

Promoting effective learning for health and safety

When incidents and near-misses occur in hazardous industries, it is essential that organisations and people learn from this, and so prevent a recurrence. However, effective learning is hard to achieve, and how to do this is often poorly-understood in the health and safety community.

Mindful of this, Australian oil and gas company Woodside Energy Ltd commissioned The Keil Centre to design a 2011 health and safety campaign based on research and recent industry analysis of effective learning methods. A realistic scenario was developed, based on generic lessons from a series of Woodside incidents and near-misses. The scenario was used by operational and maintenance teams to

promote the application of learning prior to an extensive plant commissioning program.

The interactive, scenario-based approach was well received by the teams involved, and clearly had greater impact than more traditional methods employed previously. Building on this success, two more health and safety campaigns are being designed for Woodside in 2012 using a wide range of more engaging learning methods.

Woodside's Acting Vice President Health & Safety, Paul McCormick, says this approach is helping to address the challenge of embedding lessons learnt.

"We believe it's important to invest time in distilling events down to the key lessons and linking them to the requirements of our management system – so that people understand why we have certain rules, and why we do things the way we do."

"We need strategies to communicate this in new and refreshing ways, and this is where developing scenarios based on previous Woodside events has been very effective."

