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SAFETY LEADERS





The Sir Moir Lockhead safety award recognises leaders in operational safety around the world. Originally set up in 2018, this third year of the scheme highlights safety leaders working in the UK and overseas. Five 2021 winners work in transport, and are profiled here. Interviews by Will Dalrymple



SAFETY LEADERS

Sir Moir Lockhead, the founder of First Group and former patron of the Society, pictured above, says that the award named after him does not follow traditional definitions of health and safety. "They are about compliance with regulations, and if you comply, you're fine. Here, the SOE is going one step further. Instead of talking about health and safety, we are talking about injury prevention and well-being, which is about looking after people and caring for people. There's a simple message: if you can't do it safely, don't do it."

He adds: "Those people nominated

and who are being rewarded have created in their companies a change of culture where injury prevention and caring for people is at the top of the list. Where this occurs, where leadership is strong, what happens, as we all know, is that they make more profit, and are more successful than those that don't."

A former colleague of Lockhead involved in the awards, Naveed Qamar, now safety assurance and environment director at Serco Dubai, says: "It's leaders that make safety happen. Where the organisation's culture is driven by the belief of leaders, it makes a huge difference, and I saw that first-hand at

First Group under Sir Moir [where he worked as group safety director]. He was so passionate; he inspired us to come up with ways to engage people better. He always put safety where it needs to be: first and foremost, and everything else fell in line."

Another former colleague of Sir Moir's that was also involved behind the scenes in the awards is Gary Catapano. Previously senior vice president of safety at First Group America, and now chief strategy and safety advisor at Magtec, he says: "There's a quotation from Edgar Schein at MIT, the founder of organisational psychology: 'The only thing of real importance that leaders

JUDY AGNEW

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SAFETY SOLUTIONS AT AUBREY DANIELS

"I always tell people, if you understand the power of immediate certain consequences, that will change your strategies for the better"



"A lot of people ask, 'why would someone do something at risk?' They could lose a limb or their lives, and there's nothing bigger in terms of safety consequences than that. But what we know from science is that it is the consequences that are more immediate and certain have the most power. Getting hurt is a very uncertain consequence; it's much weaker than people think. People who take risks think, 'If I take the shortcut, I get the job done faster, and make the customer happier or my boss happier or I make the next job easier'. Their focus is on more immediate and certain

consequences. That is a big blind spot for many organisations. I always tell people, if you understand the power of immediate certain consequences, that will change your strategies for the better."

Being positive in safety management is key, she argues. "Unfortunately in safety particularly we have a history of people mostly experiencing negative consequences. It's really essential that we tip that balance; spend some time talking to people about the good things they're doing. Then safety is 'something I get recognised for'. When they get more of that positive reinforcement, they are more willing to give discretionary behaviours [that are key to safety]: to step up and get engaged in meetings with suggestions, and report near misses and help that peer that they see doing something at risk. A lot of the time people think of positive reinforcement as a nice thing to do," but it is essential for safety, she contends.

As important is how safety is measured. "The problem with lagging indicators, the most common of which is something like incident rate, is that they have some natural variation. An organisation can do exactly the same things one year to the next and have a different incident rate because there's always a bit of luck in there. If the number goes down, we don't know how we got there. There are three possibilities. One is everyone behaved safely; they did all of the right things. The second possibility is luck. And the third one, which is probably the most troubling, is that people just didn't report.

"Focusing on incident rates doesn't help manage the behaviours that people need to engage in to get that reduction. A leading indicator is a way to say, what do we need to do to reduce incidents, and let's measure that. That way we can proactively measure the behaviours that will drag a reduction. After all, you don't manage results; you manage behaviours. To me it's foundational. Until an organisation is willing to look at leading indicators, they are going to be stuck in reactive safety management, which is not as productive."

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do is to create and manage culture.' He [Schein] doesn't address safety, but what we know from looking at other businesses is that it is culture-driven, and stems from the top."

Winners are profiled in alphabetical order by surname. Also awarded this year are Phil Malem, chief executive officer of Serco Middle East and David Cooper, director of LECS UK. They are not profiled here, but instead in a companion article in an upcoming edition of *Operations Engineer* magazine. [TE](#)

MARTIN BRYCE

ENGINEERING DIRECTOR,
DHL SUPPLY CHAIN

"Everyone who is involved with safety champions that safety agenda and is an enabler for the next person in the chain to deliver the safety message"



"Safety within the DHL organisation has no constraints; everyone involved in safety champions the safety agenda and is an enabler for the next person in the chain to deliver the safety message. If I went to my line manager and said: 'I want to try this because I think it's good for safety', they would say: 'Yes:

show me the results and the outputs.' We don't have a 'that'll never work' attitude. That becomes the enabler. It's empowering to be an engineer where everyone else around you wants to see what else you can do to improve safety. It encourages creativity."

"Something I started many years ago involves reporting of safety issues. In situations where an engineer is called in to conduct an investigation after any event or incident, there is a risk that responsibility for closing the incident is lost between the site team and site health & safety. I insist that someone in the team has personal ownership for an accident or incident or a post-MOT failure investigation."

Bryce adds that his focus on safety goes back to his five-year mechanical craftsman apprenticeship at a nuclear power plant. He states: "When you're 16 and go into industry, and the number one message to you is safety, it does become part of your core agenda."

"I'm proud to say I champion a safety agenda. I'm proud to say I have a 'don't walk by' mentality. It's always possible that I will stop the GM of a site and say, 'that's not acceptable', but it's the right thing to do."

The biggest safety issue in the industry is choosing the right tool for the job, he reasons. "If we're in an urban environment, let's use an urban vehicle. Committing to be as safe as you can be in what you do leads that agenda."

