

Aligning Safety & Social Responsibility

Safety as a Value-Add to Corporate Stakeholders

By Jeffery C. Camplin

IN BRIEF

- To gain attention of corporate decision makers, SH&E professionals must justify expenditures and present safety in terms of its impact on the bottom line.
- Corporations have ethical responsibilities to all stakeholders, not just those with a financial interest.
- The SH&E professional must move beyond the mere business aspects of safety and focus on how safety management demonstrates good governance and social responsibility.

With increasing globalization, greater environmental and social awareness, and more efficient communication, the concept of corporations' responsibilities beyond their drive to be merely legally compliant and profit-related has gained new impetus. To succeed, the corporate world and other organizations want to be seen as acting responsibly toward the three Ps: people, planet and profit (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2004). The term *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) has been modified to *social responsibility* and the discussion now includes government, educational and not-for-profit groups

Social responsibility is an inspiring, challenging and strategically important development that is becoming more important for organizations of all sizes. SH&E professionals must be aware of the opportunities and challenges they face in this evolving global environment. The SH&E profession must realign itself as a value-add to organizational stakeholders and become a champion for people, planet and profits.

Safety & Corporate Decision Makers

Effective safety management requires the attention and support of decision makers in upper management (Smith, 2008). According to Adams (2003), the SH&E professional's main responsibility is to seek "active support for safety function affairs from higher level management." Speaking the language of business requires knowledge of business and financial skills combined with an understanding of the stakeholders the business serves.

In the corporate environment, decision makers have many obvious and not so obvious stakeholders to serve. The main stakeholder traditionally served is the shareholder or investor seeking a return on investment. The SH&E profession has recognized that to gain the attention of corporate decision makers its practitioners must be able to justify expenditures and present safety in terms of its positive impact on bottom-line profits as a return on investment (Schneid, 2008).

However, the value safety brings to an organization goes beyond the financial statement. Corporations have ethical responsibilities to all stakeholders, not just investors or financial supporters. SH&E professionals can promote the value of safety by demonstrating how effective safety management serves all of an organization's stakeholders.

This article explores how safety can be integrated into social responsibility and sustainability initiatives. To achieve this, SH&E professionals must think in terms of creating and sustaining value for key stakeholders, no matter the business's overall purpose or direction (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007). The profession must move beyond the mere business aspects of safety and focus on how safety management demonstrates good corporate governance and social responsibility.

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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small globe of the Earth. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers wrapped around the globe. The globe shows the Americas and parts of Europe and Africa. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

Corporations & Corporate Responsibilities

J. Friedman (2007) defines a corporation as follows:

[A] legal entity, chartered by a state or the federal government, and separate and distinct from the persons who own it, giving rise to a jurist's remark that it has 'neither a soul to damn nor a body to kick.' Nonetheless, it is regarded by the courts as an artificial person; it may own property, incur debts, sue, or be sued. It has four chief distinguishing features: 1) limited liability (owners can lose only what they invest); 2) easy transfer of ownership through the sale of shares of stock; 3) continuity of existence; and 4) centralized management. Other factors helping to explain the popularity of the corporate form of organization are its ability to obtain capital through expanded ownership, and the shareholders' ability to profit from the growth of the business.

In a free-enterprise, private-property system, the corporate executive is an employee of the business owners. The owners have direct accountability to their employers, the corporation's shareholders and investors. That accountability generates a responsibility to conduct business in accordance with their desires (within certain constraints), which generally is to make as much profit as possible while conforming to society's basic rules, those embodied in law and ethical custom (M. Friedman, 1970).

However, in recent years, the topic of ethical customs as applied to corporate compliance issues has increased the importance of those responsible for its oversight. Visible ethical lapses by many corporations also have led to legislative and regulatory mandates for improved corporate governance.

Corporations & Safety

SH&E professionals are good at managing safety programs, but not always successful at demonstrating how they contribute to profits. On the other hand, corporations effectively manage profits, but may not be so good at demonstrating commitment to SH&E. The ability of corporations and their shareholders to focus purely on profit has limits under the new global framework of good corporate governance and social responsibility initiatives.

Today's SH&E professionals must recognize this transformation in the business world and seize upon it as an opportunity. The role of safety management must expand within the organization's governance system in order for SH&E professionals to be seen as value-added employees by decision makers and the stakeholders they serve. This can be achieved by having the ability to promote people (safety and health), the planet (environment) and profits (value-add).

