



## Ryder Marsh

### The Psychology of Industrial Safety

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BEHAVIOURAL SAFETY USER CONFERENCE 2003

What I am going to try and do in 15 minutes is give you a very broad overview of something that's very early days for us, safe behaviour process, we only started it last year, but hopefully we can share something.

First of all, a little bit of background. Who is Masterfoods and who am I? Masterfoods is a group of food, confectionary, and pet foods companies that is part of the Mars group. Birstall is the site where I work which is just outside Leeds. My background is that I have worked in three food companies, very much in R+D. I was a chemist originally, did product development, process development. I've worked in Mars for over 20 years. I was quality manager at Birstall until 3 years ago and then moved into safety. One of the particular interests I have got are the behavioural causes of safety accidents and the links between them, and to be honest we are still trying to think that through a bit. I wish I knew some of the stuff about behaviour when I was quality manager that perhaps I know a little bit more about as a safety manager. We are a Mars manufacturing site making pet snacks and treats, and pet hygiene accessory products as well.

We started the safe behaviours process at our site last year, and we have already made the connection that if we are serious about trying to reduce accidents and injuries, we've got to do something about behaviours. We were not quite sure what it is, and probably still aren't sure what it is actually, but I did try and take some external learning's during 2001. We had one of our sister sites in mars who were running a safe behaviours process, and we learnt from that. Graham Randall from Pilkington was very helpful. Graham is a factory manager at Birstall who used to work for Pilkington and we went over and took some ideas from them. We tried to take a few outside learning's. Then what we did, rightly or wrongly, is to not work formally with consultants, but to try and set it up ourselves, and that is part of the learning I would like to share with you.

The order we set it up, which I think if we done it again we would do differently, is we set up a process for factory associates, and we are just now looking at doing something with behavioural process managers. I think if we did it again we would probably do it the other way round. The basis for the factory associate program we've got is to develop key safe behaviours that we believe if we follow we will prevent the majority of accidents we have at Birstall. They were developed by the factory associates in workshops so they didn't come from me in a 'teller' situation. We have 4 shifts at our site with about 40 people on each shift with 10 observers on each shift. Fairly bog standard, we have about 25% of each shift who volunteered to be observers and they basically observe their colleagues for safe behaviours, and if things are unsafe to have a conversation and raise the awareness.

With the managers what we have only just started to develop is with a group of 10 managers, including the factory, engineering, R+D and liability people, key people, is to develop a list of what were calling 'key right manager behaviours for safety and quality'.

There are 10 of us piloting it at the moment using upward feedback. An example is that if the factory manager has done or said something which I think does not give the right message about safety or quality, is to not publicly confront him, but have a quiet conversation and say 'did you realise you said this, and I think it might be giving the wrong message?' against some criteria we defined to begin with, and hopefully he doesn't sack me but takes the message on board. He then does a very simple little capture, a self-orchestration form.

Things that have worked for us are that our factory manager, who is the guy in charge on manufacturing, is really on board with this program, he really does want it to work, and sees it as a priority. In terms of giving the leadership, of coming along to workshops and saying why he thinks it is important makes it a lot easier for me as coordinator. I think that in itself is a measure of success, that the guy at the top isn't just paying lip service, but genuinely wants to do it.

It took time to do it, but rather than having people suddenly walking round with little notebooks and observing, I ran a series of 30 half day workshops for the shift associates, all manufacturing, all R+D etc, and really talked through "what is this behavioural stuff?" to try and get people onside, to see the logic. I think that was well worth doing, so the when we launched into the observing it wasn't a surprise, and it means we haven't had any resistance to it. I think if you ask anybody whether they broadly understand what were trying to do and why, and do you buy the logic of it? I think everybody is supportive. That was a big investment of time upfront before we started but I think it was worth doing. Also from those half-day workshops we got each of the shift associates to pick an injury category and help develop half dozen key safe behaviours, that we then put a composite list together from all the workshops. I think also from the shift guys that they felt involved in the putting together of it, which was good.

In terms of our observation process, that should be '&OK' in brackets. It seems ok. There's no resistance, people understand it and they seem to be taking it on board. Is it changing behaviours? I don't know, that's a hard thing to judge. I'm going to do a survey in the next couple of months, sitting down one to one with our shift guys, finding out a year and a half down the road of observations, are people doing it? Do they understand it? Have they been the subject of an observation? If so was it helpful? Or not? Have they taken it on board? To be honest I am not sure if we are permanently changing behaviours or not.

Some difficulties we've had are with line manager priorities. The factory manager is well on board, as are our shift supervisors and team leaders and people at that level. The line managers broadly support and understand the logic, but is it top priority at 3am when the line is going wrong? I don't know? I think that's why we want to go and look at manager behaviours a bit more formally than we have done.

Also old habits die hard. If somebody is used to running down the stairs while not holding the hand rail for the last 15 years, then that's not going to change overnight, and were not changing many of those immediately.

In terms of achieving observation targets we were fairly loose in our targets. We didn't say you must achieve X amount per month, just try to do one or two a month and fill the little bits of paper in. We're just about achieving that. We did consider incentives, like cash, and that might have put the observation targets up, we have resisted the temptation. I think that's right. The observers are volunteers, with no personal incentives, and as we are trying to build something into the fabric of how we operate I think that's the right way to go about it.

The last problem we've had is the perception of 'who owns it (safety)?' 'Tony Hayes owns it'. I am still trying to explain that we have introduced it, and I'll coordinate it and take feedback and help adapt it, but actually you guys on shift own it, so we've got it owned 24 hours a day. I think we are moving towards that.

I think the big thing we have learnt is that we should of done something more formal about manager behaviours up front, but we didn't know how to, and I am not sure we totally know how to now, but we are having a go. With a number of key managers we are letting our teams, customers and peers let them know and give them feedback to let them know if they are exhibiting the right key observable behaviours for safety and quality. I wish we would of done that earlier but like I say we didn't know how at the time where as now were thinking lets try something.

## Questions

"Can you tell me what the attitude has been from your work force?"

Generally ok. Very little resistance verbally or through body language, and they're still seen as colleagues, not management spies or something. I'll find out more when I speak to everybody over the next two periods, but I think it's worked reasonably well. We've got a book that we use, but the observers aren't walking around with that, they're tending to write it up afterwards. They're not advertising 'I am an observer'. Is it changing behaviours is a different question, but they (observers) have generally been received quite well.