



How Do We Know Human and Organizational Performance Works?

In most HOP integrations, it will not be possible to demonstrate "success." Wait, what?

The first challenge confronting an organization seeking to incorporate Human and Organizational Performance (HOP) thinking into their operation is determining what success looks like. For many this will be couched in terms of injury reduction, and therein lies a data problem. Few organizations track numbers of incidents and injuries and instead use TRIR (or similar) for safety performance measurement. TRIR does not measure the rate of injuries or incidents, rather it is based on the frequency of medical treatments above a certain threshold and can only be regarded as somewhat of a proxy for number of injuries. It is subject to "management" and will always undercount both injuries and unplanned events.

To examine the data problem further, consider two organizations, Company A and Company B. Although both companies are about the same size and operate in the

same space, they are very different, as shown in these two charts.

Company B is significantly further along in its maturity journey than Company A. If it is accepted that higher levels of safety culture maturity lead to better risk management and therefore safer operations, then Company B will enjoy significantly better safety performance when assessed using traditional metrics such as TRIR. Of the two organizations, Company B is much more likely to be in a position culturally to integrate HOP concepts in its business operations than Company A. Unfortunately, given their low "injury" metrics they will have difficulty showing that their investment in HOP is having any impact.

In order to see a correlation between any safety initiative (not just HOP) and reduced injuries, a means of measurement must be available that is sufficiently sensitive to reflect performance variations.

Safer operations mean fewer incidents and injuries, which means less

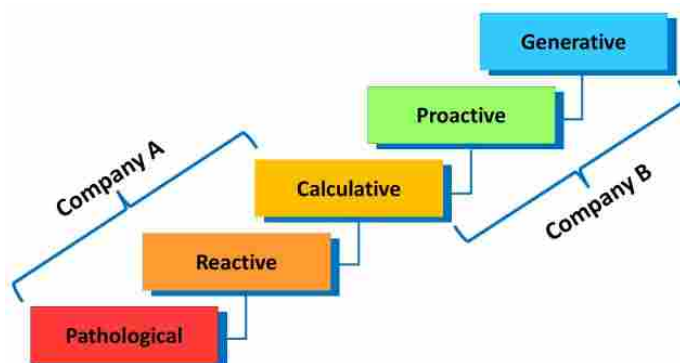
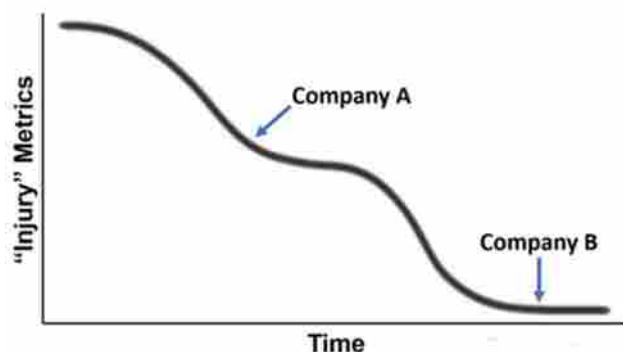
Inside this issue:

How Do We Know HOP Works?	1
The Quest for Employee Engagement in Safety	2
Combining Business with Pleasure	2
Out and About	3
Honors and Awards	3
The Joy of Surveys	3
HSE and Risk Consulting	4

recordable medical treatment data to input into TRIR etc. Some very large organizations see only one or two recordable medical treatments per month, hardly a sufficient dataset upon which to do any kind of valid statistical analysis.

Thus, it may be said that the organizations more likely to proceed with HOP are less likely to have enough injury data to reach a statistically

(Continued on page 3)



The Quest for Employee Engagement in Safety

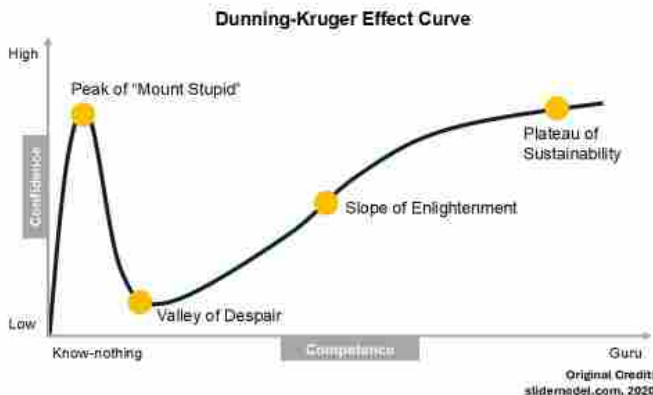
vPSI Principal Consultant Tom Knode recently had the honor of speaking in front of a group of senior EHS leaders at a meeting in Denver for the Conference Board. The presentation was around observations over 30 years on engaging employees in safety. It must first be unequivocally stated that years of research have shown a direct link between increased levels of employee engagement and improved business performance across multiple facets, including safety and profitability (Gallup State of the Global Workforce 2025). This research provides a compelling argument that engaging our employees in reducing risk and improving business processes results in fewer injuries.



Tom didn't understand was why the machinists kept bypassing interlocks and guards, to the frustration of the site safety manager.

The safety culture at the site was very good yet these devices were continually defeated. Several years later, the larger group initiated a strategy to address the risk of significant injuries (SIFs) including looking at machine entanglements. It was then that leadership started asking why the machinists were bypassing guards and interlocks and realized that the specs for the parts, and the tooling and programming for the machines drove the undesired behavior. It was only then the system could be changed so that safety features didn't have to be disabled.

