

REFLECTING ON HOW WORKFORCE INSIGHT IS THE KEY TO RELIABLE PERFORMANCE

BY FRITZ KIN

As I prepared for a Human and Organization Performance (HOP) panel discussion at the AFPM Annual Meeting in San Antonio this year, I reflected on the journey my company, Marathon Petroleum Corporation (MPC), has been on for the last 15 years.

Looking back to 2007, the MPC refining organization experienced three fatalities. This was a devastating blow. Perhaps made worse because we had not experienced a fatality for well over a decade before these incidents. In response, we began building our workforce's hazard recognition skills, and developed and implemented Life Critical Safety rules. Both of those efforts were important in our evolution to better performance. However, like many safety programs, over time and personnel changes, there is always the risk that the program's effectiveness wanes, and you find yourself back in a performance rut that is not meeting your expectations.

Anticipating this natural decline in engagement, our Refining Safety & Training organization developed a complementary, parallel training and leadership program that we called SAFETY1. Working with a high-impact training provider, we developed a series of safety leadership training workshops, first focused on our front-line supervisors, then our front-line workforce, and, finally, our contractors/business partners. This was a multi-year effort that had a tremendous impact on the workforce and our performance. But as with every organizational programmatic effort, effects from the safety leadership workshops faded over the years and our performance, although relatively good by industry standards, was not where we wanted it to be.

I always want the MPC refining organization to not just be good; I want our performance in both occupational safety and process safety to be great. As we looked at our performance as an industry and at MPC, we were beginning to recognize how human factors were playing a large role in incidents. In response, we began to look at these "new" (well, new to us) concepts of Human & Organizational Performance and Highly Reliable Organizations (HRO).

I am excited to say that we, the MPC refining organization, have a great start on our HOP journey. We have all struggled with how to operationalize these new concepts of HOP and HRO into the long standing norms and processes of a mature organization. MPC is addressing this struggle with a three-prong approach below.

First, we developed our HOP journey using "Flight Map" imagery. This helped us define where we wanted to be at the end of this journey, and it laid out the many layovers (steps) that we would need to move us along our path. It is important to understand that HOP is so multi-faceted that we continue to learn and better understand the underlying foundational aspects of these new concepts every day. For me it breaks down into two big buckets: (1) HOP Based Leadership Principles, and (2) Recognition of How Work Is Done in our refineries.

The next step involved introducing and educating our leadership on our HOP Based Leadership Principles. For MPC refining they are:

- People Make Mistakes
- Blame Fixes Nothing
- Organizations Influence Behavior
- Learning and Improving is Vital
- Leader's Response Matters

The process of educating leadership and their acceptance of these HOP Based Leadership Principles is vital to the success of a HOP journey. An organization cannot undergo a cultural revolution if leadership does not embrace the change.

Finally, once the organization has started the process of getting its leadership "bought-in" to the HOP Based Leadership Principles, and at least one executive-level champion has been identified, then the parallel effort of bringing the entire workforce onboard may begin. From my perspective, much of the front-line workforce will buy-in when:

- The Leadership Team communicates the HOP principles and begins living them while engaging others on the journey to improve performance;



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- Actions demonstrate that the organization is building a culture of caring and inclusion (and this includes the budgeting of resources); and
- Employees and contractors are treated with dignity and respect.

In the final analysis, what this really means is, HOP and HRO measures must begin and end with the commitment that worker insight is your best resource to understand the reality of how work gets done, even more importantly, how it gets done reliably.

