and then the shift to safety excellence in 1991-2007 using the Partner-Centered Safety™ approach. The technical basis for developing this data was consistent throughout 1983-2007. After 2006 the leadership processes began to drift back to the top-down approach and the safety

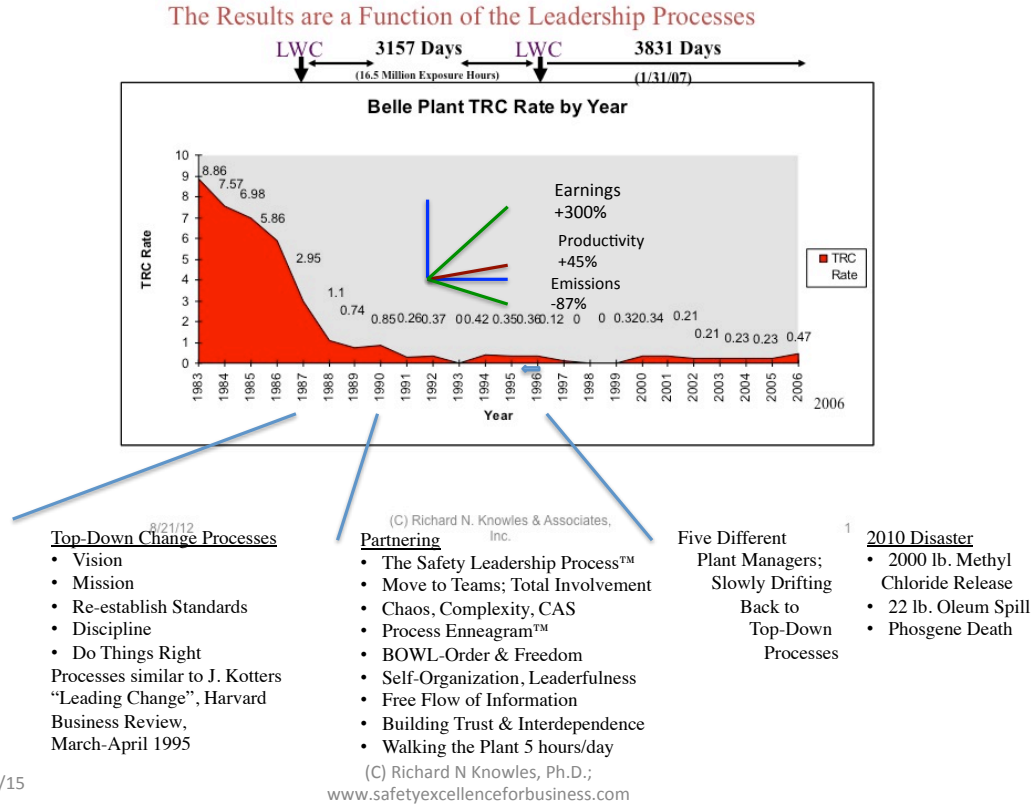performance fell apart in 2010. This curve provides the basic data to support the DuPont Bradley Curve.

Figure 2

Partner-Centered Leadership™ builds trust and interdependence. People know what is going on and they see the important role that they play in the total success of the organization. Most people like to live this way. While this may sound soft, I can assure you that there is a very hard side to this. Businesses have to provide high-quality, affordable products and services at competitive costs to survive. The safety, health, and environmental training and standards of performance must be maintained. High levels of integrity are required. Managers and supervisors must have the courage and commitment to go into their organizations to talk with, listen to, learn from, and develop better ways to do things with people. This is not a spectator sport. During the Safety Excellence Workshops, participants, from top to bottom, become sharply focused on their safety intention and co-create their Principles of Behavior and Standards of Performance so that they all know what is expected and required. They hold each other accountable to live up to these agreements. This requires an on-going dialogue to keep the work active, relevant, and constantly adapting to the changing environment. The managers set the overall direction for the organization. In these Safety Excellence Workshops, all the participants create a large Process Enneagram™ map that is then posted on the wall of their meeting room and is reviewed each time they get together. They talk about how they are doing and whether changes to the map are

needed. Revisions and upgrades are made as they go and written right onto the Process Enneagram™ map so this continues to be a living Strategic Safety Plan. People talk about the safety in their morning tool-box meeting. This enables them to work and live in the dynamic complexities of their day-to-day experiences and achieve sustainable levels of excellence. Walking around, talking, listening, learning, sharing, and being authentic are part of the process of building the Bowl.

