



OSH LEADERSHIP REFINED AT BRITISH SUGAR

1. Organisations involved

British Sugar UK is part of British Sugar Group, which is owned by international food, ingredients and retail group, Associated British Foods plc. British Sugar UK has around 1,000 direct employees and 1,100 contractors across four manufacturing sites in the UK.

British Sugar UK is the leading supplier of sugar in the United Kingdom, extracting the sugar from locally-grown sugar beet. The company produces over 1 million tonnes of sugar per annum which is more than half the country's sugar requirements. Additionally, it produces 500,000 tonnes of animal feed from sugar beet pulp and has Combined Heat and Power Plants which exports enough electricity for 350,000 people. The combustion gas and recovered heat from the Combined Heat and Power Plant at the Wisington site is used to grow between 70- 80 million 'eco-friendly' tomatoes. British Sugar began production of Bioethanol in September 2007 making it the first company to manufacture Bioethanol in the UK. Hazards within the organisation include: large numbers of LGV movement, many hot fluids, on-site carbon dioxide manufacture, the potential for gas or dust explosions, many confined spaces needing maintenance: scaffolding, work at heights, a large seasonal workforce and a large resource of contractors.



2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

British Sugar UK always had a good safety record and health and safety had always been a business priority, gaining awards from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the British Safety Council. Accreditation to the OHSAS 18001 health and safety management standard was achieved in 1999.

However, the incidents in 2003 prompted the senior management of British Sugar UK to carry out a total review of the company's safety management systems. This resulted in British Sugar creating, with the collaboration of the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) and an outside consultancy, a new approach to safety management. This was intended to change safety behaviour across the company from the top down.

2.2. Aims

- To improve the safety performance of British Sugar UK by addressing safety behaviour across the company.
- To promote and communicate that safety is an integral part of the business success

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- To demonstrate safety leadership from the top (Board/Director level)
- To create active involvement of the Board of Directors in safety.

2.3. What was done and how?

The New Health and Safety Management Model

Historically, within British Sugar UK the Board was responsible for policy development that outlined the general aims of the company with regard to health and safety. Only one Board member, the Operations Director, had the overall responsibility for health and safety. Now the Board's responsibilities in regard to safety have changed, creating a new Health and Safety Management Model. This is illustrated below. (Fig 1)

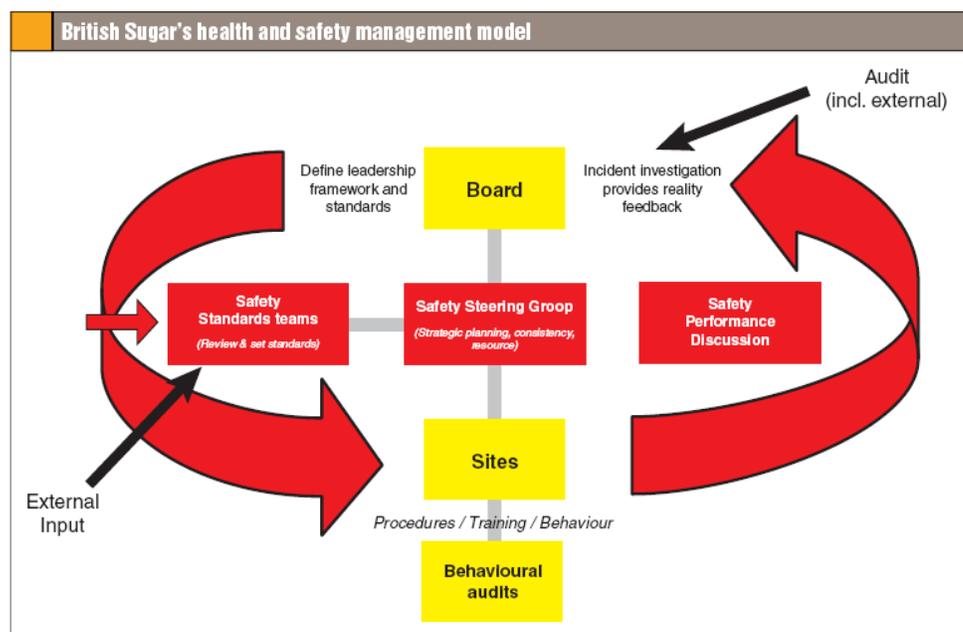


Fig 1

Initially the Board examined the leadership qualities, skills and behaviours they wanted employees at British Sugar to demonstrate. A booklet (Fig 2) was created detailing the

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desired leadership qualities and behaviours and this was rolled out across the company by the Health and Safety Manager and his team. In total, this process took around six months.

