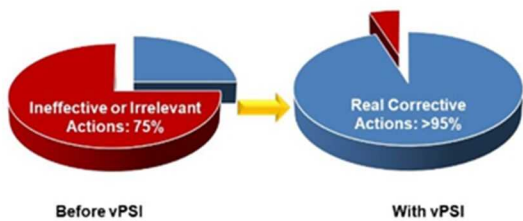




### Revisiting the Question: Who Is Checking Your Homework?

We asked this question exactly ten years ago in the Winter 2013 issue of this newsletter with respect to organizational learning through incident investigations. In this context the question translates to: who is looking at the investigation output and validating that it meets the objective of reducing the risk associated with the issue that the incident revealed? Is there a quality control process that validates and grades preventive and corrective actions, with the yardstick being whether or not the activities presented as actions will either prevent that particular event from repeating, or manage the associated risk down to an acceptable level? Unfortunately, nothing much has changed in the intervening decade and these questions remain as valid



**When organizational learning goes up, workplace risk goes down!**

as ever because the answer in most cases is still no one.

Why does this issue matter? Traditional management theory would suggest that what gets measured gets managed (see more on this below). Modern management practice has evolved in a more evaluative direction, critically assessing the value that a given metric provides the organization before measuring or managing anything and verifying that there is value-add to the organization. Is there value-add in measuring and managing the output of incident investigations? The short answer is yes.

The vPSI System's action validation tools, scoring techniques and organizational learning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) deliver a sustaina-

#### Inside this issue:

Who is Checking Your Homework?	1
“What Gets Measured Gets Managed” Origin Story	1
Riskwashing Is All Around Us	2
World Safety Day	2
vPSI Out and About	3
How vPSI Companies Operate	4

ble step change in risk and associated successful work performance while increasing efficiency in the utilization of limited corporate resources.

The organizations that have implemented vPSI concepts by including action measurement in their management systems have realized many benefits. First and

*(Continued on page 4)*

### “What Gets Measured Gets Managed” Origin Story

This phrase has been attributed to Peter Drucker, renowned management consultant. However, like the definition of insanity attribution to Einstein, the problem is Drucker never actually said it. Some people reckon the phrase originated with V.F. Ridgway in 1956 in his paper *Dysfunctional Consequences of Performance Measurements*. Others look even further back, claiming the renaissance astronomer Rheticus is the source with his statement, “...if you measure something, then you have some control over it.” Whatever the truth is about the source of the quote, management theorists do agree that what’s most important is to be careful what you’re measuring.

## Riskwashing Is All Around Us!



Greenwashing is a hot topic in the ESG / Sustainability space, with multiple companies standing accused of it, and some even being targeted by related lawsuits. Merriam-Webster

defines "greenwashing" as "the act or practice of making a product, policy, activity, etc. appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is".

At vPSI we have coined the term "riskwashing" to describe analogous behaviors in the health and safety world. The definition of riskwashing is "the act or practice of making a product, policy, activity, etc. appear to be more impactful in reducing workplace risk than it really is".

Common riskwashing activities and statements include:

- Mirror stickers such as "you are looking at the person responsible for your safety";
- Signing safety pledges;
- Lids on coffee cups;
- Drive carefully!
- Be safe!
- Safety slogans in general;
- Celebrating injury free "milestones";
- TRIR being used to measure the impact of safety initiatives;
- Sending out safety alerts;
- Safety stand downs;



- Mandatory "safety moments";
- Leadership commitment to safety without involvement and action;
- Safety is our first priority;
- Do this job safely, but be done by the end of the day as we need this unit running;
- Adherence to safety is a condition of employment;
- BBS observation card quotas.



There is no excuse for riskwashing even in circumstances where an actually effective action either cannot be identified or is not practical. Unfortunately such activities are deeply rooted in the safety profession and are trotted out with regularity across all kinds of organizations, despite their negative impact on the credibility of the safety function in other departments and functional groups. Given that many practitioners firmly believe in their value and have done so through their entire careers, it will be a significant challenge to change their mind-set and dislodge them.

One way to confront proposed riskwashing is to demand a "reverse" cause and effect analysis that requires a demonstrable chain of causality between the action taken or statement made and the desired effect. If such a demonstration cannot be provided, then there is no logical justification for wasting an organization's time, energy and resources just because "we have to do something".

## World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2023



The 28<sup>th</sup> day of April is the United Nation's World Day for Safety and Health at Work, first celebrated by the International Labour Organization (an agency of the UN) in 2003. It was created to raise awareness of the consequences of work-related incidents and illnesses, to get occupational safety and health onto international and national agendas, and to provide support to national efforts to improve occupational safety and health systems and programs. The 1% Safer Foundation will have a week-long celebration of this day, and vPSI Group will be participating in those efforts. See our website and LinkedIn page for more information as the week approaches.

## vPSI Co-Founder Selected as Distinguished Lecturer by the Society of Petroleum Engineers

vPSI is pleased to announce that co-Founder and Director Norman Ritchie has been selected by the Society of Petroleum Engineers International (SPE) as 2023-24 Distinguished Lecturer on the topic "New Methods for Learning from Incidents Involving Human & Organizational Performance".

