

Leading Australians in Safety:

How much do we really understand?



**By working together,
nobody gets harmed.**

APPEA Safety Leadership Forum



Today's journey



- Safety Culture: Setting the context
- Understanding the brain and safety leadership
- Australian thinking patterns and safety
- The psychology of leadership



Safety Culture: Setting the Context



Safety Culture Model

PERSON

Skills, Team Work,
Intelligences,
Knowledge,
Motivation,
Attitudes,
Abilities

PRACTICES

Equipment, Tools,
Housekeeping,
Engineering,
Machines,
Planning,
Design



ENVIRONMENT

Physical Environment,
Equipment, Tools,
Machines,
Housekeeping,
Engineering, Planning and
Design

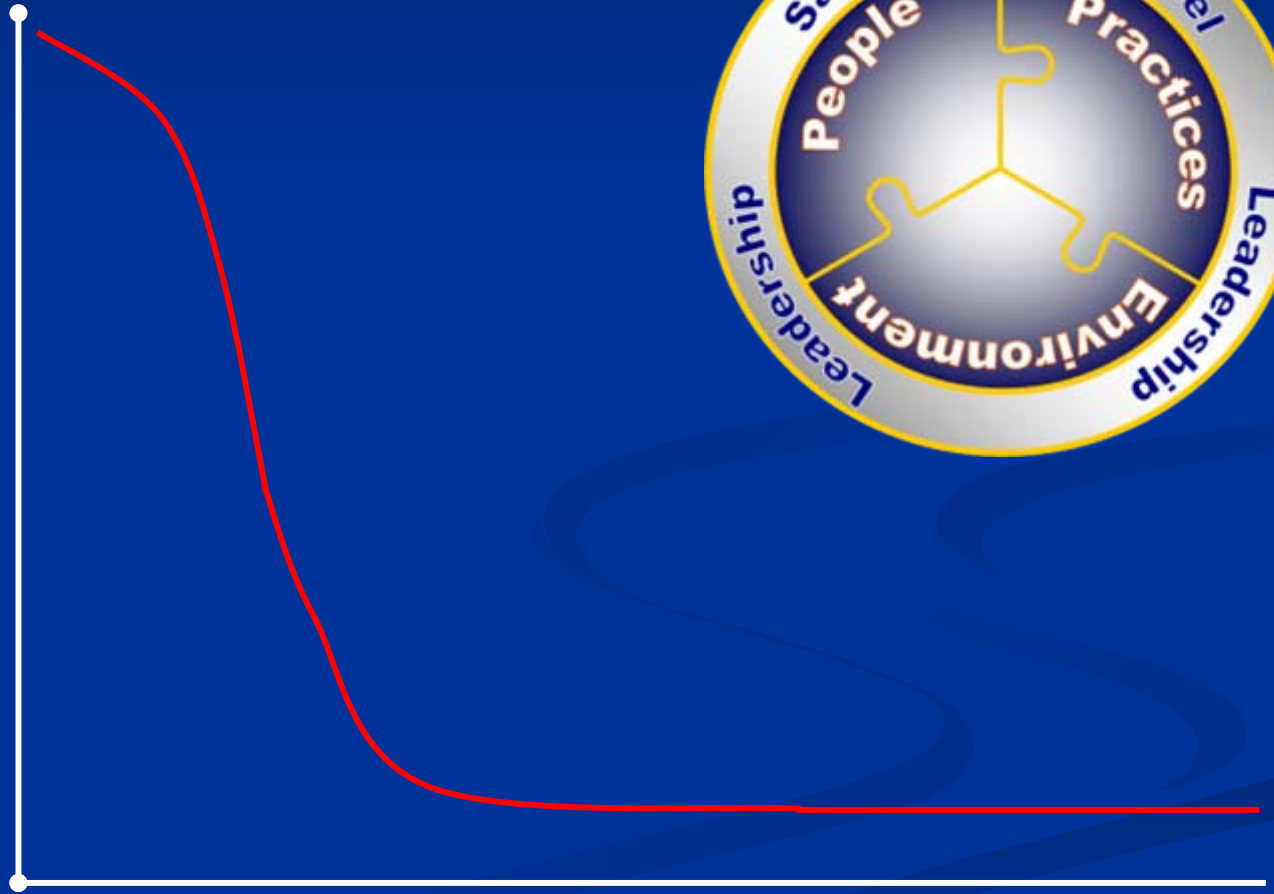




Historical safety performance



Injury Rates



Timeline





Safety performance and psychology



Understanding the brain and safety leadership



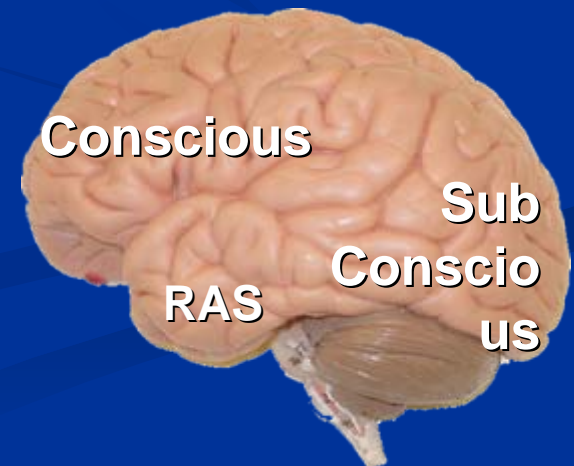
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Introduction to the brain

- Humans have the most complex brain of any animal on earth.
- It is the result of human evolutionary heritage - hardwired for simpler environments and to survive times of famine.
- The three functions of the brain we focus on are:
 1. The Reticular Activating System (RAS)
 2. The Conscious
 3. The Subconscious





The RAS



- Every 18th of a second more than 1850 bits of information flood into your brain from both outside and inside of you
- The RAS is the part of your brain that decides where the data goes.
- The 2 main functions of our RAS are to:
 1. **Sort** (according to DIPI)
and
 2. **Search** (for answers to questions)



The RAS sorts

- The RAS sorts what information will go to the Conscious for awareness, and what information will go to the Subconscious outside our awareness
- The sorting criteria is:
 1. Dangerous
 2. Important
 3. Pleasurable
 4. Interesting (novel)





What is most DIPI here?





The RAS searches



- Second main function of the RAS is to **search** for answers to questions
 - The RAS is activated by **questions**
 - **Questions** are a powerful way to **switch your brain on**
 - The questions you ask yourself are very important as they train your whole brain what to focus on

- Questions are individually and culturally based



The Conscious mind



- **DIPI** information is sent to the **Conscious** mind by the **RAS**
- Your Conscious mind has a very limited processing capacity
 - Of the **1850** bits of data, your conscious mind can only process about 7 bits of information in any one time
 - We call this **Conscious Processing Capacity** our **7Units**
- A conversation uses between 4Units and 7Units
- 7Units is not a lot and easily overstretched leading to simple errors



