

TREVOR SAYS

At the Hazards XVIII conference in Manchester, UK in November 2004 I chaired a half-day session on "Human Factors and Behaviour". The speakers put forward two opposed views. Some described ways of changing behaviour and others thought that it was more effective, particularly when trying to improve process safety, to change designs or methods of working so as to remove or reduce opportunities for human error. All agreed that there is a need for both approaches - the differences were ones of emphasis - but nevertheless there was a real disagreement on which approach was the more practicable and successful.

I have been asked to edit a special issue of the Institution of Chemical Engineer's journal, *Process Safety and Environmental Protection*, on human factors and management, to be published in May 2006. That is a long way ahead but the manuscripts will be needed by 1 August this year so it is not too early to be thinking about the contents.

Papers on any aspect of human error or management will be welcome but I would particularly like to receive papers that contrast and compare the two different approaches to preventing human errors. For example, when is one the best approach and when the other? To take a simple example, to prevent people assembling equipment wrongly should we design it so that it can't be assembled wrongly or should we pay more attention to ways of getting people to assemble it correctly or inspect it more thoroughly after assembly?

It might be thought that engineers would, as a result of their training and aptitude, instinctively look for engineering solutions but many of us tend to look first for ways of changing people rather than plants. Some courses and conferences for engineers on human error are devoted entirely to methods of changing behaviour and do not mention changing designs or method of working so as to remove or reduce opportunities for error. What is the reason for this? Also, whose behaviour should be changed? Could the methods of behavioural science be used to change the behaviour of designers and managers as well as operators?

If you are willing to contribute a paper please email me at T.Kletz@lboro.ac.uk to let me know and, if possible, include a brief abstract of what you intend to say. I look forward to hearing from you.

Trevor Kletz

391 words

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