Safety Standards Booklet

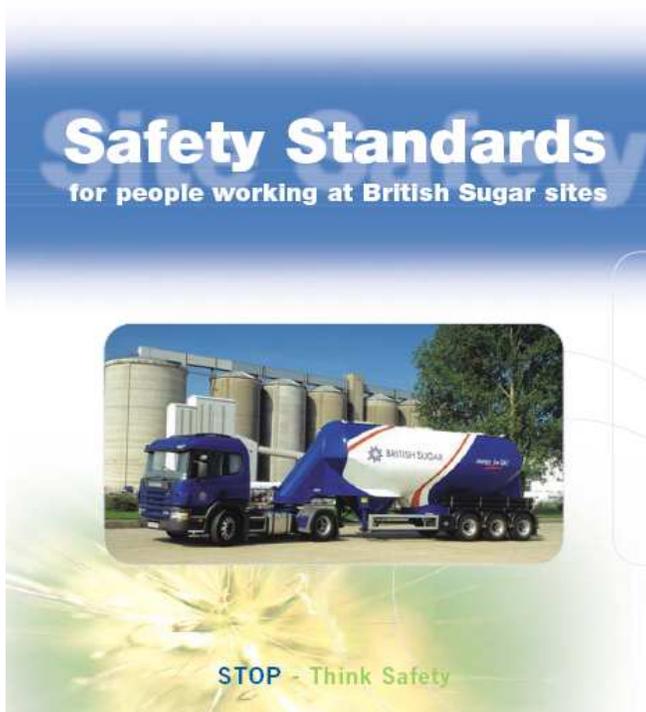


Fig 2

Safety Standards Teams

The next step was the creation of a number of “safety standards teams”. These teams comprise of a cross section of employees and are led by senior managers. Each safety standards team focuses on a specific area of safety and has an allocated safety manager, who can provide advice, support and ensure any suggestions are compliant with the relevant legislation.

Historically new safety procedures were imposed on managers at different sites, with little consultation on what it was and why it should be followed. This had the effect of making managers feel like there was minimal consultation or opportunity for them to provide feedback.

The ‘safety standard teams’ were created to encourage a participatory approach in devising and reviewing the companies practices, procedures and compliance with new legislation with regard to safety. The approach has given ownership of safety procedures to the people who have to implement them.

Commitment from the UK Leadership Team (the Board)

A significant aspect of British Sugar’s new approach for safety management is the commitment from the Board of Directors known as the UK Leadership Team. Now individual Directors have a responsibility for specific areas of health and safety. Each Director “sponsors” a safety standards team by monitoring and providing guidance where necessary.

The importance of health and safety is highlighted in the fact that each Management meeting begins with safety as the first item on the agenda.

Behavioural Audits

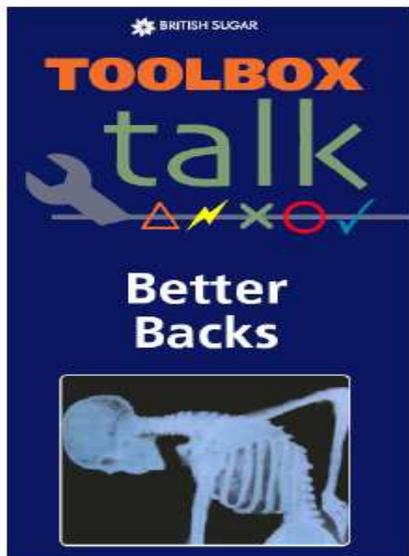
Behavioural audits are carried out by managers at their respective sites however there is also a rota for Board members to carry out audits. When the Director arrives on site, the local factory manager provides a short presentation, explaining what jobs they are carrying out that day, when their last accident was, and any other significant issues. The Director can then decide which job or area they wish to review.

