



Case Study

Curiousmind helps one of Australia's largest Energy Companies achieve their best safety records ever.

IMPROVING SAFETY LEADERSHIP WITH CURIOUSMIND

THE CHALLENGE

With a head office mandate to improve safety, a culture survey identified low visibility leadership and poor alignment and engagement as critical issues inhibiting safety awareness and practice.

THE SOLUTION

Given the poor leadership visibility rather than employ external safety professionals to deliver a comprehensive 2.5-day internal safety awareness program, it was decided to engage Curiousmind (CM) to develop internal leaders as facilitators.

THE RESULTS

- The best safety results ever
- Improved morale
- Significantly improved line management strength

Curiousminds'
extensive experience
in both personal
and professional
development ensured



lasting cultural
change

THE CHALLENGE:

In a heavily engineering dominated leadership team that planned to deliver a program with over 300 PowerPoint slides, the first challenge was to agree that dry, information loaded presentations could do more harm than good.

Active "them and us" attitudes and mindsets between management and the workforce, made worse by some legacy resentment after fatalities more than a decade previously, suggested we needed to find ways to help put issues aside as quickly as possible. Large geographical distances between sites and head office also contributed to these attitudes.

Numerous examples of poor communication further fuelled these positions. A common issue, for instance, was people not feeling heard. Workers were frustrated that when they sent reports about unsafe plant or equipment, they frequently never received a response. Seeing the unsafe material there a year or more later led to beliefs that management's focus on safety was inauthentic.

The technical nature of much of the information required an innovative approach to delivery. How could we keep people focused for two and a half days and retain what they've heard? How do we make safety "fresh" for people who may have attended hundreds if not thousands of safety meetings? How do we shift attitudes like "you're killing us with safety procedures", "management don't care (inauthentic)", or "the workers are careless?" How do we move safety from another task to be complied with to a genuine Safety-First Value?

**Curiousminds’
cultural
transformation
expertise has been
developed over
twenty years
working in the oil
and gas, mining,
finance, IT,
education and
public sectors
across Australasia,
S.E Asia and the
Middle East**



THE SOLUTION:

To meet these challenges, CM proposed an initial facilitation skills program for 25 senior leaders. The focus was on developing stronger, more trust and respect-based relationships by engaging the workforce in meaningful conversations about their safety experiences.

With many years of capability in both the personal and professional development space, CM helped these leaders recognise the importance of developing their EQ to enhance their ability to lead, communicate, and build trust to influence changes in attitude and behaviour. Facilitating a shift in mindsets requires empathy and the ability to “pull” (rather than push or coerce) people towards something that inspires them.

The initial training also identified strong biases towards a “telling” culture and PowerPoint overload. To shift this to a more collaborative, coaching style we taught them how to engage people’s curiosity about safety. We also covered essential facilitation skills, including engagement, questioning, storytelling, modelling (demonstrating by action) and listening.

Curiousmind facilitators/coaches then attended approximately 15 of the 25 programs run by this group to nearly 300 managers and supervisors. We worked as coaches, debriefing each facilitation team (4 managers per workshop) after each module and at the end of the program.

Overcoming legacy resentment and building trust was seen as a critical first step in creating a safety-first culture. Rather than presenting data and telling people what was expected of them, management began by engaging the workforce in conversations that gave everyone a sense of agency, improving ownership of their safety culture.

Due to this coaching approach's success, the client then invited CM to train a further 40 mid-level and front-line managers as facilitators (safety leaders) for the rollout to all staff and contractors.

A team of 6 CM facilitators/coaches then attended and provided coaching on sixty-five, 2.5-day workshops over the following two years. With our facilitation experience and our diverse backgrounds in management, health, journalism, law, acting, neuroscience and personal development, the CM team quickly earned the trust and respect of all these managers.

CM also advised on innovative ways to present the information and keep the attendees engaged. One example that characterises this was when a manager began his session with a provocative (but well planned) question. In the conversation (and the curiosity) his question inspired, the group raised every key objective he had intended to present. To have achieved all this without one slide or prepared activity was a turning point for everyone. The realisation that how we communicate could improve what we communicate helped all managers grow from presenters to facilitators, from managers to leaders.

Our signature piece on Self-Awareness (and being present to avoid distractions or mistakes) consistently rated as the most impactful module during the initial workshops. As a result, CM delivered it to nearly all 1,400 managers, employees and contractors. Some of the ideas presented eventually developed into part of the common language across most sites. It became a valuable tool at morning toolbox meetings as a fit for work assessment - the thinking being, if you're not present (tired, frustrated, worried etc.), you're not safe - and nor do you have my back.

CM developed a range of specific metrics and a purpose-built database to monitor each manager's progress over the program's duration.

While not an immediate objective of the program, it became abundantly clear that managers involved in the project developed significantly improved communication, influencing and team building capability and confidence.

With the CM team coaching the managers delivery, facilitating these programs became, effectively, a two-year leadership development program for all the managers.

Because the training was necessarily quite technical, we agreed that some follow-up "soft skills training would benefit all managers and supervisors (approximately 320). CM facilitators delivered 20 one-day workshops on Engaging Hearts and Minds and Advanced Communications skills (influence and Critical Conversations).

With over 1400 staff and contractors trained; the client invited CM to strengthen line management ability to support its safety message. CM coaches shadowed 108 supervisors (across all sites and ocean platforms) for a day, coaching them in their daily interactions with their team members. The success of this approach led to us being invited back the following year to repeat the process.

CM also facilitated two three-day team alignment workshops with the executive leadership team and several whole-site team alignment workshops during this time. The focus of these initiatives was building trust, commitment and alignment and confidence in conducting accountability conversations.

Perhaps some of the most significant measures of the commitment to safety were seen at home. Driving past employee houses (easily identified as they were reverse parked) you would see men mowing their lawns in full PPE with their sons in full PPE next to them!

The organisation further demonstrated their commitment by providing safety equipment to be borrowed for home use.



Safety Leadership Programs

CM facilitators are currently running safety leadership programs in several utility, engineering and mining support companies. These programs are designed to build on the back of existing safety processes to help drive a safety-first culture. Most of these programs begin at the executive level, cascading down to front line team leaders (and the workforce).

The objective is always the same, get people curious about themselves, each other and better ways of working together to build strong safety cultures.

*The course you rolled out to ***** Engineering, for me personally was the most informative and insightful course I have ever attended. Your course changed my thought process to better understand my role as a supervisor.*

The Safety Leadership workbook along with the notes & photographs of your handwritten information, has also provided me with a new range of tools to apply to safety & productivity in the workplace.

Your ability to teach your techniques and apply these processes is brilliant.

Thank you.

Mark Andrews

ABOUT CURIOSMIND

Curiousmind is the coming together of a team of passionate educators and change agents. With many years' experience in the personal and professional development sphere and diverse career backgrounds CM facilitators and coaches have unified around a desire to re-engage people with their innate curiosity.

We see curiosity as the catalyst for all forms of engagement leading to improved exploration and discovery, creativity, problem solving, team bonding and learning.

We have uncovered several key educational and managerial assumptions that actively suffocate people's curiosity. By unveiling these assumptions, we help engage and empower people to learn and change