



Using our brains to save and improve the lives of workers

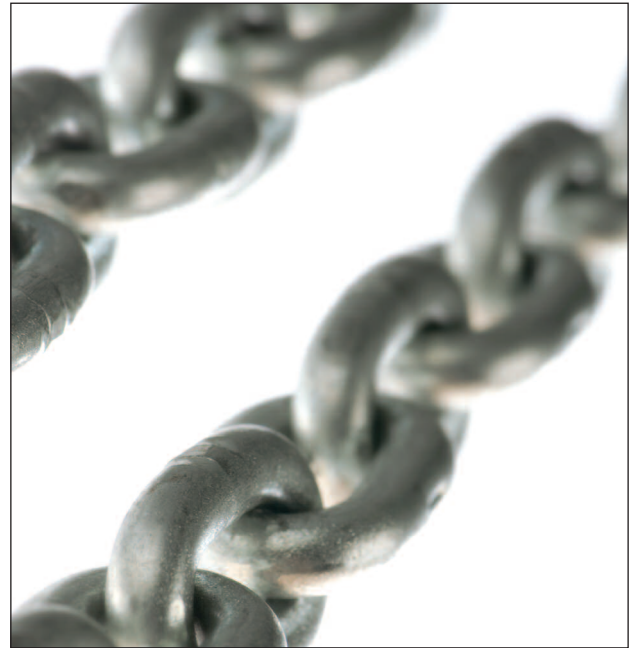
Behaviour Change and Worker Engagement (BCWE) in the Construction Industry

The Client

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has the day-to-day responsibility to protect people against risks to health and safety arising out of work activities. They do this through research, information and advice, promoting training, new or revised regulations and codes of practice, inspection, investigation and enforcement.

The Problem

The construction industry is one of the UK's most important economic sectors, with over 250,000 organisations, 99% of which are small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). It is also one of the most dangerous sectors to work in. The industry is therefore continually seeking to find innovative ways in which it can reduce ill health and accidents by engaging with its workforce and promoting sustainable behaviour change to ensure that health and safety is taken seriously on site. Owing to HSL's reputation and expertise in the area of behaviour change and worker engagement (BCWE), we were commissioned to look at the application of BCWE amongst some Principle Contractors within construction, including Bovis Lend Lease, Carillion, Kier, Mace and Laing O'Rourke. Understanding how these larger companies utilise BCWE would help to identify how SMEs could be encouraged to do so in a way that meets their business needs.



What We Did

HSL qualitatively investigated BCWE practices within this group of companies all of whom invest heavily in BCWE (e.g. training supervisors in worker engagement skills, observation and feedback techniques, implementing rewards/penalty systems for safe/unsafe acts, etc.). The contemporary scientific evidence was also reviewed to establish best practice in BCWE. By identifying the best practice undertaken by the largest contractors in the industry, HSL developed a framework for a toolkit suitable for the smaller contractors within construction. This framework was further refined following completion of subsequent research into the salient characteristics of construction SMEs that such a toolkit needs to accommodate. The resulting toolkit is due to be trialled by a number of construction SMEs and the evaluation will be published by HSL at a later date.

Outcome/Benefits

The project has generated significant interest within the construction industry and has led to a number of practical outcomes including:

- Recommendations to help raise the profile of health and wellbeing in the industry as the research identified that current behaviour change programmes tend to focus on safety.
- Developing a "rule of thumb" safety culture/climate maturity assessment tool for use by SMEs in the construction industry.
- The development of a comprehensive toolkit for SMEs with a range of resources necessary for permitting sustainable behaviour change. This includes: motivating management, providing assessment measures, integrating BCWE practices with the health and safety management system, advice on leadership skills, strategies for motivating the workforce, advice on how to instigate and sustain actual change over time. For each component a range of strategies, easy to use/adapt tools, techniques, information sheets and/or video footage recommendations were produced, the intention being that SMEs select those that best suit their business and workforce needs.

"The work carried out by HSL has examined the practice of Behavioural Change and Worker Engagement by leading employers in the construction industry, and begun to develop new tools for transferring this practice to small and medium sized businesses, as well as articulating a valuable new emphasis on "people centered" health and safety management in construction." Gordon Crick, HM Inspector of Health and Safety