



Helen Sully -

Kier Group

BEHAVIOURAL SAFETY USER CONFERENCE 2005

Chair

OK thank you very much. We have two presentations now to take us through to lunch the first is by Helen Sully. Helen Sully is from the Kier Group she is an occupational psychologist experienced in the field of behavioural change, a development adviser for the Kier Group internally consulting and developing best practice since 2002.

So what I would like to do is to invite Helen to the stage please.

Helen Sully

OK well good afternoon everybody, I am Helen and I am going to present behavioural safety in Kier Building Maintenance.

I will tell you a little bit about what we have done. We have taken a slightly different approach from the other organisations so it will give you a chance to look at the different approaches that you can take. Really my aim today is obviously to introduce ourselves to the business, a little bit about who we are, to provide you with some background and context to the project and really understanding the context and the environment which you work in is key to understanding behavioural safety. To really share with you what behavioural safety means to us and the model that we have worked with to try and encourage safer working in our business and to really discuss what we are doing and I am going to discuss this through these four chore areas and then to share what we have learned.

Who are we? Well Kier Building Maintenance are a key division of Kier Support Services part of the Kier Group one of the largest construction companies in the UK. Kier Building Maintenance employ over 3,000 people deliver repairs and maintenance to local authority housing tenants in partnership with the public sector. This particular project took place within Kier Sheffield and Kier Islington and I will provide you with a little bit of background to those organisations, they are quite unique in the way they are set up.

Kier Sheffield is actually a public private partnership which was set up in 2002 between Kier and Sheffield City Council to repair and maintain over 53,000 houses in and around the city and it actually involved the transfer of over 1,200 employees, those we were existing Council employees have now become Kier employees, there has been a huge culture change.

Similarly the motley crew at Kier Islington, this is a public private partnership, which was formed in 2000 to deliver repairs and maintenance to over 30,000 properties in and around the Borough of Islington and this involved the transfer of over 600 employees. We provide plumbers, electricians, gas fitters, glaziers, carpenters to ensure that we can deliver a quality service and therefore ensuring the health and safety of our own workforce the public, the tenants which we interface with, it is really crucial to be able to deliver a quality service.

So now you know a little bit about who we are and what we actually do I am going to provide you with a little bit of context in which we work and the reasons why we embarked upon behavioural safety.

We do actually have a good health and safety record but we have actually reached a plateau and we can't seem to break through that so we believe, and we have believed, that the behavioural safety approach will allow us to take that record of minimal risks and improved state of working that extra mile.

As I have mentioned we have had a huge change of culture going from the public to the private sector, we have had lots of different traditional styles of management and attitudes and

obviously all of these do affect health and safety. So we have needed to take this into consideration and ensure that we are delivering and actually creating a positive safety culture.

If we look at some of the environmental factors, we actually work in a constantly changing environment, in Sheffield we have 900 operatives out and about the city every day entering about 4 or 5 different properties so they are constantly entering new areas of risk. We have work and interface with the tenants and the public at large and therefore we need to maintain their health and safety and also the health and safety of ourselves. We work on our own, or most of our operatives do so as soon as they leave the depot the health and safety is their responsibility and we need to encourage them and give them that ownership and give them the ability to actually look after themselves. Everybody thinks health and safety is simple, you should do it, but we do actually need to actively encourage people and give them those decision making skills in order to enable them to do that. One of the things I say we have actually done slightly different, logistics have made it very difficult for us to actually observe specific behaviours as in many other more controlled sites and we have actually gone for a more of a practical exercise and gone to actually to try and improve the organisation to encourage safer working.

We are continually growing as a business, public/private partnerships are on the increase and looking to improve more efficient services and we, rather than in the construction industry that we have always been used to working with sub contractors for a finite period of time are actually now looking to develop a long term healthy organisation and become a learning organisation.

So why focus on behaviour? Well we have heard today and obviously we do know that it contributes to a large amount of accidents and that good systems on their own really aren't enough. It comes down to how well an organisation lives its systems and the only way that you can turn systems and procedures into reality is through people and the behaviour that turns these into reality. So systems and we are talking today about systems of behaviour are which one part, one can't work without the other. We believe in Kier Building Maintenance that there are three elements to behaving safely, first of all are we providing people with the correct knowledge, are we providing them with the correct equipment and the appropriate equipment to allow them to do their job and have we got the motivation to operate safely, that is one thing I am sure if we could we would all like to bottle it. Can we actually encourage people to become more motivated to work in a safer way? We believe we can, I am only going to touch on a bit of theory but I think it is important to understand where we are coming from in order to look at where we are going and what we have done to try and achieve that.

