

Engineering safety culture through collaboration

COG panel triangulates perspectives at IAEA safety culture conference

A workplace is as safe as the organizational foundation it is built on and the actions and behaviours of its leaders, its regulator, its operator, its workers and its suppliers.

Canada's representation at the 2016 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) International Human and Organizational Aspects of Assuring Nuclear Safety Conference in Vienna was symbolic of the industry's increasing commitment to a collaborative safety principle, with a diversity of industry stakeholders in attendance and presenting.

CANDU Owners Group President Fred Dermarkar chaired a panel with Bruce Power Executive Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer Len Clewett and AMEC Foster Wheeler's Director Major Component Engineering Dave Dennier who together were able to bring both the utility and supplier perspective on an evolving industry with changing expectations on its supplier community.

Fellow-Canadian presenters from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) and other members of the nuclear consulting community also presented on some of the industry's most recent thinking on the topic of organizational behaviour and human performance; including how to drive culture change within organizations.

"An important point conveyed at the conference is safety is not at the utility level or the supplier level – it is at the *project* level," says Dermarkar. "It must be a collaboration between all stakeholders and it must be embedded into the industry's culture in an authentic way."

Dennier, echoing words he has spoken at recent COG workshops and in his role as COG Supplier Participant Committee chair, said the increased participation of suppliers in COG reflects the supply community's new role. And, he said, with this evolving role, comes a new responsibility on that community to create its own collaborative culture in which OPEX, especially as it relates to safety, is shared.



Utilities have new expectations on suppliers, agreed Clewett, who said they specifically look to work with suppliers who have the right mindset. There needs to be a willingness to engage and investment in the resources and efforts required to ensure workers are job ready not just with the tools and technical knowledge but also with an understanding about safety expectations. Clewett listed utility expectations of suppliers as including:

- A commitment to safety,
- A customer focus,
- Excellent quality management,
- Strong ownership and advocacy for human performance,
- A robust human performance program,
- Healthy safety culture, and
- A learning organization.

Dennier said the supplier community's awareness of the expectations on safety culture has risen significantly in recent years. Now, he says, the focus is on execution. 🚫

Beyond nuclear: Other industries share similar goals

A mixed representation from diverse industries was one highlight of the IAEA 2016 safety culture conference, says COG President Fred Dermarkar.

Participants heard from the chemical, oil, gas, transportation and aviation sectors. Dermarkar says one point that stuck with him was the significant improvements made in the airline industry in the early 2000s after that industry adopted a unified approach to fatality reduction.

"They took a systematic approach of operators of the

airlines, regulators, labour and manufacturers all working together," he says, noting in the span of a decade the industry accomplished an 83 per cent drop in fatalities.

"It is a change in paradigm to have all these stakeholders working together. There is tremendous value to a diverse peer group on safety culture, human performance and organizational behaviour, all working together and sharing views, each from their particular viewpoints. That is a powerful opportunity to impact safety."