Achieving Enduring Change: Developing a Positive Safety Culture

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performance through people

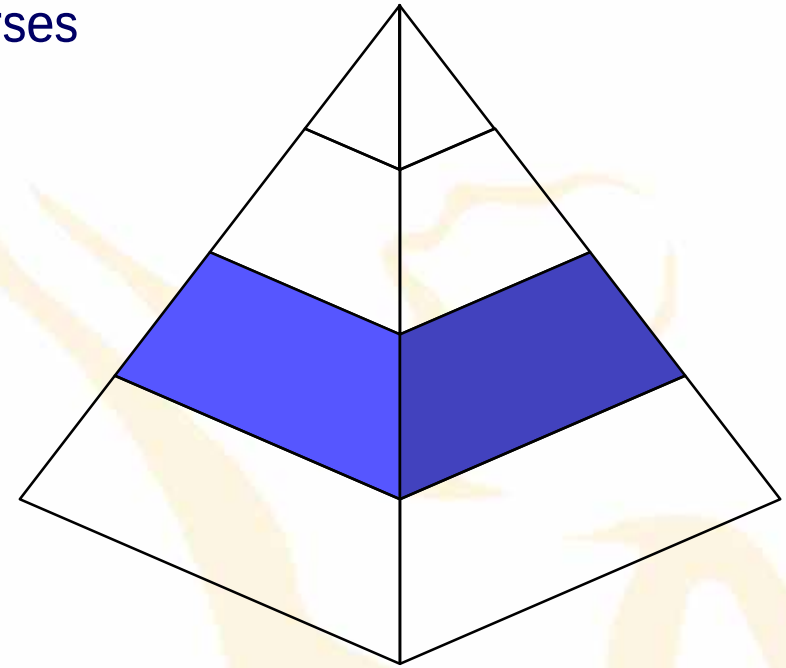
Overview

- Why safety initiatives often fail to meet expectations
- Broad and enduring change requires a broad approach
- Creating and sustaining a positive safety culture: Outlining a way forward

Safety Initiatives

How safety initiatives often look:

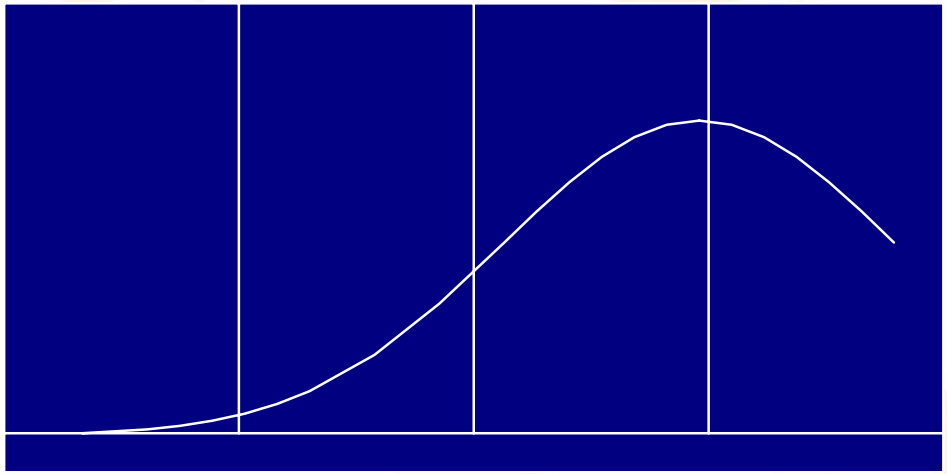
- Top level rhetoric about the importance of safety in site value hierarchy (i.e. versus production)
- Targeted training or development courses
- System implementation



Safety Initiatives

Problem: **Behaviour change not sustained over time**

- Attendees of program change their behaviour temporarily
- System implementation often marks a short term improvement on safety metrics followed by return to previous levels, or
- System utilisation ineffective



Safety Initiatives

Why? **System does not support new behaviour**

- New way of doing things not supported by current culture
- Take up of new system degrades over time as capacity of people to utilise and sustain it have not been increased

Outcome:

- Existing system in effect punishes new behaviour while reinforcing old behaviour
- System protects status quo

Safety Culture

What is culture?

- Norms of behaviour – reflecting organisation's practised values
- 'The way we do things around here'
- 'The System'

How then to create an enduring, positive safety culture?