Organizational Decision Makers & Their Stakeholders

SH&E professionals must recognize who the decision makers are within the organizations they serve, as well as the organizations' stakeholders. The range of stakeholders has expanded over the years from owners or shareholders to a broader group that now includes those who affect or are affected by a firm's goals (Freeman, et al., 2007) or who have a stake in a firm's operations (Werther & Chandler, 2006). This group includes customers, suppliers, employees, financiers, communities and managers (Freeman, et al.).

Thus, effective safety management must promote benefits and values that address all stakeholders. This will allow SH&E professionals to be better recognized, understood and appreciated by decision makers. The corporate-level and organizational safety professional has the vital role to teach and educate decision makers and stakeholders about the "importance and beneficial aspects of safety in the operations" (Schneid, 2008). Beyond the effect on profits, SH&E professionals must design safety management programs that address the needs of stockholders and stakeholders.

Changing Importance of Corporate Stakeholders

Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory identifies and models the groups that are a corporation's stakeholders; it also describes and recommends methods by which management addresses their interests.

The traditional view of the corporation is the shareholder view. Shareholders or stockholders own the company, and the firm has a binding fiduciary duty to put their needs first to increase value for them. In the input-output models of corporate governance, inputs of shareholders, employees and suppliers are transformed into usable outputs that customers buy. This returns some capital benefit or profit to the corporation. Under this model, corporate decision makers only address the needs of those four parties: investors, employees, suppliers and customers, with an emphasis on investors' wishes.

However, the stakeholder theory argues that other parties are involved as well, including governmental bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, communities, associated corporations, prospective employees, prospective customers, the general public and perhaps even competitors.

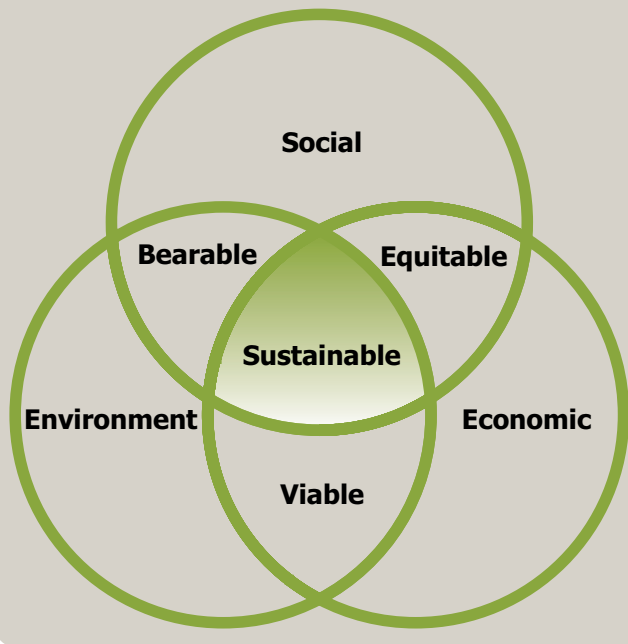
The stakeholder view is an instrumental theory; it integrates the resource-based view as well as the market-based view, and adds a new and expanding sociopolitical level (Freeman, 1984). This sociopolitical aspect of a corporate stakeholder is taking root in the emergence of corporate social responsibilities.

Communicating Value to Stakeholders

Effective communication with stakeholders is fundamental for successful implementation of social

To succeed, the corporate world and other organizations want to be seen as acting responsibly toward the three Ps: people, planet and profit.

Figure 1 Sustainability



responsibility. Employees, in particular, are vital for changing companies' social or environmental performance. This presents an important area of potential synergy with safety and health at work where participation and dialogue with employees has long been recognized as an essential element for success (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2004). Consequently, SH&E professionals have a key role to play in a corporation's adoption of social responsibility and a new way to become recognized as a value-add employee.

Going Beyond Regulatory Compliance

Federal law requires that businesses perform certain socially responsible activities. In fact, several government agencies develop business-related legislation and make sure the laws are followed. Federal criminal law has expanded as a result of criminalized regulations governing the environment, consumer and employee safety, and business practices.

Many federal regulations, such as those issued by OSHA and EPA, prevent firms from taking otherwise profitable actions and contain imprecise standards governing the boundary between legal and illegal conduct (Arlen, 2008). Under such regulations, the federal government has the authority to require businesses to adhere to certain socially responsible safety and environmental standards.

