



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Proactive OSH Performance During Challenging Times

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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.

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Overview

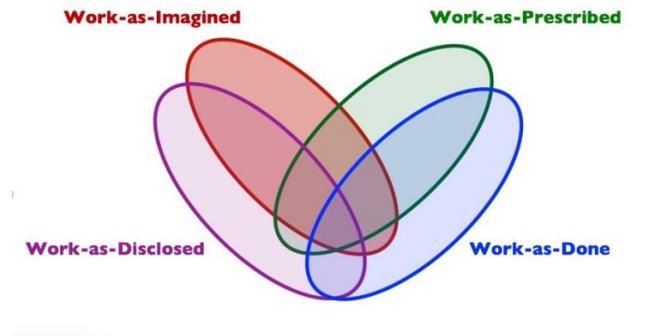
- Your assessment of your organization pre-pandemic?
- During the pandemic?
- Validity of those assessments?
- Using it to provide leadership post-pandemic
- Accuracy of assessment impacts your influence
- Also the OSH profession's chance to move the needle



*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



Leadership



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



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/refit
 - 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
- Fay Feeney
- Vic Toy
- Ron Gannt
- Deb Roy
- Todd Conklin
- Anil Mathur
- Tom Krause



For Further Review

- Safety Leadership in Uncertain Times – PSJ/May 2019
- Forbes – How to Be an Incredible Leader During Times of Uncertainty - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauragarnett/2020/04/06/how-to-be-an-incredible-leader-during-times-of-uncertainty/#6e3867a665f1>
- Beyond Coronavirus: The Path to the Next Normal <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/beyond-coronavirus-the-path-to-the-next-normal#>
- Gary Wong – Black Elephants in our Safety Systems - <http://gswong.com/black-elephants-in-our-safety-systems/>
- Gallagher Podcast – Business Continuity and Organizational Wellbeing During COVID-19 - gallagher-nrc-team-discuss-business-continuity-and-organizational-wellbeing-during-covid-19-video | Gallagher USA



For Further Review

- Fast Company - The Coronavirus Will Speed the End of Shareholder Primacy <https://www.fastcompany.com/90489502/the-coronavirus-crisis-will-speed-the-end-of-shareholder-primacy>
- McKinsey and Company – Beyond Coronavirus: The Path to the Next Normal - <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/beyond-coronavirus-the-path-to-the-next-normal#>
- Tom Krause/Krause Bell Group –Making the Workplace Safe from Covid-19 <https://krausebellgroup.com/sif-prevention-covid19/>
- Todd Conklin – Pre-Accident Investigation Podcast
- Safety Differently/LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6686839/>
- Planet Money Podcast – The Race to Make Ventilators <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/31/824886286/episode-987-the-race-to-make-ventilators>