First step is the observation of the job being done, then a conversation with the operator is initiated, first reinforcing good behaviours (“thank you for wearing your hard hat”) before discussing any potentially unsafe actions. Because the Directors are out on site seeing how their policies work in practice by talking to those that are doing the job, they can then change and amend the policies as appropriate. The other benefit is that when an employee sees one of the Directors on site wearing his Personal Protective Equipment, it makes those on the frontline see that safety is important. This also reduces potential frustrations because people have direct access to the Board of Directors (Leadership by example).

Directors are expected to carry out a minimum of four behavioural audits a year and twice a year they conduct all-employee briefings which begin with a safety update, reviewing recent developments and explaining future plans.

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Training



As well as all members of the Board undertaking the IOSH (Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) “Directing Safely” training, which all passed first time, they also undertake annual top up of behaviour audit training, and a legislative update Managers, including the Managing Director, have also achieved the NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) General Certificate qualification. Each month the Leadership Team and managers deliver tool box talks (Fig 3) to their teams

on topical safety issues.

Fig 3

Reporting Software

An incident reporting software package was introduced at the start of the implementation of the programme, which was to allow the recording of accidents, incidents and near misses in a common format across the company. In the event of the recording of a lost time accident the system automatically sends an email to the relevant employees and Board members. This allows the ‘sponsoring’ Director to be able to pick up the phone and call the factory manager and provide support.

All safety incidents are investigated so that they can avoid a recurrence at any of the company’s other sites. This encourages the manager to talk to other sites and pass on important safety information.

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Steering Group

A safety steering group, which comprises of a board member, factory managers, the Company Safety Manager and others as required has been established. This steering group meets regularly to establish policy on new development, coordinate the safety standards teams, ensure consistency, allocate extra resources as necessary and resolve any problems that arise.

Safety Climate Survey

Safety culture is a term used to characterise the safety beliefs, values, and attitudes that are held by an organisation and its members. Safety culture can be defined simply as 'the way we do things around here'. The term 'health and safety climate survey' can be described as a 'snapshot' of the organisation's safety culture at a given point in time. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has developed a Health and Safety Climate Survey tool to allow organisations to obtain the views of their employees on key aspects of health and safety within their organisation. British Sugar UK uses this tool to survey their employee's opinions with regard to health and safety every two years. This allows them to benchmark the results against other organisations, industries and the employee's previous responses in order to see where they are doing well and where they need to improve.

Safety Award Scheme

There is an annual safety awards scheme where sites are asked to demonstrate ways in which they have helped improve safety at British Sugar UK. There is an award specifically for contractors where a prize is a donation to charity of £1500 for first place, £750 for second and £250 for third. The scheme is managed by a board member, who is also responsible for judging and presenting the awards.

2.4. *What was achieved?*

British Sugar has seen a 60% fall in injuries and a 75% drop in RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) accidents, since implementing the programme. During the 2005-06, the lost time injury frequency rate per million hours worked dropped from 5.2 in 2005/06 to 3 in 2008/09, a drop of over 40%. Recently near-miss reporting, which helps identify unsafe behaviours and unsafe conditions before they lead to accidents, has increased. In the two years from 2006-07 to 2008-09, near-miss reporting increased by 346%. Over the same period, the ratio of reporting unsafe acts or unsafe conditions to injury reports rose from 4:1 to 20:1.

The continued success of British Sugar UK's safety performance has earned them the highest RoSPA awards for Health and Safety. Three of the British Sugar factories have been awarded the RoSPA Order of Distinction for 15 years of achieving consecutive Gold awards in addition to the RoSPA Presidents award. Additionally British Sugar was also awarded the prestigious DuPont Safety Award for innovation in 2009.

Health and Safety Executive and British Sugar reach a significant milestone

On the 9th July, 2010, British Sugar and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding recognising the health and safety performance of British Sugar, and developing our partnership to raise awareness of the importance of health and safety within the workplace.

