



**Martin Bate and Pete Skerrett -  
Dow Corning Chemicals**  
BEHAVIOURAL SAFETY USER CONFERENCE 2005

**Chair**

OK in the interests of keeping to time I will crack on with the next section of talks. Four case studies have been selected to be a cross section of experiences for you to enjoy. The first one is Dow Corning.. I will be interested to see what the song for this one is as well.

*(Musical Introduction "Bow Down Mister")*

**Martin Bate**

Sorry that was lost on me!

PS Yes and me -

**Chair**

I imagine it was the only one they could find with Dow in the title...

**Martin**

Ah right I get it Tim thank you.

Good afternoon everybody.

I think it is going to be a bit difficult to carry on from all these speakers from this morning because there were some good quality speakers there from this morning and especially the last one as well, just a note my great grandfather once told me 'son don't drink and drive take drugs and fly it is better!!!!' (Martin refers to commercial guest speaker who covered alcohol in the workplace after lunch).

This one is for Tim obviously there is going to be some in the room who do not know what this is – this is the grand slam – we thought we would bring this one back from Wales with us for people who do not know what it is. So Tim one for you five for us!!!

We want to share our experiences over the past five years what we have been through trying to introduce Behavioural safety into Dow Corning down in Barry South Wales, we will relay our problems and how they were overcome and obviously try and feedback successes in the renewed approach with Ryder Marsh.

**Peter Skerrett**

OK we have actually had two providers in the last five years, the first one was Applied Behavioural Sciences, we went so far with them and I was interested to hear Mark talking about measurement and the fact that it can lead you along the wrong track, we felt that was happening as part of our process. As well as that we had other problems, we had a lot of redundancies, we had insufficient management support and we had a distinct lack of workforce involvement which is the key to the whole thing, which our gentleman described so graphically earlier on.

So we were kind of sort of trying to bale out and we wondered what we could do to revitalise the process and strangely enough we talked to a certain Tim Marsh and he came up with a new approach for us.

**Martin Bate**

Yes what we decided to do, we could see that things were slowly coming to a bit of an impasse, we approached with the unions, the senior management on site and explained that we

did not think were working as we thought they should. A lot of it was to do..... let us be blunt and honest... a lot of it was to do.... and I am sure there are companies in here that have done exactly the same thing, you say there is not but you probably did, we took it upon us to take the BBS system, we were told which way it should work and then we turned it round to try and make it work like we wanted it as a company. We bastardised it basically, you know there was no other word for it. We turned it to our advantage so that management were in charge, not the workforce and it became blatantly obvious that it was not working; we took this back to senior management, they then decided to get another consultant in as Pete said which was Tim. We let Tim loose on the site, literally, to talk to people from all levels on the site both from the shop floor level to senior manager level and we explained to everybody that they must be honest and up front and tell him what they think of what we have done, where you want to be and what you think you need to get better.

From that Tim produced a report for us and the report basically backed up what we were saying so because it came from Tim and they paid him £5,000, they thought well he must be right.... They didn't pay us £5,000!!!!!! (Laughter)

So obviously we then embarked upon renewing the whole system and getting it right from the start. One of the things we did initially was the steering committee that we had initially, there was more management on there than shop floor people, basically the only two shop floor people on there was us two. So we turned that completely around and this time all the steering committee were shop floor personnel, there is not one person from management on the steering committee. But we meet representatives from the steering committee on a monthly basis with a senior manager, we have met this year with our CEO from America, plus the head of the Safety Environment and Quality Mohammed Ahmed, he came across as well, they both backed up fully what we were trying to do and spoke about the five year plan that they have got for the whole corporation across the world, we are not going to be going across the world I don't think somehow but it is going to happen across the world and they are backing it up from the top this time, that they want to see this Behavioural Safety approach, which gives us a lot more credence for what we were trying to do on the site.

So going from management driven it was workforce driven, so we needed to restore interest in the process with ownership not just involvement, people making their own independent decisions.

So as I said we got a shop floor team together, devised and presented an awareness course which was very successful in what we received and Tim said it was 'state of the art' I don't know what he meant by that but basically we had 330 attendees and 114 of these people volunteered to be observers! Bear in mind the first time around we barely had 20 observers, we couldn't get them because they felt it was spying on their own mates and you know we are not going to spy on our own mates and drop them in it. But when we made them understand that we were not spying and we put them through this awareness day, showed them videos, talked through some fun slides, you know, tried to make it an interesting day for everybody, we did have a lot of success with the awareness and there is hardly anybody on site not covered ... the only people we have not managed to capture yet is the contractors in the awareness sessions but they won't escape believe me!!