So many of you may be aware of the ABC model, show hands so I don't have to go into it too much, OK excellent. Well I will go through it for those people who aren't aware, this is the model that everyone in our business understands all the way, operatives all the way up right through everybody works on triggers and consequences. This model says that behaviour is triggered by a set of antecedents... actually forget the word antecedents we will just call them triggers, things like safety signs and safety rules. So for example if we see this sign it indicates for us to drive safely within a 60mph speed limit. However, this model also says that behaviour is followed by consequences and it is actually the consequence of an action which is more likely to increase or decrease the behaviour occurring. So for example if you see a Police car behind you whilst seeing this sign you can actually see and you are more motivated to actually drive within that limit and it is the consequence that is important to the individual which is more likely to motivate them to behave in a certain way and what we have been trying to do is to think about the triggers and consequences that are important in our environment and important within the context in which we are working; so these are things like we are trying to encourage wearing PPE what triggers do we need to put in place, first of all we need to be supplying it, people need to know they need to wear it, seeing other people wearing it is a key trigger and I'll tell you what when I come on to tell you about some of our gloves trials, one of the key things is just getting other people to do it and seeing your colleagues and seeing your peers doing something will actually encourage you to behave in that same way, we follow suit people follow other people's behaviour.

Similarly with the consequences we need to ensure that we are actually giving out consistent consequences to actions that may be for example in this situation if you are not putting it on you are likely to get in trouble with management, it is consistently dealt with, and I have just popped a quick example up here, we have all as a nation been encouraged to behave more safely whilst driving and we have heard about mobile phones today and to think to ourselves 'what triggers and consequences have been put in place to make us as a nation do this one specific behaviour' – and we can think about publicity advertising and obviously also getting fines and things like that.

But let us bring it back to reality, this model has actually underpinned everything we have done, it has actually used really everything we have done fits in to encourage safer working. First of all we needed to identify what behaviours we wanted to actively encourage in order for us to evaluate what triggers and consequences we needed to put in place. So what did we actually do? Well I am going to describe it through these four core areas and first and foremost, and everybody has spoken about it today, is worker involvement and ownership. Your workforce have got to own their own health and safety and we have got 900 operatives out and about in Sheffield, they have got to feel that they have got some ownership over what they do what, where and how they do it and that is really key to the whole process.

We started out by finding out where we are and what actually poses risk to ourselves, and we did a number of focus groups and I actually went out in the back of the vans around and about the houses and saw where we worked and asked our workers what are the risks that face you, what are the things that are causing you to have accidents? We actually did 16 interviews with people who had actually had accidents over the past year to find out what was causing the accidents, it was anonymous and they were told that the results were going to be used to support health and safety and we looked at the findings in terms of what was causing the accidents, did you have suitable PPE available? What type of support network did you receive after the incident and what do you feel about leadership and training and development within Kier?

We are short on time and we have only got a bit of time to talk about the results, we actually found that 88% of those particular incidents were attributable to some form of human error. More interestingly we looked at more specific behaviours and nearly 40% of our accidents actually related to some type of not thinking, unawareness or little risk assessment. So for example – I stepped down off the ladder, put my foot down the hole, twisted my ankle and did not realise it was there – they should have checked their work area before going up the ladder. There are other things for example, distraction – I was busy hammering away my colleague called me, I turned round continued hammering and shattered my finger – again this gave us some idea and some focus on what we needed to be encouraging and where we needed to be trying to reduce and minimise risks.

We also conducted a safety attitude survey to see where we were and what people perceived health and safety to be like within Kier and interestingly from the attitude survey and from the shadowing one of the things that we found we were weaker on was our safety toolbox talks, I am sure everybody has them and you do them in the same way but when I actually observed this it was a supervisor reading off a sheet of paper to his team and it went something a bit like – put your scaffolding up like this - and it was really, really flat in style and tone. Therefore everybody who has been in that session had signed to say they had received training, but what information and was it going to be taken back out and was the behaviour going to change when they were back out there? Well really and truly probably no, so although the system says we were probably doing it right the behaviour was slightly different and we actually developed some what we called – we went away from the word toolbox talks – they are still running the toolbox talks we still feel they are having some benefit, but actually piloted out some safety breakfasts. This is where we got the guys together over a bacon-buttie (sandwich for our American readers) and a cup of tea to come in and talk more interactively between each other about specific issues and the first module was responsibility. So we got them to share ideas between themselves and it was much more positive.

One of the other ways that we have actually got our workforce involved is actually through glove trials I am sure you have all seen these before. This is the type of glove we used to give to all of our operatives no matter whether they were male, female, what size hand they had got, no matter what trade they did, if you did something involving water you would probably have the brown plastic one. We actually worked with Marigold on their skin care systems and we looked and asked them what type of gloves were available, what type of things were available to look at protecting hands and we got a whole range of gloves sent to us, you know free samples, and we gave the first set of samples out and trailed them within our London office, the guys came back, these are good, these are durable, you know you can work in these they are not as hot, you can feel equipment through your fingers, these ones are fingerless there and then we conducted a separate set of trials over 5 different depots and we got a much clearer indication of the type and suitability of equipment. This decision was made by our own workforce, so when these gloves are available to them they are much more likely to wear them and again we are talking about the gloves, if you actually asked anybody about using these or you saw somebody wearing these around and about very unlikely, but now people are actually motivated to wear these and you see them putting them on and you see them coming and asking what other types are available to them.

