



MOSH e-news

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Continuing Where we Left Off

Closing the Second Issue – Batch 2 of the Second

*By now we hope you have been anxiously waiting for the second half of this issue of **MOSH e-news**. As this follows the Easter Weekend, and the accompanying mayhem on our roads. it would be irresponsible not to say something about this. The whole MOSH Adoption System is about health and safety, and therefore, if we don't "walk the Talk", how can we become credible in the messages we are advocating? As was repeatedly said at the Workshop, "Trust" + "Competency" = "Credibility". Let's "Walk the Talk" together.*

The issue of why loss of life in the mining industry receives so much

more media condemnation, as compared to loss of life outside the industry, has been discussed *ad infinitum* with different explanations of why this is the case.

In this issue, Billy Ray Jones, **MOSH e-news'** resident commentator, shares his experiences of crossing the beautiful Mandela Bridge on one rainy day. The experience highlights the prevailing culture of daily deliberate deviance from adhering to the rule of law and exercising common courtesy: a culture which has led to the acceptance of behaviour patterns that contribute to harming people, in many spheres of life, and the tolerance of such harm as long as there is no large clear villain to vilify. This may explain the disproportionate apportioning of the condemnation to untimely loss of life. Whatever the explanation, any untimely loss of life should not be tolerated by anyone and effort should be expended to fight against this.

The enormous resources that have been put at the disposal of the MOSH Adoption System is testimony to the collective intolerance of the industry's leadership to loss of lives and harm to people in the mining industry. The industry is, however, one aspect of the overall habitat of its employees. These employees spent part of their lives in environments outside the control of

industry's leadership where sometimes a different set of rules prevails.

One of the dilemmas tackled at the Workshop was how to reconcile the cultural gap between a best practice working environment, which is the objective of the Adoption System, and the experiences of some workers to and from work using the taxi transportation system with its unique operational rules. The question asked was whether it is realistic to expect people exposed to such conditions on a daily basis to adopt a totally different set of rules at the workplace. I may have gone out on an errand because I did not quite get the solution to this particular challenge.

This second half of the second edition of **MOSH e-news** also carries what we hope to be a regular feature of the newsletter: getting experts to explain the issues we are trying to grapple with in the Adoption System. In this issue, Gordon Butte explains Behavioural (Risk) Communications.

Thanks for your support, your comments and observations.

Behavioural Risk Communications - An Explanation

The events of the past few weeks, particularly at the MOSH Adoption System Workshop, have

introduced a number of new words and phrases in the vocabulary of the MOSH Adoption Team members. One of the most prominently used phrases was “**behavioural (risk) communications**”. In order to attain the goals and objectives of the System, it is important that the four Adoption Teams should have a common understanding of what is being said and done and where the common destination lies.



- Gordon Butte in Johannesburg. The city is just beyond the wall -

To ensure that such a common understanding exists, **MOSH e-news** cornered Gordon Butte of Decision Partners to explain precisely what “behavioural (risk) communications” is all about. Decision Partners (who provide consultancy services, together with Dr John Stewart, on the implementation of the Adoption System) is a leader in this practice.

“In a nutshell, behavioral (risk) communications, is communications intended to directly address people’s decision-making and behavior, rather than only their level of awareness and understanding of a particular topic. It is a discipline and professional practice informed by some four decades of scientific research in the fields of decision theory, risk perception and risk communication. Fundamentally, the practice calls for building strategies for communications on where people are at today in their thinking, then tailoring messages to the important decisions for them at hand. It involves first understanding in-depth why people have the perceptions or beliefs they have – typically working with something researchers have come to call, people’s “mental models” - and then addressing these in a structured manner to facilitate well informed decision-making and action”. I had a bit of a problem here about how this was possible. My problem was with the part about “understanding in-depth why people have the perceptions or beliefs they have”, particularly because some people do not, willy-nilly share their thoughts while

others tend to go with prevailing public sentiment without taking a moment to formulate their own individual positions.

I naturally probed a bit to understand this “mental models” idea. “Mental models is a communication technique used to understand in-depth why people have the perceptions or beliefs they have which therefore guides learning, decision-making and behaviour”.

So far so good. But, how does “behavioral (risk) communications” differ from any other form of communications?

“Many communications efforts, such as crisis communications and public relations, focus on providing information, to teach or to increase awareness”, says Gordon. “Typically, they start from an assumption – or guesswork – about people’s information needs and the relevance and usefulness of the information to them. They frequently end with no evaluation of the effectiveness of the communications effort or evaluation of the communications effort and not the outcome”.

Gordon goes on to say that, “In behavioural (risk) communications, we typically address people as stakeholders for communications, not audiences. The communications process starts with appropriate analysis of the full context for communications as well as people’s full thinking on key topics for communications, such as improving safety and health performance. From such analyses, precise strategies and messages are formulated, as well as detailed communications plans and materials. Importantly, we take into account issues of credibility, observability of communications, language, literacy levels, and cultural beliefs among other influences on the ability of stakeholders to interpret communications as intended.

