



The Cormorant Alpha "Care Plus" Story in the workforce's own words
Health and Safety - Making it Happen
COMMERCIAL CASE STUDY No 7

In Cormorant Alpha has been fortunate in the respect that it has had a very open minded and forward thinking management team. The initiator of this revolutionary approach was Tom Brown (CADA Asset Manager). The first stage of this approach was an empowerment programme facilitated by DDI International. This process encompassed the whole workforce, who initially went into shock. "Think for ourselves! Do we not have people who get paid to do that for us?" was one of the more popular phrases bandied about the tea shacks. The cynics were having a field day outlining the many supposed hidden agendas but the underlying power and simplicity of empowerment soon gained many converts. We, as a platform workforce, did start to think for ourselves and began to witness the associated benefits. We were moving forward, as many respectable blue chip companies had done before us. To begin with, there were many obstacles to be overcome. When the new parameters and guidelines had been clarified the process became more focussed. We took on greater responsibility and began to look forward to new challenges and experiences.

The first real hurdle our "New World" encountered was a change out of both OIMs. Doubts were plentiful. "Would the new OIMs embrace the cultural changes developing on Cormorant Alpha?" The new OIMs embraced the culture and, in fact, facilitated progress with a gusto that was, on the whole, surprising.

A previous OIM had been searching for ways of descending from the Safety plateau and considered the existing culture could benefit by incorporating a behavioural intervention system which would compliment our existing safety management systems. That's when we, the workforce, got involved. The underlying principles of behavioural safety and the various systems employed were examined first hand. As an empowered workforce we were involved every step of the way.

The investigation of what was available was a long process, culminating in attendance at a behavioural conference in Harrogate via one of the market leaders, and subsequently, a couple of sites including Montell (Carrington) and British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (Sellafield) to view an intervention programme in action. This particular system did not appeal to us as we didn't think it would marry with both the culture we had developed and the safety management systems we already had in place. In the meantime, Tom Brown had attended a conference where he had met Dr. Tim March, a Health and Safety consultant, Psychologist and creator of the Ryder March Behavioural Safety System. Tom proposed that representatives of the workforce (not necessarily S1971 Reps) could meet with Tim voluntarily to hear what he had to say on introducing Behavioural Safety to Cormorant A.

Twelve genuine volunteers came forward with an interest in hearing more about behavioural safety and attended an introductory session onshore, fully expecting to be psycho-analysed by some professor who had lost touch with reality the moment he picked up his first book by Freud.

It was refreshing to discover that Dr. Tim Marsh turned out to be a rugby playing Welshman, an ardent Manchester United fan and a reasonably normal looking individual (apart from the obligatory academic facial hair). The two-day meeting was informal but structured. We learned about the "Talk" safety system developed by Tim and there were some psycho games aimed at assessing our team-building potential, which would be fundamental to the success of a steering committee. We found that Tim could relate to us on the same level and felt he would be comfortable in any offshore situation. His package and presentation was considered to be a good long term approach.

Following the "psycho-babble" for beginners, we began to look at how this process could be integrated into our workplace. A lot of the remaining time over that two day period was spent action planning for the ambitious proposals/tasks that we had set ourselves. The informal

efforts towards team building should not be underestimated. This aspect remains crucial in order that a positive and consistent approach is sustained.

When we returned to the Platform we had plenty to be getting on with planning observation routes and then collating the relevant maps into a user-friendly guide. We had to define the categories that required measurement and decide upon specific criteria for safe and unsafe behaviours, eliminating subjective data as far as possible. Once established, these were supported by photographs and measure statements. Developing efficient lines of communication, given the four shift system Offshore, was seen as a priority and did present some unique problems. Weekly Friday night meetings became the norm onboard and comprehensive minutes of the meeting were cascaded.

Promoting "CARE Plus" Offshore had been difficult at times. Obstacles such as "not another initiative, it will never last: had to be overcome.

We ran a logo competition, resulting in one of the workforce being presented with a weekend away for two at a hotel of their choice, the only real financial incentive ever used.

We put forward contributions to the Cormorant Alpha information channel. This could be accessed via any television onboard. We produced the Care Plus Chronicle news sheet which, in conjunction with the bullet points from the actual care measures (discussed at all safety meetings) contributed to the workforce feedback necessary for the success of the process.

Following the collection of baseline data, workforce consultation was sought at goal setting sessions to establish where we wanted to be within a predetermined time scale of 3 months. This ensured complete workforce involvement.

Three months later, the whole committee met again, the first of the Quarterly reviews onshore. These meetings, combined with "on tap" support from Dr. Tim, were essential for our progress. During this meeting things began to fall into place. Imagine working with someone on a project full of unfamiliar territory, jargon etc., and you never actually see them, then you may have some idea where we are coming from. At the quarterly meetings we resurrected issues that were inevitably lost in the communication process and resolved many controversial items which required the committee as a whole to accede.

We also took to opportunity to complete our observer training (the voyeurs amongst us picked this up quickly) which included practicing interpersonal skills, one of the fundamentals involved when obtaining qualitative "Why" data. Within this paper we could easily bore you with plenty of psycho-babble pertaining to the mechanics of the system but, being the kind of people we are, we decided to leave that to Dr. Tim.

Things have not been all sweetness and light. Down/right sizing has undoubtedly contributed to apathy on the platform, not to mention the fact that you lose committee members and trained observers almost as quickly as you can train them. We think it is a testament to the commitment and diligence of the steering committee that Care Plus continues to be an established and credible part of our safety process. Another milestone reached and passed was the in-house training of Observers. Members of the committee attended a "Train the Trainer" course run by Dr. Tim. The course was adapted to suite the Platform needs. Course material was reconstructed to be more practical than academic in design. It still contained all the fundamental principles to provide a shortened package suitable for Offshore training by the workforce steering committee. This shortened package was delivered over three, three hour sessions which proved easier to facilitate offshore against the original two, 12 hour days.

We are progressing towards our goal of having a 100% of the core crew trained as Observers, early signs are encouraging, as you will no doubt see from the statistics included in the main presentation.

We as a committee would like to thank everyone who placed the trust in us and showed the commitment we required in pursuing one of the first behavioural interventions implemented in the North Sea. Also, thanks to those who are still facilitating and actively supporting the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

Management support has been fundamental in the success of this process and our successes are largely attributable to this support being provided and to the Ryder Marsh Safety programme.

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