We also decided that safety management leadership courses be run for about 100 supervisors which was completed by Tim and his group who sat in on a couple of those as well and hopefully they were going to be learning from Tim and Hugh exactly what we expected of them and how they could help in their own safety and our safety and help to get things better right across the site.

Also, which we found a little bit strange and I am sure Martin will have a smile, one of my associates down there, he is a shop steward in the factory, we were asked as a steering committee, of which Martin is a part, to actually sit down and give the senior managers some supervisors and leaders objectives in the year, so basically we were telling them what we wanted off them and they had to do it or they don't get the extra money at the end of the year. You don't get many shop floor people being able to do that which was great.

### **Peter Skerrett**

OK Martin alluded to the fact that we had some high profile management support and we feel that that is absolutely vital to the process. As he said earlier on we got support from the chair, global leaders and part of my MSc I am doing I had a look into why behavioural safety systems were successful or not. The support from the senior managers of the organisation was number two on the list and the reasons why behavioural safety systems failed.

I have researched a lot of things. I looked into RWE National Power when they were present today and they started 18 months before they even introduced the likes of Tim Marsh onto the site so they prepared themselves in advance before they even thought about a behavioural safety programme and that is really important. It kind of links in with number one, I wonder if you are wondering what number one is, it is a thing called cultural readiness. The site has got to be able and set up to receive the behavioural safety programme, trying to launch a behavioural safety programme when there is redundancies around, when there is unrest is not a good thing to do, so the first thing is cultural readiness. The second thing is support from the CEO and global leaders, that is absolutely vital and we have seen a huge turn around in the last 6 months.

The other thing is a massive improvement in near miss reporting, we feel that the root causes to accidents whether they be fatalities or near misses are the same and the only distinction between a fatality and a near miss is pure luck and that has been talked about today, so we feel that this near miss reporting and an open safety culture where you encourage the workforce to report near misses is absolutely vital to the process and we have seen a marked improvement in the last 6 months again.

Just to quantify some of the things that have happened, in the years that you see there, we have had a reduction in the site incidents, which includes fires, spills emissions and that type of thing, and we have a reduction in injuries of about a quarter, and that included a site shutdown so we are headed in the right direction.

### **Martin Bate**

Pete touched on the near miss reporting and we were very, very poor at doing it well since I have been with the firm, very poor on it, people would moan and groan maybe in the mess rooms or in the control rooms about things that had happened or things that should be right but that was as far as it went and nothing was getting done purely because it wasn't going through the right medium to get sorted out. You know sitting in the mess room moaning about it is not going to do anybody any good.

But to be fair the Safety Department came up with an idea which caused a little bit of a smile, it was the HONK system, which went down well with the workforce as you can imagine, when it came around first all you could hear was peep, peep all around the site, which was a hazards, observation and near miss card, and the only way they could spell card was with a K to fit the honk in. Since introducing this at the beginning of the year it really has highlighted a lot of problems on the site that are getting fixed slowly but surely and also to go along with that they have introduced or are in the middle of introducing a new safety management system some of you may or may not know about. In (the system) people are accountable for all actions basically from incident investigations, observations done by the observers just from anybody finding something wrong out on the plant and from this to make people accountable. Suddenly we start attacking the middle management part which was failing and making them more accountable for the safety and making them think about safety a bit more when they are giving the jobs out to the shop floor, when they are actually out there walking past.

I know we said earlier on about people not walking past incidents, I can quote one incident just quickly Tim – I know he is going to drag me off soon - one incident we saw as we were walking round the site last year. Tim asked us to go round as part of the awareness session he said go round the site, take some photographs of stuff that may be safe and may be unsafe just to cause a bit of a debate in the awareness sessions enough to just get people thinking about whether it was safe or unsafe. When we were walking round we found quite a few things that weren't safe and we couldn't resist photographs of the unsafe incidents to show everybody, everybody thought they were safe actually, but we weren't as safe as we thought we were and we actually walked round and saw a chap standing on the top handrail adjusting a light fitting, leaning over the light fitting putting some cable ties on the light fitting, he was standing on the top handrail which is slippery, it was a wet day, the handrail was probably 18ft in the air, a straight drop behind him, he had his back to the drop, there was a concrete floor below him and a concrete floor is a bit harder than a contractor's head!! Maybe!! Obviously if there are any contractors in here I am going to get lynched after....

