

# Methodology for the evaluation of qualitative factors in safety culture

## Abstract

Workplace tasks and activities often have objectives that do not lend easily themselves to evaluation by standard measurements. OSH is a case in point where in objectives may be set in negative terminology relating for example to the reduction of accidents, absolutely or by percentage. These can be quantitatively established and measured. But when it comes to establishing qualitative objectives these are often set in terms of intangibles, such as improvements to the quality of performance, of output or customer satisfaction. Whist the quality of a hard product may be measured against specific and universal standards which are quantitative, the quality of performance of workers and work-teams does not lend itself so easily to agreed/universal quantitative standards and therefore to objective evaluation.

Once such area that presents particular problems is that of safety culture, not least because of the widely differing interpretations on what it is. However in the adoption of a praxic approach where-in a common agreement is arrived at as to what constitutes a safety culture and a commitment to strive towards achieving/improving increased maturity it is possible to evaluate and score the safety culture of a company in a manner that is reiterative and consistent.

By establishing the maturity criteria and a set of core competencies necessary to measure each criterion it is possible to evaluate and compare the objectives of the company, the activities of management and the performance of the workforce in practice and produce a rating and an action plan for improvement. The process is objective, capable of reiteration year on year, across departments and indeed across an industry, allowing for benchmarking and continuous improvement in safety.

## The Competent Company

The concept of the competent company is one where-in the strategy, the managerial structures and policies, and the way in which the company acts to meet its responsibilities towards all the key stakeholders combine in a way that ensures the safety of its workforce and those affected by what the company does, enhances the quality of its output and satisfies the fiscal needs of the owners in a sustainable manner. What is required is the establishment of a competent and sustainable industry, achieved through commitment at all levels in the industry, which means that companies and their clients work in partnership within the industry, the health and safety enforcement agencies, fellow client bodies and workers and their representatives, Board members' commit to making safety work for all their staff and for all those affected by their work.

Business strategies and objectives are prefaced with a commitment that goals will be achieved in a manner that does not cause harm to workers or end-users, Companies go beyond compliance where OSH is critical, and Individuals, workers and employers will act as they would expect others to act, i.e. competently.

The culture is the way in which the company holistically behaves with respect to critical factors such as safety, and the structure is the way in which it organises to itself to achieve its objectives and goals. There are two primary elements responsible for the effective governance of the organisation, namely the Board (or its equivalent) and Management. The former is accountable to the stakeholders, is responsible for the strategic direction of the company in the attainment of the corporate objectives, including the setting of those objectives. The management is responsible for the day-to-day activities that are necessary for the setting and achievement of interim targets that go towards meeting the strategic objectives; they ensure that the objectives of the company are met in a manner that is effective and non-injurious. It is essential that these two elements are aware of and work within their respective roles such that there is no superfluity of function that permits the one to overlap significantly with the other, thereby negating, or at best severely restricting the functionality of both.

## Cultural Maturity

It is not uncommon for the safety practitioner to audit the safety culture within the companies in which they are employed or engaged. Quality companies demand safe work practices and healthy conditions throughout and in order to obtain this begin with an assessment of how safety is viewed and practiced within. Often this is conducted via attitudinal surveys and supported by observations of practice. There is a tendency for this approach to admit to a high degree of subjectivity, particularly in the absence of universally accepted criteria for determining what constitutes culture and how it may be objectively measures and compared against other companies, or indeed between departments within the company.

In developing and implementing Operation Analysis and Control (OAC) processes within a company there are a number of core criteria the absence of one or more of which will severely impair the company's sustainability in times of economic crises and which impact negatively on its ability to remain viable relative to competitors in times of economic stability. These are;

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** wherein competent company is aware of and acts to meet its responsibilities towards the key stakeholders, including society, customers, community, workers and owners,

**Innovation:** the company ihas the ability to diversify and transfer skills to the development of new products and outputs,

**Resourcefulness:** the company can use existing human, material and financial resources in a creative and adaptive manner to meet the challenges of changing social and economic conditions, and

**Authority:** the company encourages self-managing units where-in individuals and teams have the authority to make decisions within the sphere of their control and influence.

If the culture of a company is deficient in or missing one or more of these criteria it runs the risk of failing to compete in the market place against competitors who are stronger in these areas or leaves itself vulnerable to prosecution for breaches of statutory duty, closed out of markets for failure to innovate and is likely to fall foul of the declarations and conventions on safety and health at work.