Holding Upper Management Accountable for Safety

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-204) was written to address some issues brought to light during the collapses of Enron and Arthur Andersen. This legislation can affect SH&E professionals who work at companies subject to

Security and Exchange Commission reporting requirements (ASSE, 2003). The act's provisions do not specifically refer to safety, yet could apply to safety management as a matter of law and could apply as a matter of defining corporate ethical standards and best practices.

Adherence to legislated social responsibilities represents the minimum standard of social responsibility performance that corporate SH&E professionals must achieve (Hall, 2003). SH&E professionals also must determine how far beyond minimum regulatory compliance they should attempt to go. Doing so requires finding a balance between the positive and negative outcomes of performing socially responsible activities. Only those activities that contribute to sound corporate (or organizational) governance addressing the welfare of all stakeholders should be undertaken (Freeman, 1984).

Safety's Expanding Visibility & Role With Organizational Stakeholders

Organizational stakeholders may eventually come to demand the same rigorous integrity, independence and objectivity of

SH&E professionals that they expect from financial auditors. They will rely increasingly on SH&E professionals for reliable information with respect to all safety and environmental matters that may be material to an organization's financial picture.

In addition, SH&E professionals will have an increased role in developing internal programs to ensure the reliable flow of SH&E information to corporate decision makers and boards of directors (Hall, 2003). Organizations now realize that good governance founded on a strong ethical climate represents a best business practice (Verschoor, 2007). SH&E professionals must incorporate this good governance practice into safety management so that safety best practices become how good business is conducted.

Value of the SH&E Professional

Some argue that SH&E professionals' effectiveness has been hampered by a lack of business skills that would establish improved communication and gain recognition with corporate decision makers (Adams, 2003). A recent ASSE study found that many hiring professionals and other business professionals do not understand what SH&E professionals do or the value they bring to an organization. These managers also believe that SH&E professionals are too technically focused and that these technical skills are undervalued (ASSE, 2008).

If this is the case, the definition of an SH&E professional as presented by BCSP (2006) requires a significant overhaul:

A safety professional is a person engaged in the prevention of accidents, incidents and events that harm people, property, or the

environment. [S/he] uses qualitative and quantitative analysis of simple and complex products, systems, operations and activities to identify hazards. [S/he] evaluates the hazards to identify what events can occur and the likelihood of occurrence, severity of results, risk (a combination of probability and severity) and cost. [S/he] identifies what controls are appropriate and their cost and effectiveness.

A safety professional makes recommendations to managers, designers, employers, government agencies and others. Controls may involve administrative controls (such as plans, policies, procedures, training, etc.) and engineering controls (such as safety features and systems, fail-safe features, barriers and other forms of protection).

A safety professional may manage and implement controls. Besides knowledge of a wide range of hazards, controls and safety assessment methods, a safety professional must have knowledge of physical, chemical, biological and behavioral sciences, mathematics, business, training and educational techniques, engineering concepts and particular kinds of operations (construction, manufacturing, transportation, etc.).

This definition does not address the value SH&E professionals bring to employers and stakeholders. Often, when the value of safety is demonstrated to stakeholders, it has the limited business focus of showing that safety is not a cost, but an investment with positive returns (Adams, 2003).

The Business of Safety

Some within the profession believe that when SH&E professionals become concerned with promoting the cost-effective use of organizational resources, they will be further empowered through membership among top management ranks (Hansen, 1993). Thus, many initiatives have addressed SH&E professionals' ability to demonstrate that safety pays—to help SH&E professionals transition from being technical experts to more value-added employees. OSHA terms this *safety pays* while professional organizations such as ASSE refer to it as the *business of safety* (which means the safety program is demonstrated to have a return on investment). These programs have improved SH&E professionals' ability to gain executive attention and interest, yet they fall short of making safety management part of sound governance.

P Is Currently for Profits

The business of safety movement provides a limited vision on good corporate governance by only focusing on profits; this satisfies the wishes of corporate decision makers and their stockholders. While this movement has been a critical step in elevating the image of safety to business leaders, more must be done to educate executives and corporate boards about safety's value (ASSE, 2008).

Effective safety management also must promote the value of safety to all stakeholders.

Covey's (2004) fifth habit is, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." This is sound advice for 21st century SH&E professionals. From the perspective of stakeholders, SH&E professionals can get managers to listen—to understand that SH&E professionals are not technicians, regulatory compliance specialists or "necessary evils," but well-educated professionals who are concerned with promoting the cost-effective use of organizational resources to immediately affect the bottom line (Adams, 2003).