“Another difference between mass communications approaches and behavioural (risk) communications” he adds, “is that whereas mass communications usually focus on a one-way information flow, behavioural (risk) communications involves addressing the interests and priorities for communications of all affected stakeholders through interactions – two-way communications processes - of various kinds. Stakeholders can include executives and senior managers. Finally, in behavioural (risk) communications, it is important to be able to measure the effectiveness of the entire communications process as well as outcomes, focusing on measuring intended differences in people’s understanding, decision-making and behaviour as a result of communications”.

Mouthful as it was, it made sense.

Welcomes and Goodbyes

In the first issue of **MOSH e-news**, we reported on a member of one of the full time team members who had retired from his team. We also introduced some new members into the System. Up until the start of the week-long Workshop, the Noise and Fall of Ground Full Time Adoption Teams had been operating with one member each. We are delighted that **Des Wrigley** and **Eric Scholtz** joined the System

Des Wrigley started his induction into the MOSH Adoption System at the Workshop. He has been seconded by AngloGold Ashanti to join the Noise Full Time Adoption team.



- I couldn't get Des on his own. He is the fourth gentleman from left. No ladies on this team -

Eric Scholtz (Anglo Platinum) also started his service, for the Fall of Ground Full Time Team, at the Workshop. He brings 37 years of mining experience to the Adoption System



- Eric is also seated fourth from left looking directly at the picture in this other ladies team -

MOSH e-news would also like to welcome the part-time members of the Adoption Teams whose contributions at the Workshop made it possible to reach the solutions which made the Workshop such a success. **MOSH e-news** salutes you.

Billy Ray Jones – A Bridge not far Away

Just the other day, I had to rush through town to Braamfontein from work. Being a sensible guy, at least as far as I know, I took the shortest possible route which meant having to cross town via the beautiful Mandela Suspension Bridge. I guess in my haste, I was a bit overambitious... no one rushes anywhere on a rainy day in Johannesburg. On this day in particular, it was pouring cats and dogs.

For those who are from out of town, in Johannesburg on rainy days it seems that everyone is trying so hard to get to their destinations that every space on the road (literally) is utilized. Add to this mayhem, the usual contest to beat the red light and the equally ferocious sport of beating the green light from the other direction but at the same intersection. Common courtesy becomes an alien concept. The predictable result, especially in wet conditions, is the avoidable accidents which ultimately bring traffic to either direction to a complete halt. This is, of course, a normal sight in Johannesburg on rainy days and the consequence is that everyone ends up moving unhappily home at a snail's pace. The traffic light in front of you goes green up to ten times before you could get through the intersection. On occasions like this, tempers become so hot you could fry an egg on them if they were laid on a flat surface.

These were the conditions that I found myself in on that particular day. I sadly settled in my position as I entered the bridge. Coming from each direction onto the bridge, two lanes converge into one where the suspension part of the bridge starts. This means that only one lane is supposed to be used by traffic going in each direction. I am certain that the designers of the bridge, or the engineers who constructed it, planned for the bridge to sustain only that amount of traffic in each direction.

As I crawled unhurriedly towards the point where the two clearly marked lanes converged into one, I watched with extreme trepidation as the cars maintained the two-lane formation, seemingly oblivious of the fact that the point they were entering "may have been" designed for 50 percent less number of moving traffic and not this number of immobile vehicles. It is amazing how when you have all the time to waste, your mind starts

wondering. I couldn't help wondering what the impact of this load was on the structure of the bridge and if this had been taken into account in the maintenance schedule.

A sad fact of reality in Johannesburg is that it seems most people, and this is no joke, seem to be convinced that laws and orderly conduct of life is usually meant for other beings excluding themselves and such other beings are in general perceived to have a lesser intellect. The prevailing sentiment, it would seem, is not only to consistently have to prove this point, but sometimes to prove to experts that they know better. In this case, the experts being the designers and engineers who built the suspension bridge. As I progressed slowly across, I couldn't help wondering what if...

There are moments in one's life when you could almost swear that you have felt something that no-one else seemed to feel. This time I could have sworn that I felt several spasms on the bridge, as if the bridge was under strain (not surprisingly!!!), when I was somewhere on the suspension part.

My concern was if something goes wrong somewhere (like the bridge collapsing), after expressing sympathies for the victims, commentators would quickly seek out villains to vilify. Very few, if any, would take a moment to consider the contribution of the "victims" to the

incident that caused them harm. The objective would not, of course, be to blame the victims but to learn from the experience. Maybe it is this "**seek the villain**" culture which has led to the abject collective failure to comprehend that disobeying laws and regulations, and using shortcuts, is not only uncool, it could also be exceedingly dangerous.

On that particular day, I pondered as I sat in traffic, how much quicker we could all have gotten home more safely, with much less stress, if each road user was a bit more considerate and displayed a little bit of "**Ubuntu**".

Just for clarification

In reporting on the solutions reached at the Workshop, MOSH e-news reported that "the solution reached by the Dust Adoption Team was the utilisation of a dust suppression agent added to water and complemented by fogging units...", The actual opportunity statement of the Dust Adoption Team is "**fogger unit complemented by dust suppression agent and supported by a dust management system manual**". *MOSH e-news* regrets the error

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