Proactive OSH Performance During Challenging Times

Pam Walaski, CSP
Senior Program Director/Specialty Technical Consultants, Inc.
At Large Member – ASSP Board of Directors
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Pam Walaski, CSP

Pam Walaski, CSP is Senior Program Director for Specialty Technical Consultants, Inc. a specialized management consulting firm. She also serves as an adjunct faculty member at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Safety Sciences Program.

Ms. Walaski is a Professional Member of ASSP, serving a 3-year term as Director At Large and has previously been a member of the Society’s Finance and Nominations & Elections Committees as well as a member of the Council on Professional Affairs. She is also a member of the Consultants Practice Specialty and the Western Pennsylvania Chapter.

Ms. Walaski has a national reputation as a seminar leader and conference presenter covering multiple occupational safety and health topics including risk management, occupational safety and health management systems, and serious injury prevention.

www.stcenv.com
pwalaski@stcenv.com
Overview

- Your assessment of your organization pre-pandemic?
- During the pandemic?
- Validity of those assessments?
- Using it to provide leadership post-pandemic
- Accuracy of assessment impacts your influence
- Also the OSH profession’s chance to move the needle

*Information discussed during this webinar is specific to this moment in time.
Assessing These Parameters

- Approach to risk
- System capacity/resilience
- Leadership model
- Sustainability/ESG
**Approach to Risk**

- **Risk Management**: Coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to risk.

- **Organization’s Risk Management IQ**
  - Processes/procedures: Formal → Lax
  - Agile/adaptive or bureaucratic/complex
  - Principles in practice – policies, resource allocation, communication
  - How does organization create/protect its value
  - How does organization track/respond to threats and opportunities

*ANSI/ASSP Z690.1-2011*  
ISO Guide 73 2009
Approach to Risk

- Risk – the effect of uncertainty on objectives
- Risk Attitude – Organization’s approach to assess and eventually pursue, retain, take or turn away from risk
- Risk Tolerance – Organization’s or stakeholder’s readiness to bear risk after risk treatment in order to achieve its objectives
- Risk Acceptance – Informed decision to take a particular risk
System Capacity and Resilience

- **Capacity**
  - Ability to be successful in varying conditions... like a pandemic
  - Less deference to rules - more support for problem-solving

- **Resilience**
  - The capacity to recover quickly from a crisis

- Humans are designed to operate in uncertainty, provided they can take advantage of new information and adapt

- Capacity and resilience are built/strengthened during adversity

- Black Swan vs. Black Elephant
Leadership

- Consensus building leaders vs. leaders who gather information and make decisions
- Switching between the styles?
- What did your organization use to make decisions in the absence of traditional data and metrics?

Messaging
- Positive messages based in reality or Eeyore?
- Communicate the shared vulnerability and sense of hope?
Leadership

- Did your organization?
  - Terminate/layoff and stand down
  - Innovate/retrofit
  - Preserve relationships with workers

- Emotionally mature leaders in uncertain times*
  - Focus on the North Star
  - Cultivate Trust
  - Boost self-control
  - Change mindsets

- How did your leaders do along these lines?

*PSJ/May 2019 – Pater/Mathur
Sustainability/ESG

- Environmental, Social, and Governance
  - Three central factors in measuring sustainability and societal impact
  - These criteria help to better determine the future financial performance of companies

- ESG requires transparency in reporting
  - Investor decision-making based on it

- Increasing consideration of social in investment decisions – human capital
  - More reporting on this aspect
Sustainability/ESG

“People are at the core of every thriving business and their contribution is directly influenced by their health, safety and well-being.”

Kathy Seabrook

- Human capital connects CSR, sustainability, OHS management systems
- Connects the dots between risk assessment, shareholders, regulatory agencies and stakeholders
Sustainability/ESG

- How did your organization treat its people before and during COVID-19?
- What clues provide the answer?
  - Implementation of values – care for shareholders AND stakeholders
  - Communication – compassion in messages
  - Engagement to find new ways to work
- Sustainability - “The crisis will reveal not just vulnerabilities but opportunities to improve the performance of businesses.” (McKinsey & Company)
Learning From What You Learned
Learning From What You Learned

- Pandemic not likely to alter fundamental approach to risk – needle might move a bit
- Prepare yourself for post-pandemic responses and actions
- Risk averse
  - Concerted push back to “normal” operations
  - Get out of vulnerable position with rules/procedures
- Risk tolerant
  - Increased exposure to risk will bring new hazards to control
  - Innovative operations call for different approaches
Learning From What You Learned

- Did your organization see this as a Black Swan or a Black Elephant event?
  - Avoid “I told you so” arguments
  - Willingness to debrief
  - Push to go back to “old normal” ASAP or willingness to consider the “new normal”
  - Plan for moving forward, including future waves of the virus
  - Be ready with your ideas – start to socialize your organization to them now
Learning From What You Learned

- Position your organization to keep track of how it responded
- Building/growing capacity – organization learns from itself
  - Gather stories at the ground level and share with leadership
  - Building a narrative for coping and improvement moving forward
- Putting the rules back in place?
  - Advocate for less is better
  - Use of decentralized decision-making
  - Learning Teams – worker adaptability and collaboration
Learning From What You Learned

- How did your organization do with stakeholder communication?
  - Leaders lead by example
  - Demonstrate compassion
  - Open to collaboration
  - Accuracy of content – technical resources
  - What about your messages?
Learning From What You Learned

- **Leadership**
  - Similar to organizations who have experience fatalities - using adversity to improve
  - Apply SIF learnings – leaders are critical, organization needs to appreciate the risk
  - Appreciates the need to prepare for future waves and future pandemics
  - Open to learning how work is “really” done – lead them to the ground level
  - Open to engagement and worker control – show them how
  - Craft messages **to them** showing support for their efforts
Learning From What You Learned

**Sustainability**
- Innovative organizations have the best chance
- Fear and creativity don’t work well together
- Reinvent *yourself* in ways to match your organization
- Line of sight to your Boardroom and openness to messages may never be better

**Human capital**
- Long term appreciation for the workforce that brought the organization through the crisis
- At the core - need to keep them healthy and productive
My Thanks

- Kathy Seabrook
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- Ron Gannt
- Deb Roy
- Todd Conklin
- Anil Mathur
- Tom Krause
For Further Review

- Safety Leadership in Uncertain Times – PSJ/May 2019
For Further Review


• Todd Conklin – Pre-Accident Investigation Podcast

• Safety Differently/LinkedIn - [https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6686839/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6686839/)