The key areas of focus within the Memorandum of Understanding include; the Health and Safety Executive assisting British Sugar's continued development of our Safety Leadership Programme to strengthen safety leadership, and the enhancement of safe working practices. British Sugar will champion the Health and Safety Executive's mission to improve

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health and safety standards within the workplace by becoming an ‘exemplar’ in the field of occupational health and safety, and by providing visible safety leadership.

Gino De Jaegher, Managing Director, UK & Ireland, British Sugar commented, “I am extremely proud of British Sugar being recognised by the Health and Safety Executive today. Health and safety is of critical importance to our business and our people, and supports our vision to eliminate all injuries by thinking safety first in everything we do”. David Ashton, Director of Field Operations, Health and Safety Executive, concluded “British Sugar has put considerable effort into making improvements to its health and safety performance over the last five years – and the results clearly demonstrate how uniting employers and employees together can create safer and healthier workplaces. When we launched the health and safety strategy last year, we made it clear that everyone has a role from the board room to the shop floor. It’s encouraging to see a major British employer taking this on board and working so hard and with such good results to reduce workplace risks”.

The signing was supported by the GMB and Unite Unions. Tony Ellingford, Regional Officer, Unite Union commented, “today represents a clear commitment to the health and safety of our members and supports Unite’s vision of employers and employees working together to ensure a safe and healthy working environment”.

2.5. Success factors

Central to the programme’s success is the commitment and leadership of British Sugar Directors. Now safety is a key priority for British Sugar UK, so much so that it is incorporated within the values of the organisation; ‘Being Safe: Think ‘safety’ first in everything we do’. The responsibility matrix, behavioural audits, safety standard teams, tool box talks and training all focus everyone’s attention at every level in the organisation on safety.

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The continual feedback loop through the behavioural audits, safety standard teams and steering groups allow feedback on how well safety is understood, shows where systems, policies and practices are working and where there are weaknesses that can be improved, leading to more effective business processes.

Additional Information

The Memorandum of Understanding supports British Sugar's health and safety behaviour, whilst supporting our vision of eliminating all injuries by creating a culture of 'preventing injury and ill health' at work. British Sugar has over recent years achieved recognition from RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) in the form of numerous awards, including most recently the Order of Distinction across a number of sites. British Sugar was also awarded a 2009 DuPont Safety Award within the innovative approach category for its company-wide personal safety initiative called Safety Performance Discussions.

2.6. Further information

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2.7. Transferability

British Sugar UK's Health and Safety Programme has been very successful through gaining commitment from the Board of Directors who were able demonstrate the importance of health and safety and lead by example. The programme has significantly reduced the number of accidents and RIDDOR reporting in the organisation and its success has also been recognised by a number of prestigious Health and Safety awards.

This programme was designed and implemented in such a way that it is bespoke to British Sugar UK, the needs of the organisation, and its employees. Research has shown that the general principles of safety leadership from the top, (Zohar, 2002) communication (Reason, 1990) and employee involvement (Krause *et al* 1999) have a positive effect on an organisation's health and safety performance. These are the factors that underpin British Sugar UK's Health and Safety Programme. These principles are currently being rolled out to British Sugar UK's sister group, ABF Ingredients. The Institute of Directors and the HSE have issued guidance on effective safety leadership and general principals were taken into account. Therefore the main principles of the programme could be successfully implemented in other organisations and other industries.

3. References, resources:

Krause TR, Seymour KJ, Sloat KCM. (1999) Long-term evaluation of a behavior-based method for improving safety performance: a meta-analysis of 73 interrupted time-series replications. *Safety Science.*; 32, 1-18.

Reason, J. T. (1990). Human error. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

The logo for 'CASE STUDIES' features a blue rectangular background. On the left side, there is a stylized white and grey graphic element resembling a ribbon or a path. To the right of this graphic, the words 'CASE STUDIES' are written in a large, white, sans-serif, all-caps font.

Zohar, D. (2002). Modifying supervisory practices to improve subunit safety: A leadership-based intervention model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 156-163.

www.hse.gov.uk/leadership - Institute of Directors & HSE guidance on how Directors should lead Health and Safety.