The business world is changing. The means and methodologies through which SH&E professionals accomplished safety management objectives in the past may not work in the future. Today's professionals must adapt new thinking and anticipate major changes within the profession in the near future (Schneid, 2000).

Improving the Value of the SH&E Professional

The SH&E profession has acknowledged the importance of promoting the value of its practitioners to all stakeholders for five decades. In 1961, John Grimaldi, then president of ASSE, discussed the safety professional of the next 50 years:

In America, where competition weeds out the ineffective so swiftly, mere survival is an achievement in itself. Steady growth, however, represents something special. Any group which approximates a position of eminence must be representative of enterprise, intelligence, energy and character.

He goes on to say:

Today the Society's members are accepted professionals and have international prestige. Tomorrow, our stature will be greater if we meet the changing world's larger challenges and richer opportunities. To do this we must plot a true course, discipline ourselves so that we are not distracted, and appraise our progress critically so that our contributions may have the greatest effect.

Highlighting the Value of the Safety Professional

In 2007, ASSE embarked on a project with three main objectives: 1) reposition safety; 2) reposition the SH&E professional; and 3) prepare the SH&E professional to be a value-added employee. The project has identified 10 goals and more than 30 specific action items (Lawrence, 2008). To ensure that the value proposition for the safety professional is clearly understood by the business community, ASSE is striving to ensure that SH&E professionals have the skills they need to compete in this new workplace environment (Lawrence). This project is the largest (and possibly the only) current movement aimed at promoting the value of safety to corporate and organizational stakeholders.

The Value of Safety Leads to Social Responsibility

The first goal ASSE has identified to reposition safety is to "increase the business community's

ASSE's Sustainability Initiative

As a steward of the profession and champion of the SH&E professional, the ASSE Council on Professional Affairs (COPA) identified sustainability as a critical issue for the safety profession and ASSE. COPA's goals regarding sustainability include:

- ensuring that ASSE and the SH&E profession have a voice in corporate social responsibility and sustainability policy definition;
- educating the business community on the importance of incorporating safety into social responsibility and sustainability programs;
- providing new insights into the measurement, management and impact of safety and health sustainability.

To achieve these goals, ASSE approved the launch of the Center for Safety and Health Sustainability. As the center grows and develops, information on the results of its efforts will be shared with ASSE members.

awareness of the importance of safety as part of good corporate governance and social responsibility." This goal is critical to raising the value of the SH&E profession and its practitioners.

The question is, how does one tie safety and social responsibility together as part of good organizational governance? The initial answers to this question are discussed in the rest of this article. Through this initiative, ASSE has made progress toward Grimaldi's 50-year-old vision of the future safety professional. This initiative will increase the breadth and depth of skills that SH&E professionals need to stand out as viable candidates for evolving hybrid positions by providing resources that will help navigate options for future employment (ASSE, 2008). These skills will help the SH&E professional successfully integrate safety into good corporate governance and social responsibility (Lawrence, 2008).

The "New" Safety in the Social Responsibility Movement

Good governance will be redefined in the future to include social responsibility (Strandburg, 2008). The European Commission defines CSR as the integration by companies of social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2004).

In a larger context, CSR has been defined as "the broad concept that businesses are more than just profit-seeking entities and, therefore, also have an obligation to benefit society. Strategic CSR is "the idea that CSR should be integrated into the firm's strategic perspective and operations because of the long-term benefits this brings to the organization" (Freeman, et al., 2007).

CSR also has been explained as a principle that businesses should practice to actively contribute to the welfare of society and not only maximize profits. Annual reports often track what companies have done to further education, help minorities, support the arts and social welfare agencies, and in general improve social conditions. Investors use the concept to identify companies that are fair to employees, do not pollute and make beneficial products (Downes & Goodman, 2006).

Werther and Chandler (2006) suggest the entirety of CSR can be discerned from the three words contained in the term:

- Corporate: CSR covers the relationship between corporations and the societies.
- Social: CSR defines society in its broadest terms, on many levels, to include all stakeholders and constituent groups that maintain ongoing interests in an organization's operations.
- Responsibility: The mutually inherent responsibilities between corporations and the societies in which with they interact.