7 Unit thinking



- Fourth Question:
- First Question:
 - Mary's father has five daughters; 1. Nana, 2. Nene, 3. You, 4. Nani, 5. Nono.
 - You are participating in a race. You overtake the second person. Do you take the first position and pencil or a calculator.
 - What is the name of the fifth daughter?
 - What position are you in?
 - and add 40 to it.
- Answer:
- Answer: another 1000.
 - First...?
 - add 30...?
 - No, if you overtake the second person and you take his place, you are second.
 - add another 1000.
 - No, you are second. Read the question again
 - add 20.
- Its so obvious afterwards
- Second Question:
 - add 10
 - It's obvious like safety, its so obvious after some time, when is the teaming...?
 - When is the teaming...?
 - one gets hurt
- Answer:
- How many Units in a Risk Assessment?
 - Second to last...?
 - 5000...?
- 7 Units how many you overtake the 4th person?
 - No, the answer is 4 + 100.
 - The 1st person risk is an important skill



Subconscious mind

- Your Subconscious mind stores all of your thinking patterns (attitudes)
- Your **Subconscious** runs almost all your day to day activities – **99.7%** of daily processing
- Your **Subconscious** is a VERY obedient servant
 - It works according to agreement and compliance principles
 - It always **agrees** with the Conscious Mind and always **complies** with the Conscious Mind





Australian implications of the brain



RAS

Sorting function

- Relative safety of industry in Australia
- Use of safety signs and safety messages

Searching function

- Questions dominant in the Australian psyche centre on defiance

CONSCIOUS

- Limitations of 7Units
- Perception of company responsibility
- Over-proceduralisation can encourage 'switch of'
- Controlled environments and slow changes over time

SUBCONSCIOUS

- Thinking patterns exist that are deeply held within the Australian psyche
- John Guy used values based research to examine the success of the Australian campaign in Vietnam

1. Mateship
2. Give a fair go
3. She'll be right
4. Have a go
5. Fair dinkum
6. On ya



Australian thinking patterns and safety



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Mateship



- The value of mateship is one of the most strongly held within the Australian Psyche
- It is not so much about bonding and loyalty, but about defiance
- Mateship is seen throughout Australian folklore (eg Anzacs, Eureka Stockaid, Ned Kelly) , our preference for sporting legends, and the importance of competition to the Australian people.
- Consider:
 - Are you leading in ways that contributes to this defiance?
 - BBS tools when poorly carried out can contribute to the rebellion against the 'system'.



