The other day, a colleague who manages our reporting system database, Synergi, asked an interesting question: Do you have any ‘feeling’ on something has improved or is going to the wrong direction, in terms of HSE events during day to day operations for the last 12 months or half a year?

I will tell you how I answered this great question but first a little background. I am the Health, Safety and Environment Director at Maersk Drilling USA. Many of you may have seen trucks on the highway with Maersk containers on the trailer. Maersk Drilling is part of the AP Moller-Maersk Group headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark. We operate on drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico. This is Maersk Drilling’s first venture in the Gulf of Mexico and commenced drilling in September 2009 for Statoil. As you all know, the government imposed a Moratorium on drilling in the Gulf in May, 2009. From June, when we finished our first well, to March 2011, we did not drill.

Imagine telling your great Texas A&M football team that the 2011 season was cancelled. Look at the effect the NFL lockout had on its players and fans. Imagine if the lockout happened in the middle of the NFL season. That was the effect that the Moratorium had on Maersk Drilling and fellow drilling contractors.

The short answer was nothing stood out. While I could not put my finger on any improvement or decline in safety, I sensed something else. There was a more cumulative sense of accomplishment. Like other drilling contractors and operators, we were directly affected by the Macondo disaster. We had at once a sense of urgency (to operate) and to maintain our safety consciousness during the Moratorium.