



Nick Wharton & Steve Collishaw Imperial Home Décor - **Doing It In-House**

BEHAVIOURAL SAFETY USER CONFERENCE 2002

Nick Wharton

My name is Nick Wharton and I am the company health & safety environmental officer for Imperial Home Décor, who some of you will know better as Crown Wallpapers. I've also got with me Steve Collishaw who has been very much involved with one of the steering groups, the original steering group from our Morecombe site and also in the audience we have other members of our team which we can speak to later.

As regards our background we are in the wallpaper industry that is in some degree of decline as we have been in for a few years, with a great number of redundancies over a vast number of years, a lot of de-manning on the sites but still maintaining the same degree of production - which has been difficult, especially given tight budgets. We didn't have a bad safety record on our sites and in fact in the past we have been given some degree of credit for what we have done, yet still clearly there is a need to improve.

There are two things that I am sure about, particularly after been to the last conference 18 months ago. One was that, yes, I thought it would be right to go down this route. The second was that there was no way that we could afford to have anyone coming in and either doing it for us or helping us. Therefore the decision was we want to do it so we'll do it ourselves. That was fairly daunting but I think that the main step forward was really by gaining the support and the commitment of the senior managers all the way from the top from our production director who was a great champion of it and all the way through the management chain. The next stage was to recruit an initial steering group, predominantly from the existing safety team on site, simply because they had already shown some commitment to safety or had a great deal of existing background information about safety, so it was a good place to start and I saw my role as facilitating that group through the process. Steve in a moment will go through some of the specifics of what the group actually did, the pitfalls they encountered and some of the lessons learned. If I talk about the one group but in actual fact very early on in the process, the information was shared with our second major site and the two teams are running very much in parallel and feeding off each other. We didn't do it entirely alone, as that would have been fruitless. We got input from other people who have been through this process, including Kerr McGee. Just really a practical insight into how you actually do it, what's the feedback, what are the responses that you had in these learning exercises?

Also I approached Tim Marsh to come in and do the 'people skills' training sessions for the steering groups, one on each site and that was useful because that was the kind of thing that I thought wouldn't be right for me or anyone else in the organisation, to try and do this in house and it was a lot more effective having someone come in from Ryder Marsh to do that and at that time the process was a fair way down the line and Tim cast an eye over what we'd done and that was very helpful.

So where we are now? The scheme is up and running and still very much in its early stages, but I'd like to say with some definite success. Interest and involvement is growing from a number of people. The continued support that we are getting from the managers at every level is encouraging, where if we are honest, we expected some resistance, particularly the supervisory line manager level, because it is taking people away from their main business. If anything there was perhaps some elements of resistance from some on the shop floor. That was through a lack of understanding of what it's about and we tried to address that. Moving forward the intention is to roll the programme out using very much the same system that we've got, at two other smaller sites within the company, possibly and hopefully at the end of this year and there's already a great deal of interest from those sites, who are interested in what is going on. The main challenge is to sustain the interest and to keep up the momentum and getting more and more people involved. I now want to hand over to Steve who will go over some of the specifics and then we'll finish off by going over some of the main learning points.

Steve Collishaw

We set up a steering committee from a cross section of personnel, process workers, engineers, safety reps and we asked them to identify behaviours that required monitoring and frankly we came up with a huge list which some were applicable to all sites and some behaviours weren't. So we had to narrow that down to the main behaviours to be monitored. I think that we had about 28, which was far too complicated. Since then we've been able to stream-line that down to about 12.

The beauty of this system is that it is so flexible. You can alter a category without any major problems. The learning part of that was to be flexible. When we identified behaviours we had to actually decide what was safe and what was unsafe. We actually introduced that into what we call the BASH pack, (holds out literature for audience to see) an audit book. In this book we have an introduction, safe definitions, route map and a score sheet. I'll just go through those with you. The introduction basically is a reminder of what is expected of them, what we're looking for and an explanation on the scoring system. As regards the definitions, what I see as unsafe may not be as what other people see as unsafe. So as a steering committee we agreed on what we thought was safe and unsafe and broke it up to the rest of the factory. One of the pitfalls that we learned to avoid being negative and so we tried to be positive. For instance, we were writing explanations in this book such as 'look for blocked accesses', which was totally negative. When you change that around and ask 'is the access clear', it is a more beneficial way to present the statement and this was beneficial to the process. The definitions consisted of a series of photographs with a paragraph or two on safe and unsafe areas and perhaps a couple of ones where you have to make your own mind up. Also in the booklet are a number of route maps. We actually split the site into 4 main areas and each audit was taking approximately forty-five minutes in length. Due to the increased workload, some of the observers complained of the difficulties of coming off a machine for 45 minutes when it was constantly running. So to overcome this problem we actually doubled the number of routes and halved the audit time to 20 minutes, which everyone finds more acceptable. Further on, the route was actually split into zones. We didn't have observation points, we had zones. We audited the zones. Each man was given a category in that zone, so that we could actually identify and localise problems.