Social Responsibility Likely Won't Remain Voluntary

Several commercial drivers are pushing CSR up the corporate agenda:

- Informed investors recognize that the business

risk (internal and external) for companies that successfully manage their social and environmental impact is lower than the business average.

- Large companies recognize that their shares will be sought by a wider group of shareholders and institutions, potentially driving up the share price.

- Consumers who have a large choice in a range of products, all of reasonable quality and price, are likely to prefer products produced in a socially responsible way. As a result, such products will enjoy greater market share or better profit margin (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2004).

SH&E professionals also must recognize and be sensitive to the fact that some do not believe corporations have social responsibilities. In 1970, Nobel-Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman wrote against CSR efforts:

[T]he corporate executive would be spending someone else's money for a general social interest. Insofar as his actions in accord with his 'social responsibility' reduce returns to stockholders, he is spending their money. Insofar as his actions raise the price to customers, he is spending the customers' money. Insofar as his actions lower the wages of some employees, he is spending their money. (Friedman, 1970)

Regardless of which argument or combination of arguments decision makers might support, they generally should make a concerted effort to perform all legally required socially responsible activities, consider voluntarily performing socially responsible activities beyond those legally required, and inform all relevant stakeholders of the extent to which the organization will become involved in performing social responsibility activities (Freeman, 1984).

Social Responsibility Brings Value to the Safety Profession

A recent Canadian study found that:

[F]irms that are well managed from a CSR perspective are predicted to benefit from improved shareholder value. Boards, however, should stay away from a focus on procedural issues. They need to focus instead on identifying potential opportunities and threats or risks. Firms (and their boards) that stop at risk management and legal compliance and overlook the innovation and opportunity side of CSR are less likely to generate positive long-term value. (Strandburg, 2008)

A sound safety management program not only addresses risk management and legal compliance, but it also includes innovation and opportunities that benefit all stakeholders. CSR is an inspiring, challenging and strategically important development in today's business world.

Workplace safety and health is an essential component of CSR. Therefore, SH&E professionals must be aware of the opportunities and challenges they face (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2004).

ISO 26000: Social Responsibility

Content

ISO 26000 is structured as follows:

Foreword

Introduction

- 1 Scope
- 2 Terms and definitions
- 3 Understanding social responsibility
- 4 Principles of social responsibility
- 5 Recognizing social responsibility and engaging stakeholders
- 6 Guidance on social responsibility core subjects
- 7 Guidance on integrating social responsibility throughout an organization

Annex A Voluntary initiatives and tools for social responsibility

Annex B Abbreviated terms

Bibliography

Systems Approach Helps Link Safety to Social Responsibility

The SH&E profession represents a vast array of backgrounds, experiences, competencies and responsibilities. Safety management also covers a range of subject areas. Internationally, the systems approach to SH&E management was promulgated by the adoption of ISO 9001, Quality Management Systems, and ISO 14001, Environmental Management Systems.

Other key standards include OHSAS 18001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, and ANSI/AIHA Z10-2005, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, as well as OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP). In the past two decades, these standards/programs have increasingly served as a consistent framework for incorporation into business management systems. They all contain complementary elements that facilitate the execution of SH&E responsibility.

New International Consensus Standard on Social Responsibility

ISO (2010) indicates that sustainability and social responsibility are closely related but different. Sustainable development from the ISO perspective is about meeting the needs of society while living within the planet's ecological limits and without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Social responsibility, on the other hand, has the organization as its focus and concerns an organization's responsibilities to society and the environment. Social responsibility is closely linked to sustainable development, and an organization's primary CSR objective should be to contribute to sustainable development (ISO, 2010).

ISO 26000 (see sidebar above) contains voluntary guidance, not requirements, and, therefore, is not for

use as a certification standard such as ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004. Its guidance includes:

- concepts, terms and definitions relating to social responsibility;
- background, trends and characteristics of social responsibility;
- principles and practices relating to social responsibility;
- core subjects and issues relating to social responsibility;
- integrating, implementing and promoting socially responsible behavior throughout the organization and its sphere of influence;
- identifying and engaging with stakeholders;
- communicating commitments and performance related to social responsibility.

Using ISO 26000 to Link Safety & Social Responsibility

ISO 26000 outlines principles for recognizing social responsibility efforts and engaging stakeholders (see sidebar below). SH&E professionals can use the standard's structure to demonstrate the strategic role SH&E management plays in social responsibility. Consider the following areas in ISO 26000 where SH&E issues are directly and indirectly connected to social responsibility principles (Knott, 2010).

