

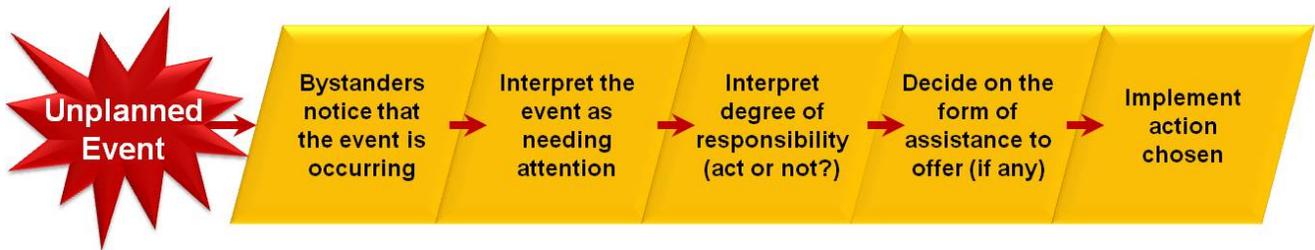


### Stop Work Authority and the Bystander Effect

"Help! HELP!" Who will answer the call? Numerous studies have shown that the more people who hear a distress call, the less likely each individual is to provide assistance. This phenomenon, known as the Bystander Effect or bystander apathy, is reflected in many shockingly violent and tragic examples.

There are five cognitive and behavioral processes that bystanders go through after the triggering event:

*"The Bystander Effect is a social psychological phenomenon that refers to cases in which individuals do not offer any means of help to a victim when other people are present. The probability of help is inversely related to the number of bystanders."*  
- Wikipedia.org



The Bystander Effect, first duplicated in research famously conducted by John Darley and Bibb Latané in 1968, has unfortunately been demonstrated many times clinically and in the world at large.

Research examining causes of the Bystander Effect continues. Some of the commonly accepted factors include the bystanders' decisions on determining if the event is an emergency, whether or not assistance is needed, and if assistance

can be safely provided. Other factors that influence the bystanders' actions are:

- The number of people in the bystander group;
- Each bystander's understanding of the situation and environment;
- Whether or not they have an established relationship with any of the parties involved;
- Their feelings on where they fit within the group dynamic.

despite the soundness of the principles behind it. Those few organizations that have successfully implemented SWA should congratulate themselves!

*Stop Work Authority is a management program that creates procedures and authorizes any and all personnel who observe an imminent risk or dangerous activity to stop work.*

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There are parallels between the Bystander Effect and Stop Work Authority (SWA) in the workplace.

SWA is a management program created to empower and engage employees to intervene when they see unsafe conditions or behaviors.

Unfortunately, SWA has proved difficult to successfully implement, even though it is a regulatory requirement in many countries and

In both SWA and bystander situations, people are more likely to take action if they perceive that: 1) the situation requires action, 2) they have the authority to take action, 3) they are the most appropriate person to act in the given situation, 4) there will be no negative repercussions for their actions, and especially, 5) they will be appreciated, or even rewarded, for their action(s).

# H-E-A-R SAY



## Mental Health Break

For many companies, motor vehicle accidents are the single greatest cause of injuries and fatalities. These organizations expend significant resources on driver training and other measures with the objective of cutting down on road accidents, yet remain frustrated as the numbers stubbornly refuse to budge.



Like many large cities, Houston has dynamic message signs on highways and freeways to provide journey times and traffic information. When nothing particularly exciting is going on, they show canned messages such as "Click it or ticket" and "Hurricane season is here, be prepared". Sometimes they display "XXXX fatalities on Texas roads so far this year".

The 2014 year-end message:



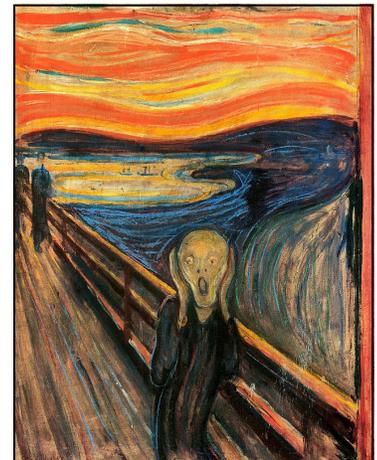
Given the great effort and expense that organizations go through to prevent motor vehicle casualties, it is perhaps surprising that many virtually ignore an even greater cause of death: mental illness.

Since 2009 in the USA, more people have been killing themselves than have been dying in motor vehicle crashes. Picture that flashing on a highway message board; it's a sobering visualization of the problem's magnitude.

The consultants at vPSI don't claim to be experts on societal trends or medical statistics, but when the odds of an employee (or family member) dying by their

own hand are greater than in a traffic accident, it is clear that the issue merits more attention than it is currently getting.

Since their job occupies so much of a person's time, the workplace provides one of the primary opportunities to identify that someone is suffering and may be on the slippery slope to taking their own life. Mental illness is treatable and many treatment options are available. If you know how to identify a colleague in trouble, then you may save not just a life, but also the enormous trauma, suffering and devastation caused to those left behind.



The Scream by Edvard Munch, Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

vpsigroup.com is hosting a special page of resources available online related to mental illness.

