

## Webinar Q&A

10th May 2016

Client Expectations for Zero Harm - Is it Realistic or Helpful?  
Presenter: Darren Broadhead

### 1. What if the Health & Safety Vision doesn't align with the business Vision?

*(Slide 8: Zero Harm – Vision or KPI?)*

You must go back to your Executive Group and work to have this addressed. A workshop can be a practical route to aligning the more traditional values, visions and strategy of the business with H&S needs. If they are not aligned, the H&S performance of the business will always play second fiddle to the primary values of the organisation (e.g., production).

### 2. Human error is only made by front line employees: Clearly this is more complex than just front line, so if a company is doing that and it's having an impact on morale, what should they do?

*(Slide 10: Human Error)*

The first requirement is that the Executive Group recognise that their 'clamour for consequences' is not demonstrating that they are serious about H&S in the way that they wanted. It gives the impression that they get everything right and that employees get everything wrong. The power of Visible Felt Leadership thinking must be engaged. The requirement for correct leadership behaviours must be communicated and coached into existence. This is the core organisational factor that must be got right.

### 3. If Zero Harm is not a good measure – what should we use?

*(Slide 12: Why do people think Zero a problem?)*

Focusing on the presence of H&S is the key requirement. In practice, that means deploying your risk controls well. Risk controls, e.g., guarding or pedestrian segregation, are housed in your management systems but must reflect all of the human factors. This includes the organisational as well as people and task factors. Again, the most important organisational factor is having leaders who feel fully accountable for H&S and demonstrate this through their behaviours. The question we should ask ourselves is: are our basic risk controls consistently and persistently applied, e.g., our start of shift briefs or our risk assessments? Finally a measure is just a measure - it is the input activities which make all the difference.

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### 4. Dropping Zero Harm as a vision could be seen as a backward step—how can we convince people this is the right way?

*(Slide 13: Has the debate missed the point?)*

All visions are aspirational and are designed to challenge our forward journeys. All KPIs are measures and I don't think it is unreasonable to change them if they are not delivering. Explaining the change of approach is quite straightforward and can add credibility. It is all the things which go in to delivering the values and visions of the organisation that are important. For many, a proactive vision and KPIs are much easier to grasp than reactive ones.

### 5. What can we do to convince our clients that we have a much bigger story than just our reactive KPIs?

*Slide 14: Selection via KPIs - Frustrating?*

Some good opportunities to up-sell credibility with key clients include:

- Early engagement outside of the structure of bid forums can be of use.
- Inviting clients to training days or awards ceremonies has a positive impact.
- Quality of bid information and the capacity and capability to adapt to different bid situations is vital.

Enter into a dialogue which is primarily about what we are positively achieving.

Examples include

- A more effective means of risk assessment or an employee engagement process.
- Basic data on our reactive H&S performance is likely to be used in most bid processes but we can share a lot more.

Don't wait for the day that there has been an incident or a problem to try and persuade your client that you are great at H&S - they may not believe you! Good H&S is the absence of incidents, i.e., the performance will give the correct output numbers.

### 6. Everyone seems to be saying our approach to H&S is broken—do you agree?

*Slide 18: The Critical Few*

I think this mindset has arisen from believing that H&S should be treated differently to other key business issues or risks. I do not believe that is the case.

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If you address your H&S success in the same way as you address your production or service success, you will recognise that if it is broken we absolutely have the tools to fix it already in our businesses. Revolution in concepts is not required—revolution in passion and application is highly likely to be required, starting with the leadership teams.

- 7. As a contractor that performs higher risk trades, we have a greater safety focus than some of our clients, who have high expectations of us backed up by statements like ‘zero harm’ – but in safety terms, we’re at least as well-resourced and trained as they are. Ultimately they are our client – it’s a business relationship - so we need to meet their needs but it can create cultural differences challenges. How can we work more effectively together?**

The first thing to say is that this sounds like a positive story. Clients have set expectations like Zero Harm to raise H&S performance in their Supply Chain, so it sounds like this contractor is meeting this need and is more likely to be selected and then retained based upon their performance.

I would also refer back to question 5 above and say push what you are doing well into the line of sight of your client. Again don't just wait for bid day or the day there is an incident to show your client that you have a lot to offer. Where it is possible, use your H&S performance to differentiate yourself from the chasing pack.

Even if you feel you have been forced to adopt Zero Harm as a concept, what's important is the narrative that you sit behind it in order to explain it and make it real!