Recognizing Unique Needs of Members of the Organization

Safety management often involves addressing the unique issues related to ergonomics, disabled workers, language barriers, cultural differences, young workers and an aging workforce. SH&E professionals should highlight these programs when demonstrating organizations' social responsibility efforts toward recognizing the unique needs of its workforce.

Employee Participation in SH&E Efforts

Several safety management systems highlight the need for employee participation including

ISO 26000: Social Responsibility Areas Impacting SH&E Issues

- **Recognizing** unique needs of members
- **Employee** participation in safety
- **Safety** committee guidelines
- **Eliminate** workplace hazards
- **Two-Way** communication on safety
- **Worker** safety training
- **Worker** input on the economics of safety
- **Safety** in the value chain
- **Consumer**, product and life cycle safety
- **Personal** protective equipment

ANSI/AIHA Z10, OHSAS 18000 and OSHA VPP. Employee participation can take many forms:

- Participate on joint labor-management committees and other advisory or specific purpose committees.
- Conduct site inspections.
- Analyze routine hazards in each step of a job or process, and prepare safe work practices or controls to eliminate or reduce exposure.
- Develop and revise site safety and health rules.
- Train both current and newly hired employees.
- Provide programs and presentations at safety and health meetings.
- Conduct incident investigations.
- Report hazards and fixing those in their control.
- Support coworkers by providing feedback on risks and helping them eliminate hazards.
- Perform a preuse or change analysis for new equipment or processes to identify hazards before use (OSHA, 2010).

ANSI/AIHA Z10 also itemizes effective employee participation as including a role in activities such as incident investigations, procedure development, safety audits, training development, job safety analysis and all aspects of the planning process. Today's SH&E professionals should be able to readily identify several ways their organizations involve employees. Areas where such involvement is lacking or hampered can be more easily implemented by demonstrating that they add value to social responsibility goals. Obstacles or barriers to employee involvement include lack of response to employee input or suggestions, reprisals (supervisory and/or peer), or other forms of discrimination (ANSI/AIHA, 2005).

Guidelines for Safety Committee Development

Active safety committees are another way to demonstrate direct employee involvement while also satisfying another component of good social responsibility. Safety committees are voluntary in many organizations but may be required by company policy or local regulations. For instance, the state of Oregon requires safety committees for most employers. The key is that workers must have a true voice on the committee.

Efforts to Eliminate Workplace Hazards Including Psychosocial Issues

The psychosocial environment at work can affect physical and mental health as well as organizational outcomes such as work performance and effectiveness (NIOSH, 2004). Psychosocial issues can include stress, post-traumatic stress, workplace violence, bullying, substance abuse, absenteeism, racism and racial/ethnic prejudice, sexism and sexual harassment, gender and racial discrimination, work-family integration and balance, and support for diversity in the workplace/workforce.

Pejtersen, Søndergaard, Kristensen, et al. (2010), developed a questionnaire to assess psychosocial issues within an organization. SH&E professionals may be directly or indirectly involved with one or more psychosocial programs within their organiza-

tions, but all safety programs address hazard identification and abatement methodologies that can be correlated to sound socially responsible actions.

Two-Way SH&E Communication

Sound SH&E management requires commitment of all levels of an organization, particularly top management. Management leadership and employee involvement go hand in hand for safety success. In fact, top management leadership and effective employee participation are crucial for the success of a safety management system (ANSI/AIHA, 2005). Managers organize and control activities within an organization. They provide the motivating force, resources and influence necessary for safety to be a fundamental value within the organization.

In an effective program, management involvement also provides the means through which workers express their own commitment to safety and health for themselves and their fellow workers (OSHA, 1989). ANSI/AIHA Z10-2005 identifies management leadership as the first step of a successful safety management system. The next step is to establish communication and trust between management and workers.

Safety Culture & Social Responsibility

According to Manuele (2003), an organization's culture consists of its values, beliefs, legends, rituals, missions, goals and performance measures, and its sense of responsibility to its employees, its customers and its community, all of which translate into a system of expected behavior. An organization's culture dictates the effectiveness of a safety management system.