Give a fair go



- Give a fair go relates to Australian egalitarianism, or the classless society.
- It is linked to the core value of freedom, which can be traced to Australia's origin's with freedom being hard won against the oppressors (British).
- Any threats to egalitarianism – e.g. people rising to great success, changes in workplace bargaining - are seen as threats to freedom and attacked with vigour
- Consider:
 - Is your leadership style one that is top down?, Do what I say and not as I do?
 - Do we promote ourselves, our position or our qualifications when trying to win credibility with our people?



She'll be right



- 'She'll be right' is not necessarily about being laissez faire
- It is the belief, or sureness that 'we will work it out', and is at the heart of ingenuity, and the pioneering spirit of 'beating the odds' and finding individual ways of operating
- Consider:
 - Are we leading in ways that prevents our people from being able to work it out?
 - Are we leading in ways that communicates that you don't believe they are capable of working things out?
 - Have we 'over proceduralised' safety so that we are preventing our people from working it out?
 - Are we failing to ask workers their opinions of the best ways of doing things, and instead, adopting a methodology where we tell them?



Have a go



- Have a go relates to the Australian spirit of ingenuity and invention
- Consider
 - Are we preventing people from being able to 'have a go' with safety? – Indeed, do we punish people for having a go if they do not follow strict procedures?
 - Can we be more inclusive of the workforce so that they take responsibility for safety improvements etc?



Fair dinkum



- Being fair dinkum can be roughly translated to being genuine
- This relates to leading with integrity and honesty, doing what you say you will do, and being honest when you can't.
- It means being accountable to your actions with the people that you lead.
- Consider:
 - How fair dinkum are you in terms of safety and production? What messages are you sending really?
 - If leaders and businesses are not seen as 'fair dinkum', defiance and competition against the leader is the likely result



On ya



- 'On ya' relates to the Australian way of giving and accepting praise .
- Praise or acknowledging team and individual contributions is an integral part of the Australian value system.
- For praise to be accepted (and not threaten egalitarianism – Give a Fair Go) – it needs to be done in a fair and relaxed way
- Consider:
 - How are we giving praise to our people
 - Do we favour some people and work groups over others



Australian thinking patterns and the safety culture



In relation to your safety challenge consider:

PRACTICES

- Are your practices 'rigid' in their application?
- Have you over-proceduralised simple tasks?
- Are your BBS tools done with respect, and with your people understanding the personal why (or are they used as tools to control?)
- How are your practices developed and what is the input from people at all levels of the organisation?
- How do you conduct your incident analyses, and how reactive are you in your responses?





Australian thinking patterns and the safety culture



ENVIRONMENT

- Do you provide adequate tools and equipment?
- Do you invest well in maintenance and respond well to maintenance requests?
- Do you include all levels of the organisation in design improvements and feedback?
- How do you address choice of PPE – Are your expectations realistic for the job and the environment?
- Do you rotate jobs where possible?





Australian thinking patterns and the safety culture



PERSON

- Do you communicate well with our people
- Do you do what you say you will, and is this carried throughout the organisation
- Do you lead with integrity
- Do you share information as to the 'why' of certain requests
- Are you top down in your leadership style?
- How do you reward your people and who do you reward? (material rewards can encourage us and them)
- What attitudes are you encouraging?
- Do you hold yourselves and others to account?
- In your communications are you encouraging an us against them mentality?





The psychology of leadership



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The power of leadership

- More than any other factor, leadership is the single biggest contributor to the safety results of a business

- **Authority Cue**
 - Stanley Milgram (1963) Obedience study
 - In the presence of a credible authority people will behave against their better judgement

- **Effect of Expectancies**
 - Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) Pygmalion study
 - Teachers expectancies directly influenced child performance





LeaderFrames

- Known as Ego-states in Transactional Analysis
- Leader Frames are directly related to **responsibility and accountability**
- If we try to force responsibility, or lead from a top down approach – we are likely to produce the ‘rebellious child’ (mateship, give a fair go etc) –
- Rebellious child is inherent within the Australian identity and therefore, easily produced in the workforce.

Parent
Force
Responsibility

Adult
Accept
Responsibility

Child
Reject
Responsibility





LeaderFrames and you

- Consider:
 - As a general rule – which ego-state characterises much of your workgroup operate from?
 - If the dominant state is Child, what does this tell you about your personal leadership style?
 - If you operated from an Adult LeaderFrame most of the time, what would be different in your behaviour, the messages you send your people, and the way you have set up your business?
 - Psychological tools of influence, when used well can assist in building an 'Adult' workforce, and work with Australian thinking patterns rather than against



Questions?

