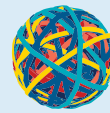




S O U T H P A C
i n t e r n a t i o n a l
g r o u p



HOP|LAB[®]

Safety Leadership Program





Why it matters

Safety is a shared, complex challenge. Yet many safety leadership roles are heavily focused on compliance and control – ensuring workers follow the rules instead of engaging in the process and contributing positively to safety performance.

Policies and controls provide a baseline for safety, but real work is a living, breathing thing – a constant navigation of competing goals, shifting conditions and the reality of limited resources.

In this environment, safety isn't something we add to operations; it's the natural by-product of well-designed, human-centered work. We don't create safety through tighter control. We create it by staying close to the messy reality of the frontline and making it easier for people to succeed.

This is the goal of our Safety Leadership Program – to create leaders who understand this reality, and their role in shaping safer outcomes.

Performance, Not Just Compliance

Safety outcomes are shaped long before an incident occurs. They are often the delayed echo of trouble created elsewhere in the system. Every time a leader decides what to resource, what to tolerate, or what to simplify, they are designing the system's future performance.

This program helps leaders stop looking at safety as a separate department and start seeing it as the health of the whole system. We focus on where work becomes fragile or friction-heavy, and we give leaders the tools to strengthen those points.

How We See Leadership

Many of us have been conditioned to see leaders as having all the answers. But when we learn to put that expectation aside, leadership becomes about shaping the space so that the right answers can emerge from the people doing the work.

1 From Hero to Host:

Instead of managing people, we advocate for hosting them. A leader's job is to invite contribution, provide the necessary provisions (resources, clarity), and create a fellowship of people working together to make the workplace better.

2 Work-as-Done vs. Work-as-Imagined:

We move past the version of work captured in tidy procedures. We lead by paying attention to what people actually do to get the job done, recognising the sense in their daily workarounds.

3 Reducing Friction:

Performance is what happens when we remove the obstacles that make work difficult. Leaders express their value by resolving pressures upstream before they become burdens for the people doing the work.

4 Curiosity over Certainty:

When things go wrong, we don't look for who to blame; we look for what made the error make sense at the time. We stay curious about the system's weak signals before they become loud failures.

Ultimately, we believe that when you make it easier for people to do good work, you inevitably make it safer.



Intended Benefits

Through our program, leaders will shift from managing compliance to stewardship of performance. These six principles ensure that excellence—and safety—become the path of least resistance. Leaders:

Are clear on what matters

They define and communicate the desired safe future, establish direction and keep safety visible when priorities compete. When everyone knows what matters, they can act with confidence without waiting for permission.

Look after people in their care

Leaders create the psychological safety and trust required for people to speak up and recover when things go wrong. Teams that feel cared for are more likely to take ownership and look out for one another.

See and act from the whole

Leaders look beyond individuals to understand how systems, context, and leadership decisions shape safety. By understanding the "why" behind the work, leaders can address risks long before they manifest as incidents.

Remove friction

Leaders make it easier to do what's right by clearing the obstacles that get in the way of safe performance. By reducing friction, the right way becomes the easiest way, naturally driving better safety and productivity.

Make it safe to learn

They treat learning as essential to safety. Leaders invite reflection, and encourage safe-to-fail trials or experiments. When people feel safe to share weak signals and near misses, the organisation can adapt and improve in real time.

Activate others to share responsibility

By empowering others to tackle shared challenges, leaders ensure safety is a collective responsibility rather than a siloed task. Allowing people to work together to create change makes the organisation faster, more agile, and more robust.

Academic grounding

Our program isn't built on a single theory or framework. It is anchored in the New View of safety and organisational psychology.

We draw from the world's leading thinkers to provide a leadership framework that is as robust as it is human.

Human & Organisational Performance (HOP)

Inspired by: Dr Todd Conklin. HOP starts with a simple idea: people are not a problem to be controlled, but a solution to be harnessed.

Rather than asking "Who made the mistake?", HOP encourages us to ask "What allowed it to happen?". By understanding the context of Work-as-Done, leaders can design error-tolerant systems that fail safely rather than catastrophically.

Reducing Organisational Friction

Inspired by: Andy Brogan (Easier Inc.) & Cass Sunstein. Performance is often held back not by lack of skill, but by friction. As organisations grow they naturally accrue unnecessary red tape, conflicting goals, and fragmented support.

We teach leaders to be Friction Hunters. By identifying where the system makes work difficult, leaders can make it easier for people to do the right thing, which inherently makes the organisation more resilient.

Resilience Engineering & Complexity

Inspired by: Erik Hollnagel & Dave Snowden (Cynefin). In a complex world, you cannot manage your way to safety through more rules. Safety is an emergent property of a healthy system.

We focus on Safety-II – studying why and how things go right 99% of the time, rather than just obsessing over the 1% that goes wrong. We help leaders navigate uncertainty using small-scale change techniques rather than rigid command and control.



Long-Term Organisational Impact

This program is an investment in the **fundamental health and agility** of the organisation. By evolving how we lead, we don't just improve safety; we create a more resilient, productive, and human-centered business.

