

## Conference Review 2008

The conference was again very well attended with about 120 delegates from around 50 companies attending.

An excellent turnout you could argue given the current economic climate! The standard of presentations was again very high with some experienced expert speakers but mostly case study "from the horses mouth" papers. These were captured on tape and have been added to the website - including the award winning paper from Twinnings.



Winning team from Twinnings with IIRSM president Keith Scott and conference founder Tim Marsh

We really must take the time to thank all of the contributors for taking the time out of their busy schedule to prepare such informative and professional talks. Without this selfless input the conference would be nothing.



Another attentive full house

### SOME QUOTES ABOUT THE EVENT

*"An opportunity to understand and appreciate the hard work that other companies put into eliminating unsafe acts"*

John Smiths, S&N UK

*"Very good - lots of common themes - given me some new ideas"*

AWE

*"Easy way to benchmark other companies progress and network"*

BVT SurfaceFleet

*"Some very useful information ... good varied speakers"*

Briggs and Forrester

*"An interesting view on the efforts companies are making to improve behaviour!"*

SGP Property and Facilities Management Ltd

### DELEGATE LIST

Amey Group  
Atkins  
A.W.E Plc  
Balfour Beatty Majour Civic Engineering  
Baxter Healthcare Ltd  
Bison Concrete Products  
Bolton at Home  
Bord Gais  
Briggs and Foffester  
Britvic Soft Drinks Ltd  
Bulmers  
BVT Surface Fleet  
Caledonian Brewery  
Canary Wharf Contractors Ltd  
Carillion Health  
Caterpillar UK Ltd  
Chemical Industries association  
Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd  
Dunston Brewery  
Enterprised managed Services  
Eon Empower Training  
E.ON UK Plc  
ERM Group Holdings Limited  
Foseco International Ltd  
Gascon Ltd  
G's Group Holdings  
Guernsey Gas Ltd  
Halcrow Group Ltd  
Halliburton  
Health and Safety Laboratories  
IIRSM  
Impress  
Impress Merthyr Tydfil  
Impress Norwich  
Intech  
Industrial Copolymers LTD  
Infineum UK Ltd  
International Energy Group  
Isosure Ltd  
Jersey Gas Co. Ltd  
John Smiths S&N UK  
Keir Group plc  
Kier Managed Services Ltd  
Linde Material Handling (UK) Ltd  
Lucite International  
Mace Limited  
Manx Gas Ltd  
MD-IT Solutions  
Metropolitan Borough of Wirral  
Ministry of Defence  
Ministry of Justice  
Mouchal Group  
News International Newspaper Ltd  
Nightfreight GB Ltd  
Oberthur Technologies  
Pivotal Performance  
QuinetiQ Ltd  
Rockwood Pigments (UK) Ltd  
R Twining & Co Ltd  
Saltend Cogeneration Company Limited  
Scottish & Newcastle UK

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# Themes and Findings

## Management Commitment

As ever, the vital role of management commitment was stressed and stressed again. Opinions ranged all the way from "it's absolutely and utterly vital" all the way through to "don't even think about doing anything if you haven't got it". What was interesting this year was the frequency with which the phrase "business case" was used. Compared with previous years we felt a more practical business approach was evident. This trend being demonstrating a growing appreciation of the need for an integrated balanced scorecard approach, or just a sign of the times perhaps?

## Culture Surveys

Following changes in the law in April there seems to be a greatly increased interest in safety culture assessment. (It's something we have certainly noticed commercially). It was stressed that the survey itself is no use if you don't then act on the findings... indeed that failing to take reasonable steps to act on clear findings might make life a little easier for the prosecution if something goes badly wrong.

## Mindset

A very interesting relationship between safety and mindset was discussed with specific regard to stress. Research evidence was shown that clearly demonstrates that the sort of behaviours trained on good safety leadership courses as well as wellbeing courses (coaching; assertion; treating the workforce as adults; listening and the like) sets the scene for good safety and a healthy productive workplace full stop.

Positive outcomes were found for such key behaviours as absenteeism, turnover, 'above the line' behaviour (e.g. volunteering and helping new starts) and of course making mistakes and having accidents. So yet again we see huge overlaps between safety, health, wellbeing, sustainability and productivity with key themes again identified as learning, communicating, involving the workforce in a day to day way ...

## New Technology

Some interesting new technology was demonstrated that showed how quickly data can be captured. Fourteen minutes observing and one minute recording being much better than five minutes observing and ten minutes recording! The chap with the technology seemed to be giving out lots of business cards...!

## Just Culture

This seems to be a framework and theory that is becoming increasingly part of the common lexicon. Some sophisticated but practical models of Just Culture best practise shown during the workshops raised considerable interest and integration of these models with the Human Resource function is another clear example of increasingly "joined up" approaches to safety management.

Perennial issues again mentioned by several speakers included the importance of:-

- Maximising workforce ownership and involvement in the day to day safety process.
- Linked to this first point - ensuring safety tools such as toolbox talks are as personalised, interactive and realistic as possible.
- Tailoring a methodology to suit a site specific safety or international culture – but ensuring that this tailoring is anchored around inviolate key principles. (The "six pillars of behavioural safety" getting many mentions).

And of course:-

- The vital importance of ensuring the front line supervisors are 'on-side' – and in particular the need to directly address any with a 'terrorist' intent on the safety process or initiative.

Finally, what was notable was that whilst many people learnt a lot (even if it was just "we're not alone") there was very little dissention or controversy. The phrases heard frequently were 'that's interesting', 'that's useful' or 'that's reassuring'. I don't think I heard 'I don't agree' once. We seem to be reaching a stage where what we need to do regarding human factors is fully understood. As ever doing it remains difficult.

Particular Commendation to Ken Wood of Impress for using cricketing references and metaphors throughout his presentation. His music intro "Can the Can" by Suzi Quatro was widely considered the most amusing.



Alison Cameron from Twinings receiving the Allan Poole Award

## DELEGATE LIST Continued...

Mouchal Group  
News International Newspaper Ltd  
Nightfreight GB Ltd  
Oberthur Technologies  
Pivotal Performance  
QuinetiQ Ltd  
Rockwood Pigments (UK) Ltd  
R Twining & Co Ltd  
Saltend Cogeneration Company Limited  
Scottish & Newcastle Uk  
SGP Property and Facilities Management Ltd  
Shell Trading & Shipping Company  
The Gas Transportation Co. Ltd  
Total E&P UK plc  
Tradeteam Ltd  
Trinity Mirror Midlands  
Uniqema Chemicals Ltd  
Warwick International Ltd  
Wates Group Ltd  
WBB Minerals

Lexis Nexis selected a beautiful and interesting location in Edgbaston cricket ground



Conference Facilitators: **Ryder-Marsh (Safety) Limited**,  
21 York Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 9HP.

Tel: 0161 881 8471 Fax: 0161 862 9514

E-mail: [info@rydermarsh.co.uk](mailto:info@rydermarsh.co.uk) [www.rydermarsh.co.uk](http://www.rydermarsh.co.uk)