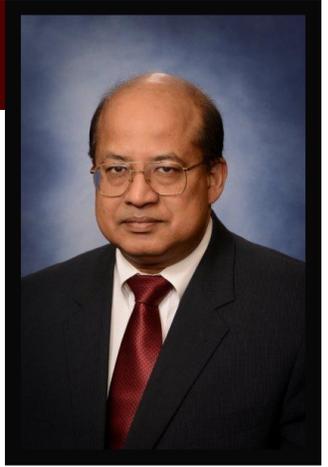


## Director's Corner



Leaders play a very important role in the success of a process safety program in any organization. So, the question is, “Who are these leaders and what exactly is their role?” Of course, by definition, everyone who has a specific managerial appointment or holds any position in any layer of executive management is a leader. However, I believe that in addition to these classic definitions, there are many others in the organization who can and should play a role in the leadership of the company, particularly leadership of process safety programs. For example, an operator who sees deviations in operating procedures and proactively brings it to the attention of management is playing a leadership role. Of course, that only happens in an organizational culture where employees feel empowered to take such sensitive and/or confrontational roles. In this newsletter, I have summarized my opinion regarding some of the things leaders can do to help instill positive process safety performance in the organization.

Leaders must realize and help others understand that successful process safety management is not a project, but a long journey. Success and compliance with process safety programs requires continuous efforts, continuous assessments, and vigilance. Process safety is not like a project where we complete the various components of the project, declare success, and celebrate. On the contrary, process safety is an endless journey, and success or compliance is valid only at the instance when the evaluation is being done, not any time before and not any time after. For example, at a given instance in time, a plant may be in 100% compliance. At the very next instance, an inspection or PHA resolution deadline is due, and if those things are not done right on schedule as planned, then the plant is not in compliance, and could have an incident. In that case, all the past success would not amount to much.

Leaders must help empower and bring everyone together in the process safety journey. A single person or a group of persons, no matter how good they are, cannot do everything required for the process safety management program by themselves alone. The whole organization and everyone must participate. Therefore, everyone should understand process safety and their accountability and responsibility with regard to process safety, how their job description interfaces with process safety, and the consequences of not complying with process safety programs and activities. Any weakness in any part of the process safety program could result in a disaster. A process safety program could be compared to a chain and just like a chain, the process safety program, and therefore the whole organization is as strong as the weakest link.

Finally, leaders help create a positive safety culture, and one important characteristic of a positive safety culture is that, safety is viewed as core value, not as a priority. Safety can never be prioritized, regardless of the fact that it is viewed as number one, because priority changes with time. In contrast, core values never change instead they only get strengthened over time. And finally, successful leaders realize and inculcate the culture in the organization that safety is a journey and will continue forever, that road is never ending, requiring the utmost vigilance at all times.

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