Ideally, those at the top of the corporation support, engage in, and provide the resources for this work to happen. Total safety performance is a key part of everyone's performance appraisal and pay. At the very least, the people at the top need to support this work, provide the resources to those at the sites, and build this into the performance appraisal and pay systems. People from marketing, sales, research, product development, etc. are included along with those in the manufacturing line.

Stories

As we learned to work this way, many people in the organization began to step forward and take the lead in working more safely and productively. The organization became 'leaderful'. When people saw that something needed to be done, they stepped forward and took the lead to fix things. They talked with people and made important decisions. It was through these initiatives that much of our performance improved and was then sustained for 16 years.

Story 1

One day as I walked the plant (I did this for five hours a day for five years, but refrained from making decisions in the field so as to not undermine the line organization) an operator told me that he, on his own, had shut down one of our units to fix a small leak at the 150-foot level of a distillation column. He didn't wait until we had a major release. He was working within the Bowl, saw what needed to be done, and simply did it. It was thrilling to see a person empower himself, step forward, make a sound decision, and do the right thing. As he shared this event, I thanked him and encouraged him to keep it up. In creating an environment of openness, mutual respect, and trust and interdependence, the Bowl, these sorts of things happen.

Story 2

On another day, a mechanic who was assigned to watch over a group of contractors told me that he, on his own initiative, had sent them off the plant because they were not following our safety procedures properly. As we shared the experience we both felt good. This person was working within the Bowl, saw what needed to be done, and did it.

Story 3

During the first part of my years at the Belle Plant, we had a chronic demurrage problem with vendor's trucks parked all around the plant. Demurrage is the rent that is paid to a vendor for keeping its truck or other container on the plant after it has been unloaded. While I complained each time when the quarterly report came out showing almost $200,000 in demurrage expenses, nothing much happened. But when we had moved to more self-managed teams and had reassigned first-line supervisors away from the shifts, the operators decided that we should get the trucks off the plant because of the congestion they caused. Within six months they had driven our demurrage costs down by over 85%. The operators and I had a good time, sharing this story in the rain one afternoon as I was walking the plant and they were fixing a drainage problem. These operators were working within the Bowl, saw what needed to be done, and did it.

Story 4

One morning, an operator who was on the site environmental team, called me to complain about what she had overheard as she drove in for her 6 am shift. She overheard two guys on a radio talk show discussing the presumed pollution from our plant. The night was clear, the moon was shining, and the steam plumes were bright white. The talk-show guys thought it was chemical pollution, but the operator knew it was only water vapor. Then she told me that she had called them up and invited them to come to the plant the following Monday afternoon for a visit. She instructed me on what I was to talk about during the first hour. Then she took care of the remaining two hours. Here was the plant manager following the instructions of a shift person who took the lead on a public affairs issue. It was one of the best visits we ever had experienced. These same two guys talked for the next three weeks (on the radio talk show) about all the good people they had met at the plant and the good work we were doing. This operator was working within the Bowl, saw what needed to be done, and got it done without leadership approval or supervision. We both felt good as we talked together about this event.

Conclusions:

With the Partner-Centered Leadership™ approach, all aspects of the safety performance improved, and then this attitude and desire for improvement flowed into all the rest of our organization's work. The more that we worked together this way, the better we became.

Partner-Centered Leadership™ is the pathway to sustainable business excellence.

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