

GKN 'thinkSAFE!' Programme

Martin Smith – GKN

Group Health, Safety and Environment Director for GKN, reporting directly to the CEO

Martin explained that the topic for today is 'thinkSAFE!' which represents the GKN approach to making their employees aware of key hazards and the actions to take.

Martin began by telling us a little about his background as well as GKN's. Starting at the age of 16, Martin has been with GKN for 37 years. During that time, he has experienced many roles and functions. GKN is a FTSE 100 Company, a leading engineering company which has been in existence for around 250 years, with its roots at the start of the industrial revolution.

What is GKN?:

Today, GKN is based around four portfolios:-

- **GKN Driveline** – “The world’s leading manufacturer of automotive driveline components”.
- **GKN Land Systems** - “is a global leading supplier of technology differentiated power management solutions and services. We design, manufacture and supply products and services for the Agritechnical, Construction, Mining and Utility vehicle markets and key Industrial segments, offering integrated PowerTrain solutions.”
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- **GKN Aerospace** - “is a first tier supplier to the global aviation industry. A leader in the manufacture of highly complex composite and metallic aerostructures and engine products, our business is equally focused on military and civil markets.”
- **GKN Powder Metallurgy** – “comprises GKN Sinter Metals, the world’s largest manufacturer of sintered components and GKN Hoeganaes which produces metal powder used in the manufacture of these components.”

The 'GKN Code':

GKN is a 7 billion pound business, with 45,000 employees worldwide speaking 26 different languages. It has a 'GKN Code' which has been in place for 10 years or so. This 'Code' forms the relationship between GKN and its employees. The relationship is a partnership in which each 'partner' promises to act (in terms of health and safety) in a mutually beneficial way which involves not harming the partner, whether the partner is an employee or a co-worker.

Martin has a small team and he reports to a variety of GKN committees. His team is effectively a 'virtual' team, located at the centre of the organisation with supervisors/managers at the local level responsible for local health and safety. GKN has a H.S.& E. 'Global Specialist Forum', which deals with high risk areas/topics including dust. There are three Group H.S.& E. Auditors and in addition, there are external auditors and peer auditors from within the Company.

GKN Accidents:

Martin went on to look at GKN accident and accident frequency rates and Lost Time Accidents (LTA's). Martin explained that certain aspects of the business are the main contributors to these rates. This month, there have been 4 LTA's, and two of which involved slipping over on ice! Generally, manual handling is the biggest causal factor for GKN.

What is 'thinkSAFE'?:

'thinkSAFE!' is a learning tool that has been developed by GKN over the last 2 years, and it will be the foundation for many of the things that GKN do in the future. Martin explained that 'thinkSAFE' is in many ways about sharing best practice. Data extracted into "thinkSAFE!" comes from a Group-wide data capture system (DCS), which alerts Martin and others immediately when an incident occurs.

Each GKN site has a 'thinkSAFE' Leader who has been trained in aspects of "thinkSAFE!" and who in turn cascades his/her learning to others. A further aspect of 'thinkSAFE' are the 'Safety Corners' that have been established at GKN sites. Martin described the rationale for the development of a 'Safety Corner' in a GKN plant in Brazil. He noted that Brazil is a difficult environment in which to operate due to the wealth of rules and regulations.

David Hughes asked how 'thinkSAFE' could be emulated in a small business with just one site? Martin suggested that 'thinkSAFE' could be 'reproduced' by providing a web portal for all site employees to access, or by putting aside a small corner within the factory site, devoted to health and safety learning. Martin added that engaging employees in working safely is one of the biggest challenges for all companies (not only GKN).

'Ourspace' - GKN Intranet:

Martin went on to show us the opening page of the GKN intranet, known as 'Ourspace'. One of the main aims here is to keep the on-line information simple, by producing.....

GKN e-Brochures:

GKN has developed a series of e-brochures which cover a variety of different topics such as manual handling. To ensure statutory compliance there is a disclaimer on each e-brochure which directs the reader to their own country's regulations and standards for further information. Martin reflected on the fact that translating text/information into 26 languages is both challenging and resource consuming. However, the look and feel of the brochure is the same no matter what the language. E-Brochures can be viewed in the 'Safety Corner' via a TV or PC. The e-brochure includes short videos and mock ups of accidents for example, crushed finger/hand; back injury due to incorrect lifting and handling techniques; using hands in an inappropriate way etc. Martin added that their aim is to animate all of GKN Serious & Lost Time Accidents, and Serious Near Misses.

There is an accident report 'Scorecard' which categorises the seriousness of the incident (it could be a near miss), for example, red means serious and yellow represents an LTA.

Incident Investigation:

Martin said that where an incident is considered serious, formal reviews will take place within the site. Each site uses Practical Problem Solving techniques to determine root cause(s), and to develop robust corrective actions. Serious incidents are peer reviewed to develop global actions.

'Do More':

'Do More' represents an opportunity to eliminate unsafe behaviours, and it includes a 'before' and 'after' photograph locally loaded into the "thinkSAFE" system for the global audience to view. Employees are given a topic and they photograph the same situation as it is discovered and a second photograph after the employee has made improvements. It involves employees reviewing a work area, seeking out health and safety issues and then putting corrective actions in place. The topic might be for example, slips and trips. 'Do More' is reproduced on posters and it has become an icon which all 45,000 employees now recognise. Martin noted that the system receives about 150 'before' and 'after' photographs each quarter (at least one from each site).

GKN Plan for 2013:

This year there will be a focus on hand tools; falls of materials involving cranes and elevated platforms, and dust. At the end of the year, e-brochures will be produced for occupational health matters including noise and vibration. Martin added that a further project will be 'thinkGREEN' which of course, will cover environmental issues. Another project to be launched soon is called 'Don't WALK BY' which will be focused on leaders and the taking of responsibility (at

whatever level within the organisation – but starting at the top), to act and do something rather than “Walking by..” the situation.

In response to the question: ‘Does thinkSAFE reduce accidents?’ Martin said that in his opinion he believes that it makes a crucial contribution. Martin asked us to be patient and to wait until the end of 2013 when more evidence should be available to confirm his belief. He added that the success of ‘thinkSAFE’ will depend upon whether it is supported by GKN leaders at all levels. Martin noted that the project does have the full support of his CEO. Martin at this point made mention of the work carried out by George Allcock (BHSEA Management Committee Member), who laid the firm foundations for GKN’s current safety systems.

Members' Questions

David Hughes, BHSEA Committee Member, reflected on a company in Cheltenham that he worked with some years ago. David used West Bromwich College apprentices to design some manual handling solutions. This got the apprentices interested and involved in the problems and the solutions. David added that the apprentices learned a lot through this particular work. Martin said that everyone (even the contracted caterers), and including apprentices, will go through the ‘thinkSAFE’ programme. Martin recognised the importance of apprentices and their learning and welcomed the return of this practice.

Following a comment from the floor, Martin explained that projects like ‘thinkSAFE’ must be taken seriously and not just paid lip service. There has to be commitment from everyone at every level for it to work. If there is no commitment at the start, it’s not worth bothering going any further.

Mark Hoare, University of Birmingham commented on the animations, adding that although there did not include ‘real’ people, they are nevertheless effective.

George Allcock, BHSEA Committee Member, commented on Martin’s emphasis on leadership and company values including the GKN commitment to providing a safe place of work for employees. Employee involvement and cooperation is essential. Martin agreed and added that he believed it to be important to share the lessons/messages provided by the animations, and this is made easy because there is no language barrier – there is no need for translation.

This concluded Martin’s presentation, and the Chair asked Members to show their appreciation in the usual way.