This fed the belief that more needed to be done with employee engagement, resulting in an assessment of readiness and the launch of a multi-year strategic plan to get employees more involved than the historical BBS and Safety Committees that were common practice. Once the strategic plan was launched, leadership realized they weren't as ready as they thought they were. There were still pockets of leadership who weren't inspiring (some would say knuckle draggers), were indifferent, wouldn't act, and there was still an overestimation of capabilities for risk awareness (back to Dunning-Kruger).



While the presentation provided a 30-year timeline, it started with the classic Dunning-Kruger cognitive bias observation from Tom's perspective: he didn't know then what he knows now, so the first years were reviewed looking backwards with the perspective of knowledge gained from the years since.

He was working in a large manufacturing facility in the '90s that had a good safety record as measured by lagging indicators and was an OSHA VPP site. What

There are plenty of Safety Culture survey models that can assess an organization's readiness. There is also a model for a direct survey of employees' engagement in safety that will tell you what the gaps are and why employees aren't fully on board. In either case, improving employee engagement has been shown to yield better results in safety, quality, retention, and profitability. Who doesn't want that?

Combining Business with Pleasure

After the meeting mentioned above, Tom visited the Broadmoor Hotel which opened in 1918, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and had a great lunch in the tavern.

Interestingly the owner of the Broadmoor stockpiled bottles of liquor in anticipation of prohibition and had enough on hand to serve throughout its entire thirteen year span.



How Do We Know HOP Works

(Continued from page 1)

defensible conclusion determining the value, or lack thereof, of incorporating HOP thinking. If an organization actually generates sufficient recordable medical treatment data to reach a solid conclusion one way or the other, then they are likely not yet ready to go the HOP route, given that they clearly have lots of issues in play that are best dealt with using more traditional safety thinking.

In conclusion, it is not recommended that the success of a HOP integration be judged using a traditional metric such as TRIR, unless the organization's TRIR is high enough that it will be insensitive to the randomness of low frequency medical treatment events.

Instead, accept that the HOP principles will reduce risk by making the workplace more humane, leading to more operational improvement through improved organizational learning, and effective preventive and corrective actions to both issues and opportunities.

Out and About

vPSI Consultants frequently attend conferences, even when not speaking at them. Below are the last opportunities to catch up with our consultants out in the wild before the end of the year:

November 2025: Norman Ritchie and Tom Knode will be attending the NSC Global Network Meeting scheduled for November 11-13, 2025, in Washington, DC.

December 2025: Norman Ritchie will be attending the UTA Oil and Gas Health and Safety Conference, scheduled for December 2-3, 2025, at the Hilton Americas in Houston, TX.

Awards and Honors!



Olivier Houzé, SPE President, and
Tom Knode

The highlight of the Society of Petroleum Engineers International awards gala for us at vPSI Group was our esteemed colleague Tom Knode being presented with the Distinguished Member Award! He's running out of award hanging space on his office walls!

The Joy of Surveys

When used intelligently, surveys can be among the most effective tools for learning, improvement, and connection. They allow organizations to move beyond assumptions and hear from people directly. From benchmarking to research, surveys turn opinions and perceptions into valuable insight. Click on the embedded links to find out more!

Benchmarking: One of the most robust safety culture surveys available is the National Safety Council's Safety Barometer survey. With more than 35 years of data and millions of responses, it provides companies with a powerful way to benchmark their own results against industry norms and identify opportunities for improvement.

Opinion polling: The Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals wants to ensure its monthly meetings continue to meet members' expectations. Rather than guess what members think, they are simply asking via a quick online survey. It's a straightforward but highly effective way to stay responsive and relevant.

Research: At the University of Central Missouri, a graduate research study is exploring national OSHA 300A trends and the impact of Occupational Health Nurses on workplace safety outcomes. A broad callout to EHS professionals to participate in a technical survey is helping generate a rich dataset that will deepen understanding of this important topic.

The real joy of a well-designed survey lies in its ability to turn opinions, perceptions, and experiences into actionable knowledge. When people are invited to share what they know and feel, and that input is used to make things better, surveys become more than questionnaires; they become instruments of learning and improvement.



Sustainable Continuous Improvement

HSE and Risk Consulting

Trust vPSI Group's expert consulting services to deliver in all areas of Risk, Safety, Environment, Sustainability, Health, and Project Management. Our project-specific Solution Teams focus their deep subject matter expertise and considerable experience on our clients' most important and complex issues. This yields resource efficient and effective solutions alongside reduced risk and bottom line impact.



Why vPSI?

Whether your need is strategic, tactical, or something in between, vPSI consultants have what it takes to get it done, from strategic policy development to detailed field activity risk management. Core competencies include:

- Safety Management Strategies & Systems
- Risk Management
- Program Assessment
- Organizational Learning
- Performance Benchmarking
- ESG
- Land Transportation Risk Management
- Human & Organizational Performance
- OSHA, NFPA, EPA, etc. Compliance
- Process Safety Management
- Incident Investigation
- Project Management
- Chemical and Hazardous Waste Management
- Leadership Coaching
- Culture Measurement & Improvement
- Industrial Hygiene Monitoring



The answer is yes; now what's your question?

vPSI People

To execute consulting projects, vPSI forms "Solution Teams" consisting of appropriate combinations of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). These are highly experienced individuals, often semi-retired from their primary careers, who bring immediate credibility to projects based on their many years of accumulated knowledge and deep technical and industry expertise.

Industries Served

- ◇ Oil & Gas
- ◇ Pipelines
- ◇ Refining & Chemicals
- ◇ Power Generation
- ◇ Manufacturing
- ◇ Marine
- ◇ Semiconductor
- ◇ Construction
- ◇ Food
- ◇ Transportation & Logistics
- ◇ Biomedical

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