Evaluating Safety Culture for Ford Motor Company Ltd
The Client

Ford Motor Company Ltd has been the UK’s new car market leader for 28 consecutive years and its iconic Transit van celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2005. Ford employs over 14,000 people at 10 locations in Britain, including the Transit plant in Southampton, producing 375 vans a day. Ford’s vision is to be the world’s leading consumer company for automotive products and services This brings with it considerable challenges in health and safety.

The Problem

As a global company, Ford is committed to demonstrating social responsibility and reducing its accident and illness rate. With Human Factors being a key aspect of modern health and safety management, Ford approached HSL to see how we could help them answer the question “How can we best evaluate the safety culture in our production plant workforce to identify priorities and action plans to address health and safety perceptions, issues and concerns?”.

What We Did

HSL worked in partnership with Ford to undertake a safety culture evaluation, including:

- Using our ‘Safety Climate’ tool to prepare a tailored questionnaire for employees.
- Analysis of data to inform the design and development of focus groups.
- Facilitation of focus groups to give an opportunity for employees to express their views on:
  - Underlying factors identified from the questionnaire.
  - Identification of priorities and action plans to address safety concerns.
- A comprehensive report presenting the key findings.

Outcome/Benefits

The project has had significant benefits for Ford, including

- Understanding the underlying safety culture within their Southampton plant
- Insight into potential barriers preventing them from achieving their health and safety objectives

The most significant impact of the work for Ford has been the involvement of its employees in the development of a targeted and prioritised strategy to address health and safety concerns. Ford are taking forward the recommendations made by HSL and expect to see a significant financial return on their investment in the reduction of sickness absence and improved worker well-being.

"We have a very good safety record in Ford, however it's easy to get complacent. This survey allowed us to get a level of insight and understanding not previously available. In particular we started to get to know how our people 'feel' about our commitment to safety and build a response that will further improve our safety record. Be prepared for honest and sometimes difficult messages, but it's worth the journey!" Rob Ardley, Human Resources Manager, Ford Southampton