... He was standing there quite oblivious, it was obviously something he was used to doing and nobody had pulled him up for it, we actually pulled him up, but what we noticed as we were standing there talking about it, is there were at least 12 – 16 people walking around that area, working in that area, there were managers, engineers, some of them actually walked up past him on the stairs, checked something on the clipboard, came back down past him and our words to them were – how would you feel if you walked up the stairs and he is standing there and when you came back down he is lying in a pool of blood on the concrete, how would you feel about that? Not very good I don't think, I don't think anybody in the room would feel good

about that, so why walk past him? Why not ask him why he is doing it. Ask him why he didn't do it a little safer, take that extra five minutes to go and get a step ladder, put a scaffold up, you know attach yourself to something, do something yourself to get this job done more safely, encourage people we need people from the middle level of management, I don't know how many middle level management are here because they are probably looking at me a bit stern faced as well, but we need people like that to help everybody to be safe, as well as the people from the shop floor and the senior management it has got to come from that middle section. Hopefully you can take that back to your companies and if you can attack that middle bit and get that going you have got a good thing going I think.

I think that is pretty much it Tim Questions?

### **Chair**

I have known Martin for some time now and bizarrely we do have time for some questions!

### **Martin Bate**

I must be getting slow in my old age Tim, they had to drag me off last time!!!!

### **Hello I am (a General Manager of Severn Trent Water)**

– Chaps can you tell me do you think your culture has changed so that there is no going back and if it has how long did it take before that happened and if it hasn't how long do you think it is going to change before it does reach the point where there is no going back?

### **Martin**

I think it has changed but only slightly. Now it is starting to change and this is probably after 3 – 4 years. As we said we earlier on we went through a lot of things during the time we were trying to introduce behavioural safety, redundancies, we had a year without a pay rise, we had all sorts going on in the factory, you know out of work and everybody was getting a bit despondent, when you are trying to introduce behavioural safety at that time it was really difficult. But people are starting to change, there is no doubt about it and I am sure Martin would back this up as a shop steward, Martin (the shop steward) is becoming more involved and that is the union becoming more involved now, they can see what we are trying to achieve, hopefully we can sustain it, but I do think it is still going to take another 4 – 5 years before we really start seeing the full benefit, hopefully I will be wrong and it will happen sooner but I don't think so, I think it is a long, long term thing for most firms, bigger firms may take longer because of the amount of people but I do think it is a long term thing to try and change people's behaviour and actions towards safety. What we find is that most people try to do a job just to get the job done. You know I have got to get the job done so any way I can do it I will do it. But if they are education and we say look we can do it safe and make them think about that it is better but it does take a long time.

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Yes just to carry on with the theme of plain Welsh speaking..... yes.

### **Martin Bate**

That is what I just said wasn't it??? (Laughter)

### **Chair**

We have time for one more question, I think if you ask Peter rather than Martin.....

### **Ian Forbes - Jacobs Engineering**

You mentioned your success with near miss reporting, and how it has increased, I have been involved in a number of schemes putting cards in place and it hasn't worked as well as we hoped. What happened with you that made it work?. It wasn't just the card there had to be something else?

### **Peter Skerret**

We had support from the management, our Safety Department supported us and drove it through along with the other senior managers on site and the safety committees.

### **Martin Bate**

Yes I think as well - sorry Tim – I think as well a lot to do with it as well was the ease of reporting, because some of the systems we had a few years ago it wasn't easy sometimes to report the near miss you know you had to do too many things to report it and people said by the time I report it, it'll be the end of the day. And the other thing, big thing, was when people

did report it quite often it was lost, nothing ever got done about it because it went into a box and went out the other end straight into a black bag and out in the bin which didn't encourage anybody then to report the near misses, but this new system and the management system coming in to make people accountable they could suddenly see that they could track these things. They have now got to have a reply, when the HONK is raised someone has got to take that on board and reply to that person even if they are not going to do anything about it, they have got to go to that person and say thank you for putting that HONK in but we can't do it this year because of money restraints but we will do something about it and we are glad you put it in or hopefully tell them we are going to do it next week. But they have got to thank them and reply to them and that is the one major difference.

The hook has just appeared from Tim!