

Adding Value in Risky Times

Winter 2009/2010



Risk on the agenda

President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), Jean Venables, presented their annual Safety Lecture in September. She emphasised that, as engineers provide solutions to the needs of society, there is a need for greater clarity on the balance between rules of professional conduct, legal obligations on engineers and the exercising of technical judgement. Learning from incidents is crucial, as is sharing good practice and balancing risk with cost-benefit. ICE has started a debate to address the sensible management of risk which can be in stark contrast to risk-averse policies in some areas of society.

Risk expert Prof. John Adams of University College London says that officials imposing safety regulations should be more rigorous in distinguishing between hazards (something which could lead to harm) and risks (hazard with numbers attached). Magnitude is the key to analysis. Mike concurs with this as he works with clients in the chemical hazards environment.

MCHFT

Mid Cheshire Hospitals Foundation Trust provides acute services. As an FT it is a self-governing enterprise, but regulated by Monitor and the Care Quality Commission. It is part of the NHS family, but no longer directly controlled by the Dept of Health. In exchange for this freedom, the governance structure provides for a membership drawn from the local population, which elects a Council of Governors, whose levers of control include appointing the Chair and Non-Executive Directors. FTs consult their members as an aspect of their developing strategy.

In his capacity as a NED, Mike has been using his consultancy expertise, adding value by becoming heavily involved in supporting strategies to recruit new members, as well as advising on communications with members, in addition to his other responsibilities.

Balancing the technical perspective, in November the British Library social questions debate, Making Sense of Risk, explored attitudes to risk in our everyday lives. The contrasting views of policy-makers, planners and the media were exposed.

Is the officialdom trend down to an alarming disconnect between actual safety and the avoidance of legal culpability? Our perspective on this is that we need to demand firm evidence of occurrence of actual hazardous events before we stop any course of action.

Mystery Shopping

This year the engineering profession engaged Chandler Associates to undertake a second mystery shopping exercise, looking at the membership services of 16 of the engineering professional membership organisations. Diane took the project lead, and the "shopping" was done through the early summer months by a number of our Associates. She then had the task of compiling an overall Report of the project for the commissioner, Engineering Council (EC) UK, and a separate, personalised and confidential report for each of the organisations which took part. The generic outcomes, building on the previous project in early 2008, were then presented in a half-day workshop at EC UK, providing pointers for the value of sharing and focussing on continuing the development of good customer service.



Di took this photo of "Newton" by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi on a July visit to the British Library: it provides a perfect example of our shared passions for History, Art, Science and Engineering.

UK Team win Gold

Last year we told you about the UK's young people working towards competing at WorldSkills Calgary 2009. WorldSkills is the biggest skills based competition in the world, held every 2 years in a different host country. Places to represent the UK were won after 2 years intensive training, coaching and personal development, undertaken through the nurturing environment of a virtual Conservatory structure. Diane took the lead for a Conservatory Cluster of 4 engineering skills.

The 26 competitors in Team UK, all under the age of 25, and their Training Managers worked extremely hard under intense pressure for 4 days before thousands of world visitors. It paid off: they came home with 3 Gold Medals, 6 Bronze and 14 Medallions for Excellence, the latter awarded to those who achieve the very high score set as the bar for the WorldSkills standard. Team UK came 7th overall on scores out of 46 nations, proving the value of a well structured & supported approach. Well done to the full team.

Now the evaluation of all aspects of UK's 2009 participation has been completed, and planning is progressing towards 2011, when WorldSkills comes to London. Diane has agreed to participate again in the work ahead: it promises to be an exciting if challenging time! For further information, contact Di or visit www.worldskillslondon2011.com

People buy from people

Earlier this year Mike completed a 5 year strategy for one of his clients in the construction industry. As part of the implementation plan, they are making successful use of specialised telemarketing to raise awareness of the company's products and for making appointments for all important introductory meetings. This is an interesting example of how "old" technology can add value to the process, by speaking directly with decision makers and arranging for appropriate personnel to visit.

CPD Matters



The Institute for Continuing Professional Development (ICPD) is an international cross-professional body promoting CPD, as a key component of lifelong learning, to organisations and individuals. Chandler Associates values its status as an Affiliate of ICPD and we subscribe wholeheartedly to their objects.

You can find out more at: www.cpdinstitute.org

Fair Trade for African Blackwood

Mike's work as Chair of Environment Africa Trust continues to evolve. A key milestone was achieved this autumn, the certification of villages and their forest reserves, the loggers and the Tanzanian sawmill. By the time you receive this newsletter, the first sustainable harvest will be completed, and the Mpingo wood processed and dispatched in a container to the UK. We are hoping that by the time that it arrives in the UK, manufacturers of woodwind instruments will have been signed up to take the Mpingo and turn it into certified instruments for the 2011 market. One of the real values of this approach is through the modest premium to be charged on each instrument. This will flow back down the chain of custody to the villages, for them to invest in their future. It is of fundamental significance that the village councils must by law comprise at least 1/3 women members, to ensure community benefit. To see more about EAT, visit www.environmentafricatrust.org.uk

QUOTES OF THE ISSUE

Those in the third sector who innovate and change in tough times will emerge from the recession resilient and in the right place for what will eventually follow.

Dame Mary Marsh, Companion CMI

Ordinary men cease to be ordinary when they not only ask questions but exert themselves to find the answers.

Benjamin Franklin

Sometimes I just sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits.

Dylan Thomas "Under Milk Wood"

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