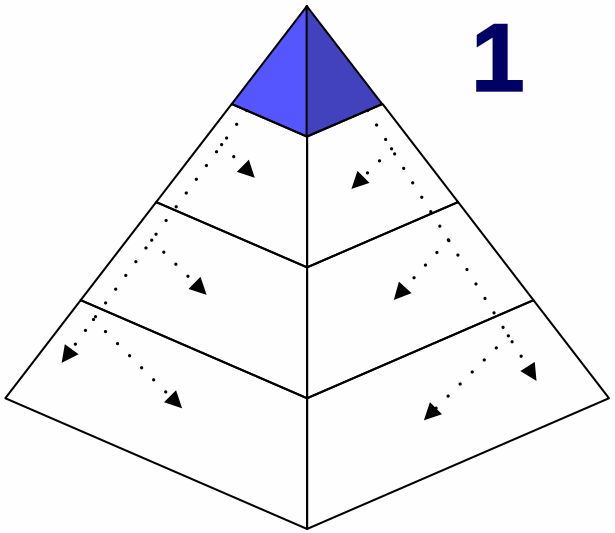
- Requires a whole of system approach
- Requires changes to individual behaviour *and also* those factors that influence and sustain individual behaviour

Creating a Safety Culture

DeJoy (2005)

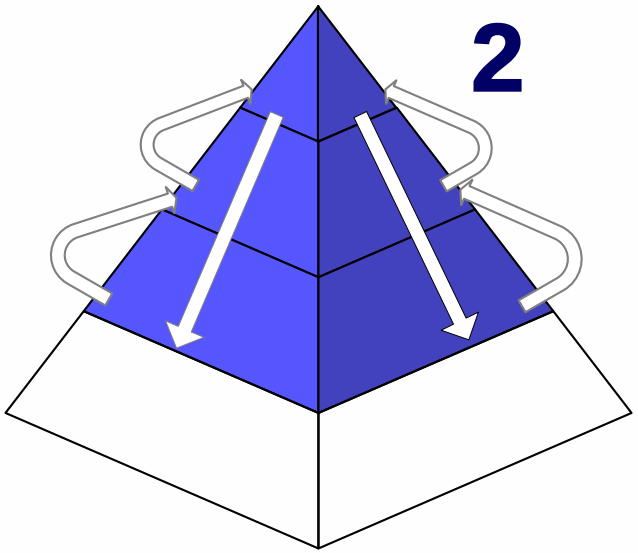
- Contrast between behaviour change versus culture change
- Processes can be seen as complimentary
- Behaviour change technologies applied within a culture change methodology
  - More focused, defined, tangible interventions
  - Measurable outcomes
- Process is critical
  - Your people own the problem, they own the solution

System-Level Change:
Clarifying & Communicating



- Understand the system (baseline)
- Understand the issues
- Define safety *in this context*
- Determine where safety sits in the value hierarchy (i.e. versus production)
- Communicate message to whole of system
- Form cross-sectional guiding coalition

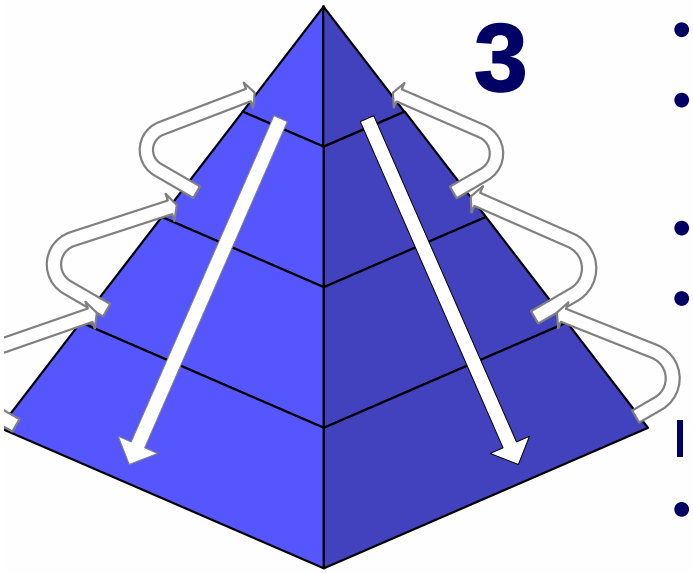
System-Level Change:
Bridging the Disconnect



Engagement of leadership at all levels to:

- Translate safety message into leadership behaviours at each level of business
- Identify obstacles and key sustaining mechanisms to supporting safety behaviours
- Communicate obstacles and strategies for overcoming to important others
- Reinforce role of leaders in safety chain: transparency and legitimacy of process = trust

System-Level Change:
Committing to New Behaviours



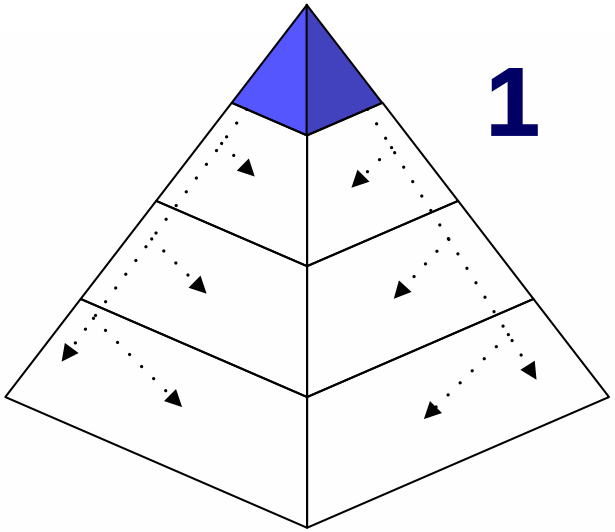
Team chartering with broader workforce to:

- Engage workforce actively
- Translate safety message into behaviour at operational level
- Develop safety as a group-defining attribute
- Embed processes to sustain safety culture

In this way:

- Safety is the responsibility of the team and safe behaviour is a choice
- Work teams act as mediums for change and targets of change
- Workforce know that behaviours they commit to are supported by the system

Sustaining System-Level Change



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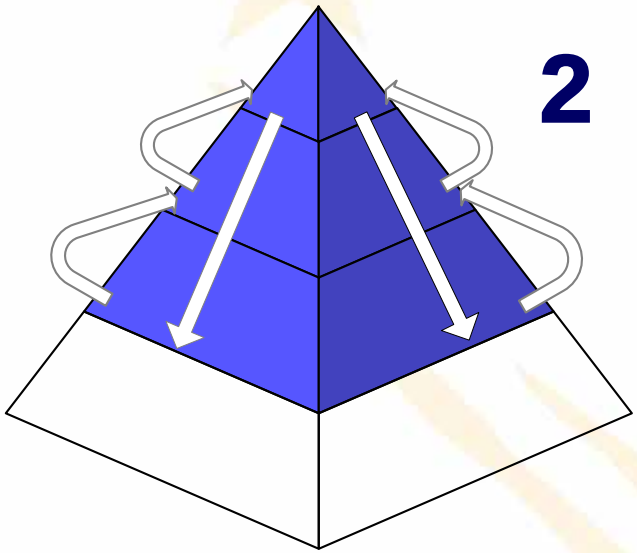

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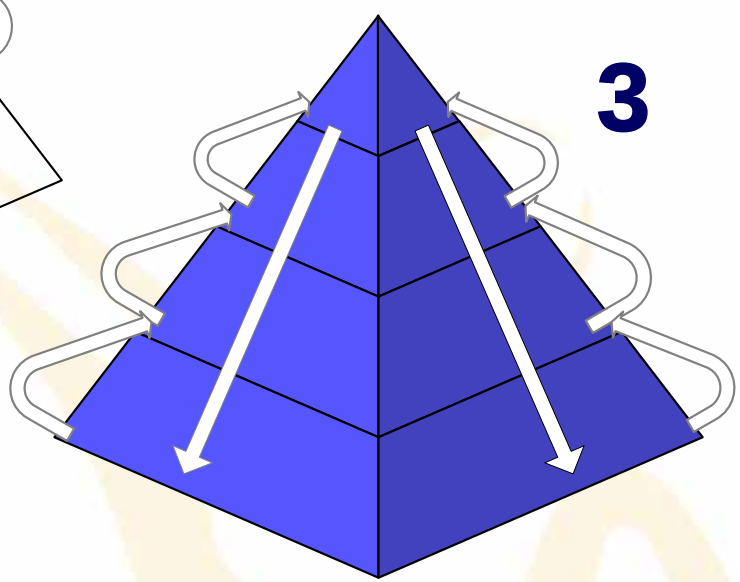

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Keys are:

- Leveraging existing systems and processes
- Connecting layers of business through trust

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