Petersen (2003) found that an organization's culture sets the tone for safety as well. "In a positive safety culture, it says that everything you do about safety is important" (p. 66). Consider this statement by OSHA: "The best safety and health programs involve every level of the organization, instilling a safety culture that reduces accidents for workers and improves the bottom line for managers. When safety and health are part of the organization and a way of life, everyone wins" (OSHA, 2002). Haight (2007) provides a simple survey to measure the culture gap between upper management, middle management and the workforce.

Worker SH&E Training

In 1986, OSHA issued a program evaluation profile for compliance officers to use when evaluating a site's safety program. Although this directive was eventually rescinded, it serves as guidance in evaluating a sound employee training program. Guidelines from this document include the following:

- Knowledgeable persons conduct safety and health training.
- Training is properly scheduled, assessed and documented.
- Training covers all necessary topics and situations, and includes all persons working at the site (hourly employees, supervisors, managers, contractors, part-time and temporary employees).

- Employees participate in creating site-specific training methods and materials.

- Employees are trained to recognize inadequate responses to reported program violations.

- A retrievable recordkeeping system provides for appropriate retraining, makeup training and modifications based on evaluations.

OSHA has more than 100 standards that contain training requirements. The agency (OSHA, 2005) has developed voluntary training guidelines to help employers provide safety and health information. These guidelines also provide employers with instructions needed for employees to work at minimal risk to themselves, fellow employees and the public. These guidelines include the following:

- 1) Determine whether a worksite problem can be solved by training.
- 2) Determine what training, if any, is needed.
- 3) Identify goals and objectives for the training.
- 4) Design learning activities.
- 5) Conduct training.
- 6) Determine the effectiveness of the training.
- 7) Revise training based on feedback from employees, supervisors and other workers.

Haight (2007) provides a more in-depth discussion of effective safety training.

Workers' Rights Regarding the Economics of Safety

Social responsibility requires a balance between people, profits and the planet. Social responsibility should affect the balance on economic decisions with issues related to worker safety and health from the perspective of the workforce. This starts with SH&E professionals linking safety initiatives with profits or demonstrating the business of safety. ANSI/AIHA Z10-2005 states:

Organizations and the community may see additional benefits of implementing an OHSMS beyond the reduction of injury and illnesses. Some of these benefits may include: lowered workers' compensation costs, reduced turnover of personnel, reduced lost workdays, compliance with laws and regulations, increased productivity, improved employee health status, improved product quality, higher morale of employees, reduction or elimination of property damage due to incidents, reduced business interruption costs, and reduced impact on the environment due to incidents. (p. 6)

These are the positive benefits of an effective safety management system that senior management can see. SH&E professionals must paint the picture of success and obtain management's commitment while the vision is fresh. This is salesmanship; this is how to achieve commitment to safety from management. A little salesmanship can integrate safety into the business model by illustrating incident and accident effects on production and profitability.

Integrating the costs of safety into the business and demonstrating a return on investment has been

identified as a major goal of the SH&E profession (ASSE, 2007; ASSE/AIHA, 2005). This puts safety into a language to which management, frontline supervisors and even employees can relate.

However, when a safety initiative has a negative impact on the bottom line, it may lose priority. Socially responsible organizations will weigh the benefits of an SH&E initiative based on its social and environment impacts as well as its effect on corporate profits.

Savvy SH&E professionals will use social responsibility principles involving employee rights in economic decisions as a value-add proposition when a profit-based business case for an initiative is lacking. Active SH&E programs that routinely involve employees in reducing workplace hazards should be highlighted as an example of meeting this social responsibility initiative.

SH&E in an Organization's Value Chain

ISO 26000 defines *value chain* as entire sequences of activities or parties that provide (suppliers, outsourced workers, contractors) or receive (customers, consumers, clients, members, other users) value in the form of products or services. Organizations have found that sustainability can be reached only through people (Nestle, 2009). No asset is as important as the people who contribute to organizational culture and goals through their work. These organizations devote all the necessary energy and attention to protect employees, contractors and others along the value chain, including suppliers, customers and the public.

Organizations can highlight social responsibility by requiring suppliers to meet minimum SH&E program requirements. This can include the procurement of products and services with reduced environmental impact (i.e., a green supply chain). Organizations also can mandate compliance to standards higher than what is mandated by local regulations. Serious organizations also audit their supply chain's SH&E commitment. The Auditing Roundable (www.auditing-roundable.org) provides examples of how to achieve this.

