

How to link safety and corebusiness?

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In safety science research there is the paradigm that safety should be integrated into the business processes and at the same time should be explicit enough to control the most critical elements. It is well known from safety research and industrial practice that management commitment is probably the most essential factor for safety management. It is also widely known that the primary concern of managers is to control and develop their core business. In order to develop a more robust safety management commitment, it is therefore a major challenge to create a closer link between core business and safety. By linking the two, the core business will take advantage of production wins caused by less disruptions and safety will benefit from a new strategic perspective. This, however, creates a tension in itself since safety should be explicit enough that precursors of accidents can be distinguished, monitored and acted upon. Linking safety to the core business promises more attention and commitment from management, greater awareness of risks taken, more stability in turbulent times in which the complexity of doing business increases and more action to ensure safe conditions. However, uncharted issues in safety are the role and influence of the organisational culture on the management of safety and the political context in which decisions take place.