"The challenges in the road haulage industry in terms of safety are so varied, whether that's congestion, VRUs [vulnerable road users], distraction of driver colleagues; there are so many critical issues in play. The best we can do as engineers is make available the best assets we can for our driver colleagues."

LINDA BURTWISTLE

CEO, COACH USA

"We can't manage every single person every single day when they are out on the road. They have to feel it and they have to want to be safe"



"Safety belongs to everyone. It's not just policies and procedures. It's something that we all live with every single day. As the head of Coach USA, safety has to be my first thought every morning, and the last thought in my head every night. With regard to building a culture, obviously you have to have policies and procedures and

standards and all of that good stuff. But we can't manage every single person every single day when they are out on the road with a policy manual. They have to feel it and they have to want to be safe. To me that comes from the top and it comes through every single person in the organisation has to hold each other accountable for their safety, their own safety, their passengers' safety and their colleagues' safety. When you can make that happen, you get a safety culture."

"You talk about it all the time. You become almost like a cult. You make sure that safety is the first thing on every agenda. Every meeting starts with a safety message. You never ever imply that cost is more important than safety."

"I firmly believe that the safety function is embedded within every one of our locations. I have a vice president of safety who is responsible for nothing but driving safety through the organisation. He doesn't own safety, but his job to make sure that we have all the right elements in place across the board. He gives an independent view of our safety performance. He's independent of operations, he's independent of maintenance and engineering, and he reports directly to me. He sits on my senior management team. At the end of the day, if we have any push and pull between safety and operations, he is completely independent. To me that's really important."

Burtwistle offers her proudest safety achievement: "It's an absolute no-no in the student business to leave a kid on a school bus. When I was at First Student, we challenged ourselves, can we have a year where we don't leave any kids on the bus. We shouldn't be saying, 'well we left 30 last year, we did 27 this year'; we needed to go for zero, and we made massive inroads. So much so that my successor said, 'you set me up for failure; we'll never be that good again!' It was about focus and discussion. If you focus on an issue and measure an issue, then you can manage that issue."

DEBORAH HERSMAN

FORMER CHAIRMAN OF US
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
BOARD & CEO OF NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

"A great safety culture is one that thinks it has opportunity to improve. You're always learning. Safety is really a journey, not a destination"



"I do think you create the next generation of safety leaders, both in your company and in your community, when people see the behaviours that you are modelling for them. And they don't always understand. Part of that is about good communication and educating people and coming from a place of caring about their safety, and not punishing them

and not preaching to them. When I was at the National Safety Council, I would meet every new employee on their first day of work on the job and impress upon them what was expected of them. I said: 'We will have people on our team approach you and correct you, whether it's holding the handrail when you are walking down the stairs, or making sure that you put a lid on your cup. Don't be offended; they care about your safety and that's why they are communicating with you.'"

"A great safety culture is one that thinks it has opportunity to improve. You're always learning. Safety is really a journey, not a destination. It can always get better. Two hallmarks of a good safety culture are that you have a learning orientation within your company, and that you have a reporting orientation within your company. When you identify issues, people feel very comfortable reporting those, and it's a non-punitive environment where you're learning from the things you see to make adjustments and improvements.

"The very sad thing is for me is that I have found that the companies that are performing the safest have just had an incident. Because they are hyper-vigilant; they're trying to learn and get better. It's equally sad to me that when companies are performing very well, that's when the safety budget gets cut, because people think, 'we don't need health and safety; we're doing such a great job'. But after an event, people pour money into safety. We shouldn't have to wait for an event to happen to prioritise safety.

The biggest safety issue in the transportation industry is roadway fatalities. The biggest way to combat those fatalities would be to address system safety; designing a safer system. We lose 10,000 people every year to alcohol-impaired driving crashes. We can stop people driving drunk: there are technologies to detect impairment, but we're not widely applying them."

GARY KING

NATIONAL ENGINEERING
AND COMPLIANCE MANAGER,
SAINSBURY'S

"Safety is our number-one priority, and so any way that we can reduce our risks in the correct manner, we will"



Of his general approach to safety and engineering, King says: "I am always trying to improve standards rather than just maintaining them. At Sainsbury's, we use external specialist partners to run our vehicle workshops, so part of what we do is implement national standards across the business. We use irtec (IRTE's technician

competence scheme) as a national standard, and technicians working on the fleet work at a set level. Our contractors are very important.

"Safety is our number-one priority and so any way that we can reduce our risks in the correct manner, we will. We fit drivers' aids to vehicles and work with unions, drivers, driver trainers, health & safety teams and operational teams to find the correct methods to reduce risk. We were one of the first businesses to deploy an automatic braking system, which we fitted before legislation required it, and we fitted a bespoke trailer coupling system so drivers can couple trailers from the floor level."

One particularly effective safety measure that King was involved in a few years ago was a safety restraint system for roll cages (pictured, p11), which are used by the majority of the retailer's stores. He says: "Cages can hold 300kg of products and could fall off a tail-lift six feet high. Tail-lifts often have a safety feature of flaps that hold products back, but sometimes they fail, so there's a risk of cages coming off. We want to make sure the environment is as safe as possible, so we have developed the 'boxing ring' pole and strap system to retain cages on the tail-lift. Straps are higher than the flaps were - about three feet high or a metre off the floor, so about halfway up the cage. We have adopted this system across the whole operation and it's led to a drastic reduction of incidents. Now we fit them as standard in the new fleet on everything with a tail-lift, even the hire fleet."

Taking a step back, King points out the importance of engaging with drivers particularly, who, as he puts it, 'are actually doing the job'. He says: "Having a great relationship with drivers, driver trainers, the unions and stewards is really important to get to understand the root causes and then deal with potential risks. Relationships are really key; you get information straight from the horse's mouth and understand what has gone on, and then you can create a solution."