Consumer, Product & Product Life Cycle Safety

Organizations often work to address environmental and social issues across the product life cycle. For instance, Baxter (2010) incorporates these issues from sustainable design and bioethics during research and development, to efficient use of energy and materials during manufacturing and transport, to appropriate product advertising and promotion, and finally, responsible repair, refurbishment and recycling at product end-of-life. SH&E professionals should be aware of how their organizations address consumer alerts and product recall information as part of their overall CSR goals. This awareness should extend to products used within organizations as well.

Personal Protective Equipment

PPE use is an important aspect of social responsibility obligations. However, regulations and best

SH&E professionals can use the structure of ISO 26000 to demonstrate the strategic role SH&E management plays in social responsibility.



Many CSR topics are associated with effective SH&E management. Therefore, SH&E professionals who recognize the role of CSR-related topics will be able to be a more visible value-add to their stakeholders.

practices require organizations to address workplace hazards using a hierarchy of controls. PPE must be used a last resort to protect workers. It is acceptable as a hazard control method under the following circumstances:

- when engineering controls are not feasible or do not totally eliminate the hazard;
- while engineering controls are being developed;
- when safe work practices do not provide sufficient additional protection;
- during emergencies when engineering controls may not be feasible.

ANSI/AIHA Z10-2005 expands on the traditional hazard abatement hierarchy (p. 16):

The organization shall implement and maintain a process for achieving feasible risk reduction based upon the following preferred order of controls:

- A) elimination;
- B) substitution of less hazardous materials, processes, operations or equipment;
- C) engineering controls;
- D) warnings;
- E) administrative control;
- F) PPE.

Feasible application of this hierarchy of controls shall take into account:

- the nature and extent of the risks being controlled;
- the degree of risk reduction desired;
- the requirements of applicable local, federal and state statutes, standards and regulations;
- recognized best practices in industry;
- available technology;
- cost-effectiveness;
- internal organization standards.

Effective social responsibility will look well beyond providing PPE and incorporate the hierarchy of controls into hazard reduction activities.

Defining the New Safety Discipline

Another significant area where social responsibility will affect organizations includes global climate change. The 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change" (Nobel Foundation, 2007). Even in the face of challenges to the "science" behind

global climate change, sustainability and social responsibility initiatives move forward.

Other environmental and social issues that will be addressed via CSR include water, land access, product stewardship, diversity, compensation, workplace safety, labor shortages, aging populations and other demographic challenges, health-care, human rights, ethics, and community and customer relations (Strandburg, 2008). Many of these topics are directly or indirectly associated with effective SH&E management. Therefore, SH&E professionals who recognize the role of CSR-related topics will be able to be a more visible value-add to their stakeholders.

Is Sustainability the Same as Social Responsibility?

The term *corporate sustainability* is also increasingly used to describe the three-P aim for businesses, while environmental sustainability is a closely related concept, often preferred by those in the environmental community (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2004).

Common use of the term began with the 1987 publication of the World Commission on Environment and Development report, "Our Common Future." Also known as the Brundtland Report, this document defines *sustainable development* as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

This concept encompasses ideas, aspirations and values that continue to inspire public and private organizations to become better stewards of the environment and that promote positive economic growth and social objectives. The principles of sustainability can stimulate technological innovation, advance competitiveness and improve quality of life (EPA, 2007).

Globalization and the advent of the systems approach to business management, combined with the similarity in content of standards, have prompted many organizations to group SH&E professionals' responsibilities into one collective discipline (Camplin & Evans, 2008). Corporate governance, social responsibility and sustainability add to this collective discipline and the competencies necessary for their management.

Conclusion

The corporate and business world is evolving. The SH&E profession must adapt to the new vision or face extinction as an unrecognized value-add to their stakeholders. The SH&E professional can no longer "just do a good job" by being technically competent on regulatory compliance issues. SH&E professionals cannot simply learn to speak the language of business by presenting SH&E issues in terms of profits.

SH&E professionals must become a champion for people, the planet and profits to survive in the new global corporate environment. SH&E professionals must take notice of how the corporate world is evolving and take steps to capitalize on these opportunities. Corporate employers now expect their

employees to be able to explain what value their job, and their role in performing it, brings to the organization (Lawrence, 2008).

As Grimaldi (1961) said a half century ago, "Tomorrow, our stature will be greater if we meet the changing world's larger challenges and richer opportunities. To do this we must plan a true course, discipline ourselves so that we are not distracted, and appraise our progress critically so that our contributions many have the greatest effect." **PS**

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