Process Safety: Meaningful Processes That Need Mindful People

Abstract

Objectives/Scope:
The paper explores how Process Safety requires mindful organising to be truly effective (Vogus et al., 2014), with leadership establishing top-down meaningful processes that are accomplished by mindful frontline and managerial personnel. A framework is proposed that allows for a consistent and effective approach to risk management, enabling organisations to anticipate and manage process safety risks and maintain dependable operations. The case for organisational mindfulness is presented using academic theory and empirical evidence from the nuclear and oil & gas industries.

Methods/Procedures/Process:
Good Process Safety is exemplified by High Reliability Organisations (HROs); where safe, dependable performance is sustained in extremely challenging conditions. Analysis of HROs shows that operational safety, especially in tightly coupled and interactively complex work environments, results from good organisational design (Roberts, 1993; Weick et al., 1999/2008). As a result, HROs only use processes that are practical and meaningful. HROs fundamentally accept, however, that not all risk can be understood and controlled. HRO literature, and emerging Resilience Engineering research, points to frontline workers being key in dealing with unanticipated risk, and best placed to adaptively respond to unexpected events. HROs achieve ‘Resilience’ as part of their mindful, routine everyday work.

Results/Observations/Conclusions:
HROs adhere to processes, but it is organisational mindfulness that allows for flexible problem solving. For example, formal top-down management structures rapidly transform into decentralised, bottom-up frameworks in times of crisis, with experienced and knowledgeable frontline personnel responding quickly to emerging events (Boin & van Eeten, 2013). The combination of HRO/Organisational Mindfulness approaches, coupled with flexible leadership (Yukl, 2010) allows organisations to develop HRO characteristics and balance efficiency-thoroughness considerations.

Novel/Additive Information:
HRO/organisational mindfulness approaches will be examined in case studies from the nuclear and oil & gas industries. From these findings, tools to assess, and mechanisms to develop an organisation’s HRO potential will be discussed. This work considers the offshore and nuclear Safety Cases and underpinning Safety Assessment Principles (SAPs), designed to ensure that risks are controlled within a ‘safe operating envelope’. The Office of Nuclear Regulation, as nuclear regulator, updated its SAPs in 2014 in response to the Fukushima disaster, and stated that ‘Leadership and the management of safety’ is a Fundamental Principle essential for the effective delivery of nuclear safety. These SAPs also highlight that ‘Directors, managers and leaders at all levels should focus the organisation on achieving and sustaining high standards of safety and on delivering the characteristics of an HRO’ (2014, p. 18). This statement, pertinent to the Offshore Oil & Gas Sector Strategy (2014 – 2017), highlights the need for learning across all low-probability/high-consequence industries.


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Mindfulness gives people distance from their thoughts and feelings, which can help them tolerate and work through unpleasant feelings rather than becoming overwhelmed by them. Mindful breathing in particular is helpful because it gives people an anchor—their breath—on which they can focus when they find themselves carried away by a stressful thought. Mindful breathing also helps people stay “present” in the moment, rather than being distracted by regrets in the past or worries about the future. Difficulty: Casual | Frequency: 1x/day | Duration: 15 mins. (12 member ratings). We need to face tough questions: What is a good use of the users’ time? Why would a user... The Tamagotchi Trap. On the Dangers of Mindful Design, Well-being-based Design, Behavior Change, etc. Joe Edelman. Blocked Unblock. Follow Following. Feb 16, 2018. Designers are growing more concerned with the lives of our users, and with supporting meaningful interactions. We need to face tough questions: What is a good use of the users’ time? Why would a user have an interaction, if it’s not a meaningful one? When most people imagine a life of continuously stimulated positive feelings, they find the idea horrifying. And we can also eliminate many other candidates: Is it important to us to get our beliefs right? To become high status? Process safety layers of protection, often referred to as barriers, are typically comprised of plant hardware, procedures, and people. In a typical Know Your Limits. The front line is instrumental in implementing process safety, Yet they are rarely engaged in meaningful process safety discussions. We tend to Surviving the Black Swan, Strategies for Process Safety Specialists and Companies to Survive Unpredicted Catastrophic Events.