

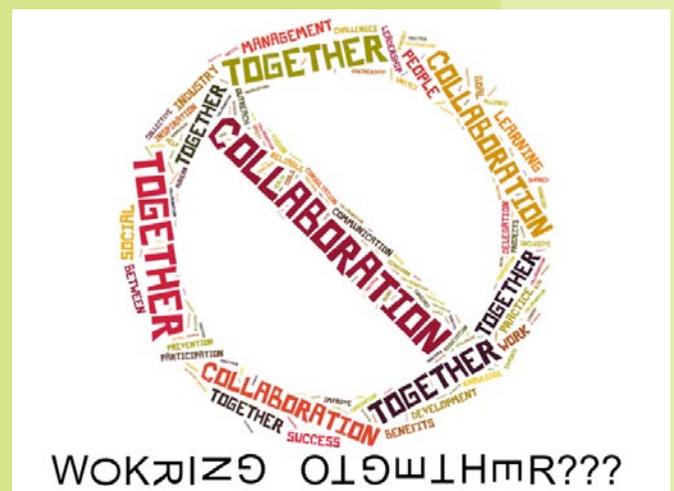
Healthy Workplaces Summit closing event Bilbao 11-11-2012

Opening speech Kris De Meester, Federation of Enterprises in Belgium, chairman BusinessEurope Health and Safety working group

It is always a pleasure to be able to speak at the Healthy Workplaces Summit. Because it means that we have found once again evidence that businesses and organisations, employers and workers, supported by governments and experts, brought to practice, implemented the working together for risk prevention slogan. We have found proof of management leadership and worker participation in the real world. That makes me proud and on behalf of BusinessEurope and it's member federations I congratulate all the award winners and the organisations that pushed them to do so, with a special mention of the Agency and it's staff.

So far the positive aspects of my speech. I now come to the warning part. I've asked to turn on the evacuation sign, but that would me with no audience. Anyway: WARNING!

And that warning is about collaboration mistakes. Because, the campaign theme being about 'working together', I have noticed sign of misunderstanding of the theme or signs of people/institutions not fully living up to it.



1. Wrong language

How leaders talk matters a great deal. To get people motivated to collaborate, you need to talk the language of collaboration, all the time. That also means respecting each other, including the respect for agreements. You get the hint. It involves social partners, hairdressers including mine who is on strike.

2. Confusing delegation with collaboration

Delegation means letting other people do the work, with little oversight. *Collaboration*, in contrast, means that leaders are actively involved, sit around the table, sweat blood and tears throughout difficult discussions, given and take, and forge solutions. Do you thin Europe's leaders are actively involved in the health and safety debate? Or do they delegate?

3. No meaningful outreach to stakeholders

Real collaboration means bringing in all parties, including those who might disagree, to debate *early in the process*, and not later when many decisions have already been made.

Any similarity to existing health and safety discussions, alive or death, now or in the past, are entirely coincidental and the result of the authors' imagination.

4. No hard compromises

Good collaborative leaders have learned the art of compromising.

5. Lack of a compelling common goal. In 1961, President Kennedy pronounced his famous "man on the moon" goal. It was a great goal because it unified. People set aside their own agendas and ideologies. This morning we had a meeting at the Agency's premises with people from leading industries and organisations running contractor safety management schemes in different countries in Europe like Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Germany and Austria. And we have set our common "moon" objective, maybe even a "stellar" target if you see the different positions we came from. And that goal is the creation of an international association gathering organisations sharing the goal of creating, managing and maintaining a meaningful partnership between plant-owners, and their (sub)contractors to ensure the safety of workers on site.

I have the feeling that we are still seeking our real common overall European health and safety goal. Therefore it is my hope and aspiration that this campaign "working together for risk prevention" goes lunar. When the smoke is going down, we carry on!

I hope that we find more compelling unified goals in the days to come that unite people from the different groups. I hope we use a tone that invites to collaboration, that we foster real debate, reach out to those who disagree and stay hands-on in major initiatives. And, when the process stalls, that we make hard choices for safer workplaces and better businesses.



Lights, camera, revolution!

Thank you.