Next, the score sheet. (Points to slide) This is the central axis to make this volume work and again we're taking the "no name, no blame" culture. On the score sheet we just basically have three columns. You mark it safe or unsafe, but some of these behaviours are not applicable. We've added a third column for 'not seen' and this adds to the consistency. If you add all the sums of safe, not safe and not seen, they all come to the same total every time and you can check on that. On the score sheet, if a mark is entered into the unsafe column we would expect the observer to approach the person during the unsafe behaviour and ask the reason why? It may be simple, it may be complicated, but what we ask them to do is to find the route cause, report it back onto this score sheet, which comes back to the health and safety team on the steering committee, which review all these audits weekly. From this we can set up an action log of the specific problems and go and investigate and eradicate that problem. Also on the score sheet we get a percentage to measure against so that we can establish a percentage safe. We can actually formulate that into a graph to identify trends as well and that goes to a weekly meeting of the management, where they employ trends on health and safety matters.

When we first set up we had just the initial steering group and then we had to find other people. We did that in a number of bulletins and briefing sessions and that's still ongoing. We haven't got everyone on the site involved but we're actually getting there. At present time all managers, from the senior production managers, down to the shop floor managers and supervisors, have actually been on an audit, not to do it, but for awareness and to understand where we are coming from. We need their help to solve some of these problems, but one interesting reaction was seeing the production manager commenting that it "certainly opened my eyes".

Can I just make some points of what we actually learned from the pathology of making this audit plan? I'm going to make it plain and simple. So number one, make it simple. Don't make it complicated. Number two. Make it user friendly. We believe that with a small amount of training anyone here could complete an audit in our factory, that's how versatile it is. Three, be positive and don't treat everything as a negative. We've reduced the audit to meet their needs, but we can still alter it anytime we feel and we felt that was a major factor. Four have a review of the report each week, an action log, feedback to the observers and feedback to the people on the shop floor so that they know that something is actually happening. A big one here ... Don't make the mistake of identifying unsafe conditions and making the mistake of identifying them as unsafe behaviours. There are two more. The 'not seen' column and the use of zones have helped consistency. That made sure that all categories are being considered all the way along the route. Thank you.

Nick Wharton

Thank you Steve. Just to finish off, to add to some of the specific learning points that Steve's gone through there. The main lesson perhaps from our talk here is that you can actually do this yourselves. I feel it's all the better for been home grown and I'm sure that everyone who has gone down this line with the involvement of outsiders would say "yes but the ideas have come from us anyway", but I don't think we lost out and I think we gained by doing this ourselves. It was hard work and it did take a lot longer than expected and I think that is a key learning point. Finally once the research is done the easy part is putting it all together and getting it to this stage was relatively easy. We would copy off people. We would take advice from others who had been down that line. The difficulty is getting them involved, getting them to buy into the whole process and to sustain it and to keep the momentum going. OK, thank you very much.

Questions

"How long did it take to get from the initial thought "do it" to its implementation?"

Nick. From my initial thoughts you mean? Well 18 months ago I was at this event and it got me thinking that I'd like to go down that line. Having been to one of these events I went back and saw my boss and put across that we should go down this line and a project charter was drawn up a few weeks after that and it really has gone from there. It was probably about 12 months ago, early last year, when we first got the initial steering group together and the plan was to role things out in the summer. That took a little longer than expected, but for all the right reasons as all the ideas had to come from the steering group. It would have been very easy to suggest how they might do it, but it's not me working on the shop floor, it's these guys.

(Further questions would have got in the way of coffee and Nick offered to deal with raised hands one by one during the break).