Signage © 2014 / 2015 Houston TranStar

## Silver Linings

Many friends of vPSI have been negatively impacted by the current oil prices. As a small measure of support to the upstream Oil & Gas community, we are extending a special offer to those who find themselves "between assignments." If you are in this position, you are welcome to attend one of our regular Open Enrollment training workshops in Houston for only US\$50, a saving of over \$900.

Please contact us to take advantage of this (hopefully) limited time learning and networking opportunity.

## Combining Business with Pleasure

**vPSI consultants travel extensively in the course of their work and, wherever possible, try to fit in some pleasure alongside their serious business.**

Unfortunately, there are times when technical expertise gets in the way of enjoying life. Such is the case for our consultant whose Mechanical Engineering education prevents him enjoying roller coasters. It is also apparent in our Industrial Hygiene (IH) expert's reaction to a new type of ice cream parlor. While in San Antonio, Texas, conducting vPSI training for Marathon Oil and the University of Texas at San Antonio, our sweet-toothed team visited Sub Zero, where liquid nitrogen is used to turn your chosen ingredients into ice cream as you watch.



Apparently, from an IH standpoint there are two main concerns for the staff there: contact with a cryogenic liquid and oxygen displacement. Unprotected skin contact with a cryogen, or with superchilled process pipework or equipment, will result in a severe burn. This is one of the rare instances when PPE can prevent an Unplanned Event. Liquid nitrogen evaporation will gradually reduce atmospheric oxygen concentration, resulting in lightheadedness and mental confusion (which might explain why our consultant's order came out wrong initially), but only in extreme circumstances can asphyxiation result. Workplace hazards notwithstanding, the ice cream is excellent, and Sub Zero is heartily recommended by our consultants.

San Antonio is a popular location for conferences and provides a wide variety of hotel accommodation. While one vPSI consultant chose the slightly hipster Hotel Valencia on the



Menger Hotel by Angi English on Flickr

Riverwalk, another enjoyed the haunting and genteel southern atmosphere of the Menger Hotel and Bar. The Menger, adjacent to the Alamo, was established in 1859 and is the oldest continuously run hotel west of the mighty Mississippi.

Further afield, a long layover afforded an opportunity for a visit to Singapore Botanic Gardens. For Houston-based people unused to public transit, just getting there from the airport by train counts as an adventure. While overall the



Gardens are very impressive, the National Orchid Garden is absolutely world class. Orchids have been grown and hybridized here for over 150 years and the results are spectacular, with thousands of varieties on display.



While visiting Kuala Lumpur, serendipity in the form of a sudden downpour diverted our consultant to Hakka Chinese restaurant on Jalan Raja Chulan. It looks a bit out of place amongst the new high-rise construction but Hakka has been in business since 1956 and doesn't look like it's going anywhere, particularly given how packed it was with happy customers enjoying the good food, good service and interesting ambience under a giant tent strung with fairy lights and Chinese lanterns. Follow dinner at Hakka with a few hours exploring Changkat Bukit Bintang for an epic evening of entertainment!



More vPSI travel photos can be found on our Facebook page.



## Slash Non-Productive Time!

Non Productive Time (NPT) is the bane of the drilling world, costing hundreds of millions of dollars in direct costs. In many wells, the value loss resulting from delayed production dwarfs the direct cost. There is frequently no cross-functional visibility of this business impact; it is irrelevant to many drilling people whose focus is on their performance versus the AFE.

Effective countermeasures against all NPT-related losses take on new importance in the current oil price environment, and this is where vPSI offers substantial business benefit at low cost.

The same vPSI techniques ordinarily applied to accidents and incidents measure and radically improve an entire organization's response to losses characterized as NPT.

Many organizations that enjoy excellent performance when measured by conventional metrics have a mature management system and believe that existing processes for handling unplanned events are

in no real need of improvement. While this belief is typical and understandable, it is the experience of vPSI Group that significant upside potential exists in such an environment.



U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, ARC Identifier 535132

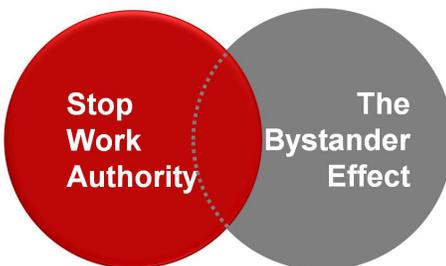
By objectively assessing responses to NPT events, vPSI Metrics measure the degree to which an organization identifies, assimilates, systemizes and sustains the new knowledge that such problems present. Improvement opportunities are surfaced both in the effectiveness (in terms of avoiding future loss) and resource utilization efficiency of the activity that results when the organization responds to operational issues.

vPSI assessment of NPT response will identify significant value adding business improvement opportunities in every drilling organization. Contact us for more information.

## Stop Work Authority and the Bystander Effect

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Employers can influence these factors by providing adequate and appropriate training on the SWA procedure, ensuring that employees have the appropriate degree of competency specific to their jobs, and demonstrating management commitment. This might mean providing, at least in the short term, a reinforcement program related to encouraging SWA activities; for instance, individual and work group recognition for its use and positive discussions about the actions taken and impacts prevented.



Organizations must avoid incentive programs that have traditionally been shown to encourage employees to

hide problems within the workplace, such as rewards for the number of hours/days/weeks since the last injury/recordable/lost time event. Such schemes send a mixed message to employees. Reducing ambiguity increases the likelihood that employees will decide to intervene when appropriate.

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