## Organisation Cultural Maturity Index (OCMI™)

Having identified these criteria the task was to design a way to that it possesses the cultural attributes essential to success in occupational safety and health. The challenge is to put in place organisation's behaviour and competence and present the The Organisation Cultural Maturity Index is a tool kit that will company and calculate a score that will place the

The OCMI™, once the weighting of the maturity criteria consistently applied year on year objectively compares company and can be applied to specific aspects of Finance, Governance) or to sections of the objective comparisons between these sections.

The index, displaying the year on all criteria for all the core capabilities provides the information necessary of both strategic objectives and from which action plans may be

The safety practitioner, being well requirements can utilise this toolkit in that they would conduct safety employer or client. Moreover the as a safety strategist is well persuade and lead the company process towards a growing

objectively assess how a company demonstrates establishing preventative measures in respect of a system that will measure and monitor an findings in a consistently objective manner. measure the policies and practices within a company on a maturity rating.

have been established, when the growth in cultural maturity of the the company (such as; OSH, company, and similarly will allow

year scores across of the company, for the establishment managerial targets, developed.

versed in prevention much the same way audits for their OSH Professional placed to through this maturity.



## The Core Capabilities

The core capabilities are those capabilities deemed necessary by a company for the effective management of their business and successful production and delivery of products and services to their customers whilst meeting their legal and social obligations to the workforce and the public and their fiscal responsibilities to the owners of the company. In this example 10 capabilities relating to the safety and health culture have been selected for demonstrating the model. These are:

**Leadership**  
**Collaborative Working**  
**Working Safely**  
**Using Management Standards**  
**Developing People**  
**Managing Operations, Project Controls**  
**Reporting Effectively**  
**Incentivising Behaviour**  
**Defining Objectives**  
**Setting & Managing Resources**

These capabilities will be assigned a weighting by the company in accordance with the degree of importance in achieving the company's strategic objectives or by a set of principles that is consistent and justifiable. Ie.g the following principles are used:

**Legal requirement**  
**Strategic objective**  
**Managerial requirement**  
**Operation necessity**

The core capabilities are then measured against the each of the maturity criteria utilising a set of questions designed to elicit information from a representative selection of senior staff and employees, and to gather material evidence that will substantiate the assessment conclusions.

	CSR	Innovatory	Resourcefulness	Authority
<b>Leadership</b>	There is evidence that the OECD Principles are being applied.	There is evidence that the company is guided by ILO OSHMS, 3.10.2 when embracing change.	There is evidence that the company is using the competence of its workforce to deliver its outputs.	Determine from the available evidence what management style the company adopts; (Authoritarian to democratic).
<b>Collaborative Working</b>	There is evidence of worker participation is safety decisions.	There is evidence that teams are encouraged to innovate.	There is evidence of the team's ability to identify and acquire resources.	Determine the decision making powers of the teams (Complete authority through to no authority).
<b>Working Safely</b>	Determine what the drivers of the company's strategy and policy are.	There is evidence of the company's ability to develop new solutions & improve existing controls to ensure work progresses safely	Determine to what degree the requirements to make work safe are available.	Determine who the decision makers on the safety of an operation are.

Assigning a score to the information and evidence gathered is based on an objective determination of the knowledge held and ability to act on and manage the operation or procedure of the people within company or the department that is being assessed. The determination of the assessor must be reasonable and in line with what another person competent to conduct such an analysis would make.

The assessor would be guided by standard audit practices and methodologies ensuring the objectivity of the process and permit independent verification of the evidence and scoring.

Company Name:		Company Contact Details:						
Maturity criteria for a competent company								
Core Capabilities (In respect of Safety Culture)	CSR	Innovation	Resourcefulness	Authority	Score Avg. =Sum(b:e) <sup>3</sup>	Weighted multiplier	Multiplied score	
Leadership	6	8	4	-1	4.25	10	42.5	
Collaborative Working	3	6	5	9	5.75	5	28.75	
Working Safely	6	3	2	8	4.75	10	47.5	
Using Management Standards	5	6	7	8	6.5	5	32.5	
Developing People	8	7	6	5	6.5	8	52	
Managing Operations, Project Controls	3	2	8	8	5.25	5	26.25	
Reporting Effectively	6	7	8	5	6.5	10	65	
Incentivising Behaviour	7	3	2	8	5	5	25	
Defining Objectives	8	6	7	8	7.25	8	58	
Setting & Managing Budgets, Establishing human/material/financial resources	5	7	6	5	5.75	5	28.75	
Totals						71	406.25	
Maturity Rating							57.22 %	

This company has an OCMI rating of 57.22 for Safety Culture

(These core capabilities examples relate to the evaluation of the safety culture in a company)

