

FOCUS ON PROCESS SAFETY

David Ramsay, Managing Director, Kelvin TOP-SET, looks in detail at the benefits of implementing a solid process safety management system

For any business to run efficiently and to enjoy a high level of productivity, the key lies in operating safely.

Traditionally there has been a lot of time and effort expended by most companies on improving personal safety at work, but over the last few decades the focus has been shifting more and more towards process safety.

The main difference between personal safety and process safety is that personal safety deals with low severity, high frequency risks whilst process safety is aimed at eliminating high severity, low frequency risks.

Process safety in the oil and gas industry can be defined as:

“The practice of reducing the risk for catastrophic events that lead to fires, explosions and releases of product into the environment.”

Manufacture, handling and use of dangerous substances and management of pressurised systems have the potential to present major hazards not only to workers, but also to members of the public nearby, assets and the environment. Process safety considers how these major hazards should be assessed and controlled.

It is important to keep in mind that, because of the nature of process safety, it is possible for a company or industry to demonstrate a healthy decline in numbers of incidents over a long period of time and then suffer a major incident with little or no change in operations.

Safety culture starts in the boardroom. Companies where the top-level management are advocates of strong safety culture benefit from board level leadership on major process and risk management issues and exhibit greater focus on minimising hazards.

Typically, organisations are very clear on what they need to do to improve corporate profitability – maximise income and optimise expenditure – however, without a clear understanding of what is required to meet health, safety and environment (HS&E) objectives, the approach and costs of

managing them will lack control. Furthermore, there may be little indication or warning if these activities are being ineffective until an incident occurs.

Good process safety managers need to be highly skilled in risk management and require solid business acumen. Organisations must be clear on what their Health and Safety objectives are and how these will be managed and financed.

This is an area where implementation of a consistent Incident Investigation and Root Cause Analysis system along with a programme of continual learning can help to minimise risk and to reduce and eliminate process safety incidents.

Kelvin TOP-SET has over 30 years of incident investigation experience and is well equipped to help companies to achieve their process safety goals, with a long history of providing organisations with incident investigation courses, software, and the services of highly qualified incident investigators.

The key is to help client organisations to improve their process safety procedures, and constantly evolve product offerings to meet with changing technological and

organisational demands. Kelvin TOP-SET offer powerful incident reporting software that links to DNV GL’s Synergi Life Incident Management System, an e-learning e-RCA Root Cause

Analysis Course and a brand new App which allows investigators to work together in real time, onsite or at their desk, via their phone, iPad or tablet.

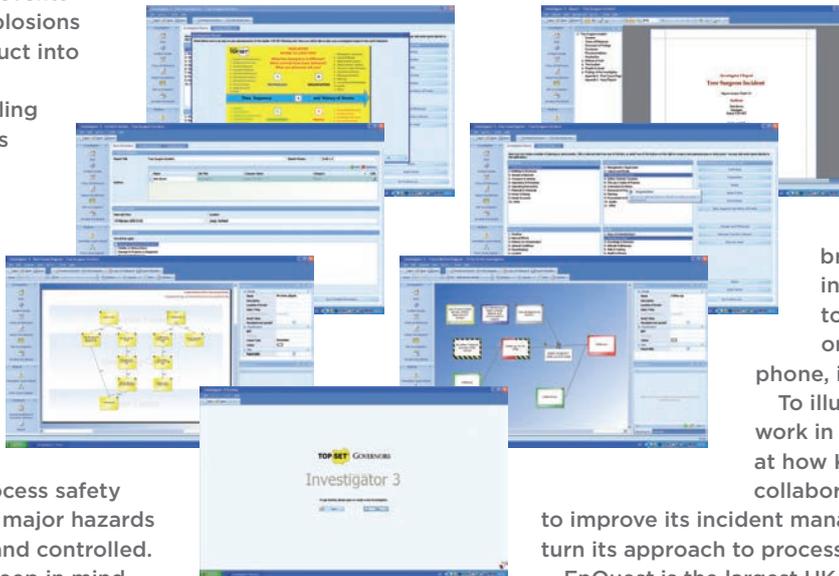
To illustrate just how this can work in practice, it is worth looking at how Kelvin TOP-SET recently collaborated with EnQuest to help

to improve its incident management processes and in turn its approach to process safety.

EnQuest is the largest UK independent oil producer in the UK North Sea, with assets including producing oil fields, major new developments and a portfolio of discoveries.

HSE performance statistics and process safety are being improved across the organisation and Barry Quinn, HSE&A Team Lead at EnQuest said: “The approach to incident investigation has been standardised through the rolling out of Kelvin TOP-SET Incident Investigation and Root Cause Analysis courses and the implementation of an incident management system which seamlessly combines the Kelvin TOP-SET Incident Investigation Software and the DNV GL Synergi Life tool.”

Commenting on the implementation of the Kelvin TOP-SET system within their organisation, Quinn continued: “Since going live with the new system in October 2013 we have trained more than 100 people both onshore and offshore.



There has been a marked improvement in the quality of data concerning incidents, which has resulted in better incident analysis and reporting and more opportunities to learn lessons. This is having a positive impact on EnQuest’s health safety and performance across all our assets.”

This positive outcome is great news for the company and, coupled with a continued focus on process safety, EnQuest is well placed to continue to reduce risk and to ensure the safety of all involved with their operations.

Highlighting the importance of focusing on operating safely, Barry Quinn stated: “We firmly believe that good HSE performance goes hand in hand with good business performance, and that both are outcomes of high quality operations. In an ideal world every organisation would be incident-free. No one wants incidents to happen, but we recognise that they do, so the focus has to be on how we manage these effectively and, most importantly, how we learn lessons from them and prevent them from happening again.”

Organisations should strive to manage and learn from their incidents by adopting a proactive approach to process safety and by continually searching for the best products and tools available to support them in this effort.

However, one must also remember that no matter how good the products and tools that you select are, you must always remember to implement a process of continual learning to ensure that the tools are understood and that they are being used appropriately. It is also important not to forget that even if people have the best tools in the world they need to know how to use them to make a difference and most importantly there needs to be a system in place to make sure that they are actually using them!

In conclusion, no matter which industry companies are operating in, the key to reducing incidents and increasing corporate profitability is to implement and oversee a solid process safety management system. This system should be supported by focussing on empowering employees through continuous learning, so that they understand what the expectations are of them and are able to contribute fully by being enabled to competently use all tools that they are expected to utilise.



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