Human & Organizational Performance (HOP) issues may be complex and can cover a broad range of disciplines. Investigating unplanned events such as safety incidents and operational problems from the HOP perspective requires a different approach than conventional incident analysis methodologies allow. This presentation offers new methods that can be applied through the entire process of responding to the learning opportunities presented by unplanned events, including data acquisition, analysis, and developing appropriate and optimized corrective actions for HOP causal factors.

vPSI's Ritchie commented: "Key takeaways from this presentation include differentiating between HOP failure types in an unplanned event and quickly developing and validating appropriate corrective actions to maximize organizational learning and future

risk reduction. I'm honored to have been selected and am very much looking forward to meeting SPE members around the globe."



The Society of Petroleum Engineers is a not-for-profit professional association with more than 124,800 members engaged in oil and gas exploration and production in 134 countries. SPE is a key resource for technical knowledge and information exchange via in-person and online events and training courses, publications, and other resources.



The purpose of SPE's Distinguished Lecturer program is to provide SPE sections worldwide with outstanding speakers and to recognize the professional contributions of those selected. The program promotes SPE's mission to collect, disseminate, and exchange technical knowledge. It is funded primarily by the SPE Foundation via member donations with a contribution from Offshore Europe.

## vPSI Out and About

There are several upcoming events where you can meet vPSI personnel and / or listen to them speak.

First, Norman Ritchie, vPSI Group Co-Founder and Director, will be speaking at the ASSP Gulf Coast Chapter Meeting February 2, 2023, at the Battleground Golf Course in Deer Park, Texas. His topic is New Methods for Learning from Incidents Involving Human & Organizational Performance.



April 18-19, 2023, Norman will be a panel member at the IADC Health, Safety, Environment and Training Conference and Exhibition at the Hyatt Regency Houston West. Norman and the other panelists will discuss transitioning from TRIR to a Serious Injury and Fatality (SIF) model of HSE reporting.

We'll also be exhibiting at the ASSP Gulf Coast Chapter Professional Development Conference Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at the Houston Marriott South at Hobby Airport. Come by for a chance to win one of our much-coveted Yeti tumblers!

May 1-4, 2023, we'll be setting up our booth at the Energy Safety Canada Conference (formerly known as the Petroleum Safety Conference) in Banff, Alberta.



## How vPSI Companies Operate



The vPSI companies are unconventional, not just in how we approach learning from incidents and optimizing the effectiveness and efficiency of investigations, but also in

how we work and the types of projects we undertake. Our small core staff is augmented by a collective of risk, safety, environment, sustainability, industrial hygiene, energy, and transportation subject matter experts (SMEs), many of whom have retired from their first, second or even third career. vPSI SMEs are highly experienced individuals who bring immediate credibility to assignments. Their many years of accumulated knowledge and deep industry expertise give our clients confidence that their projects will be managed competently and successfully.

Each client project is handled by an ad hoc Solution Team stood up specifically for that purpose and staffed appropriately by individuals selected from vPSI's deep bench of SMEs.

Here's a small sampling of missions vPSI Solution Teams have undertaken so far in 2023:

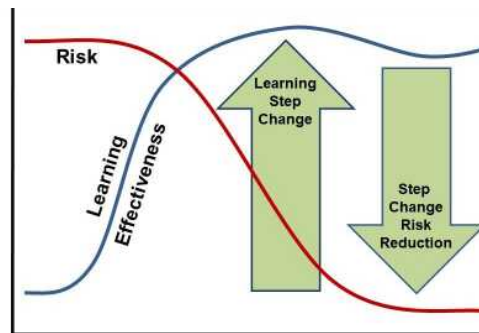
- Failure Mode and Effect Analysis (FMECA) of a specialized downhole tool for sidetracking oil & gas wells;
- NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 101 Life Safety Code evaluation for a global leader in e-commerce;
- CO<sub>2</sub> injection review for a carbon capture conceptual study; and
- Incident investigation for an onshore oil and gas company.

Call vPSI next time you are looking for assistance with a unique or interesting challenge or need input from a high-level Subject Matter Expert. We've got the people you need. One caveat: since we have to tempt our SMEs off the golf course (or wherever else they are spending their retirement), it helps if the project isn't boring (unless it's drilling related, which is fine).

## Revisiting the Question: Who Is Checking Your Homework?

*(Continued from page 1)*

foremost, the quality of the output of their investigations greatly improved, meaning they were more likely to target what went wrong in the unplanned event, while the solutions generated were more likely to be permanent solutions within the organization, where appropriate, without unduly increasing bureaucratic nonsense. In addition, because the organizations has confidence in their corrective actions, they were



able to reduce the many unnecessary actions that had previously

been taken when something went wrong. This had multiple layers of beneficial effects, including reduced risks, reduced costs, and no additional unnecessary bureaucracy. Improving safety while reducing demand on corporate resources enables companies to do more with less while increasing operational effectiveness.