We have also got a behavioural safety steering group which has got employees, union representatives, safety representatives and myself and we are developing a number of initiatives in and around the company.

We have filmed a safety video that was one of the things that they decided they wanted to do and again slightly differently rather than getting an off the shelf package, we actually used our own employees as actors, I don't think we will be making the Oscars this year but actually the participation in getting them involved in acting it, with the guys we have got guys from Sheffield and Islington to go and film it with a company who are used to involving their own workforce, and it really increased morale within that particular group when we took that back out into the workforce people can identify with them, they have got the same shirts on, they do the same job and we have actually reacted previous incidents that we have had within our business. So it is real, the consequences are real to them, it is not happening to somebody else in another company, it is happening to them and we have developed workshops around these.

Here is just one of the scenarios that we have got – this might not work – no.

OK I have got no sound on it (trying to cue in a video) but not to worry but as you can see we have got our own guys in here Kier shirts on, we do a wrong way of doing it, he has come back he has seen the supervisor we show the reporting procedure and then we go back and we say why did this happen? What could you have done differently? And they go back and show them – this particular one he wanted to rush off to go home because Sheffield Wednesday were playing that night and the other guy said do you want me to take the brackets off? And he said no don't worry about it I am in a rush and cutting corners obviously is one of the key things.

We are also piloting a behavioural safety programme, we are also working with our out of hours team, 30 operatives in Sheffield and Islington and they are looking at things like again equipment that is suitable to them, we have actually had a huge amount of violence and aggression against our guys who go out and work on quite difficult estates at times and we are actually trying out stud vests, this might sound quite harsh but it gives them the confidence to be able to do their job and again as a company our commitment.

I will just very briefly come onto communication. The interviews, the findings were presented with every level in the organisation, everyone knows the types of incidents and behaviours that are causing our accidents and we have also looked and introduced the model, so we need to be thinking, every supervisor, every manager is looking at what triggers and consequences are currently in place and maybe what they need to put in place.

From the glove trials we have actually produced a hand protection guide and these are some of the recommended gloves. They are available in every depot this is a great trigger, they are removable, our operatives can go and try them on, this is the one that was recommended by glaziers, it's too big for me but they can feel the glass with their fingers but it gives maximum protection across their hand. Again the appropriate equipment for the job are we providing it? Have they got the correct knowledge and each of these on this particular board have got an indication of which trade they have been recommended for, but you can actually try them out for yourself and they are available.

We have also developed a PPE catalogue which is just one step further but it is actually a KIER catalogue in partnership with Greenhams and again people can come they are much more likely if they have been tried out with our own people.

The Safety breakfast, the bacon-butties and cups of tea have actually created a much better vehicle for communicating with 900 operatives bringing back information into your business it is much easier than us going out there and finding out all the risks and they are now bringing them back to us and talking.

One of the things we have done as well is to launch a 'don't walk by' campaign. We have got plenty of posters relevant again to our business dotted around the workplace which act as the triggers but more importantly if somebody does report a hazard at the end of the quarter there is a draw and somebody rings a red letter day, a balloon trip or a health spa and again we are rewarding positive safe behaviours, and the safety video again.

I am going to flick through these, we have increased our monitoring and our occupational health system has increased and made us aware of where we have got particular back problems and again through the interviews we do lift a lot of gas boilers when removing them and they said you have to book out a trolley if you want it, which is a few minutes from the house you are working in – where is the motivation to use that particular piece of equipment. So we are

actually providing people with aluminium flat pack trolleys which pack into the back of their van and again the equipment is there and it is available but we have been able to do this because of the information we have got through.

We are also now developing observation and we have developed an operative inspection form which is looking at specific behaviours and we have trained our supervisors up and the actual behavioural safety team is now looking at trying to develop a inter-team competition.

Everything that we have done has been to develop competence lifting gas boilers, packing trolleys, aggression and violence and last but by no means least is safety leadership and this over-arches everything that you do and more importantly our supervisors have direct contact with the majority of our workforce, we need to be providing them with the confidence and the ability to actually lead safety.

Chair

Well Helen thank you very much.

I will have to be strict with Helen I am afraid and say because she has overrun slightly there won't be any time for questions for this presentation to be fair to the four finalists. I would like to point out though that the fatal flaw with the video was that it is simply incredible that anybody would be rushing to watch Sheffield Wednesday!!!

Helen

If anybody does have any questions you can always come to me over coffee we have lots of information at the end.