- ✓ **Trust-based performance:** Moving from high-control to high-trust relationships with clients and teams. This unlocks deeper collaboration and creates a partnership rather than a policing culture.
- ✓ **A culture of innovation:** By staying curious about how work actually happens, leaders create the psychological safety required for innovation to flourish. We embrace diverse working styles and technology as tools to solve real problems.
- ✓ **Effective, distributed decision-making:** We move decision-making to the point of work. This reduces bottlenecks and allows the organization to respond to reality in real-time.
- ✓ **Profitability through flow:** By relaxing rigid systems and removing friction, we enable work to flow. This boosts productivity by letting people focus on the task, not the red tape.
- ✓ **Resilient Safety:** By decreasing bureaucracy and increasing local skill-sets, we build an organisation that can learn rapidly, turning every challenge into a future strength.
- ✓ **Talent magnet & retention:** Leaders who Host rather than Command create a workplace where people feel seen, heard, and trusted. This leads to higher job satisfaction and the retention of our most valuable assets – our people.



THE DEEPWATER PARADOX: When Systems Go Deaf

A Cautionary Tale of Two Realities

The day before the Deepwater Horizon exploded, senior executives were on the rig celebrating a milestone: seven years without a lost-time injury. They walked the decks, checked equipment tags, and commended the crew on spotless housekeeping. They were sincere, engaged, and focused on safety. But they were looking at Work-as-Imagined—the version of safety that travels easily in reports and green lights on a dashboard.

Meanwhile, in the drilling shack, the crew was wrestling with Work-as-Done. They were debating confusing pressure results and feeling a growing sense of unease.

The leaders weren't ignoring the warning signs; they simply couldn't hear them.

This story reveals a fundamental failure of relationship. When an organization splits into Us (Leadership/Oversight) and Them (Operations/Frontline), a relational fracture occurs.

- ✓ **The Proxy Trap:** Leaders begin to manage proxies (KPIs, checklists, audits) instead of reality.
- ✓ **The Filter Effect:** As information moves upward, it is smoothed and thinned. By the time it reaches the boardroom, the human texture of anxiety and uncertainty has been filtered out.
- ✓ **The Control Paradox:** The more we try to see through rigid control systems, the less we actually understand.

Breaking the Cycle

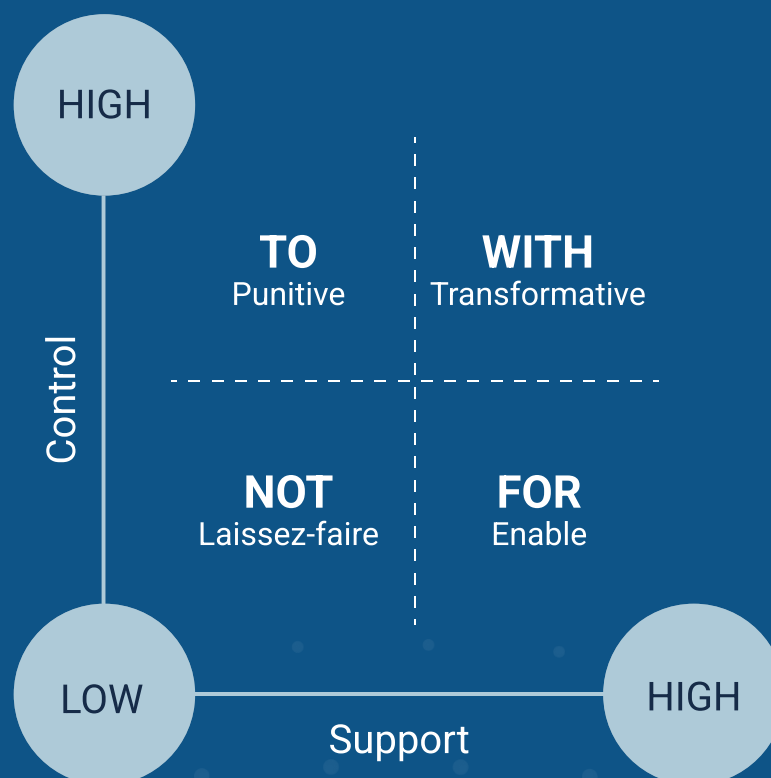
The Deepwater Horizon leaders did exactly what the organisational architecture required of them. To prevent the next drifting into failure, we must change the architecture.

We don't need more tools or more controls; those created the distance in the first place. We need to restore contact. This program is designed to help leaders move from Inspection to Connection. It's about giving up the illusion of control to gain a genuine understanding of the work. By showing up as Hosts rather than Inspectors, leaders create the relational space where difficult truths can travel upward before they become catastrophic.



THE LEADERSHIP STANCE: How We Work Together

Leadership isn't just about what you do; it's about the relationship you build with the people doing the work. We use the 4 Modes of Social Change to help leaders navigate the balance between Support and Control.



By moving into the Transformative (WITH) quadrant, we shift the organisational architecture. We stop looking for who to blame and start looking for how to host the solution.

Practices (ideas to include)

- ✓ Learning conversations
- ✓ Story powered leadership
- ✓ Micro experiments



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