BEWAG General Assembly

Safety culture

26 April 2017

JM Dechamps

EUROPEAN
UNION
AGENCY
FOR RAILWAYS

Purpose of the presentation

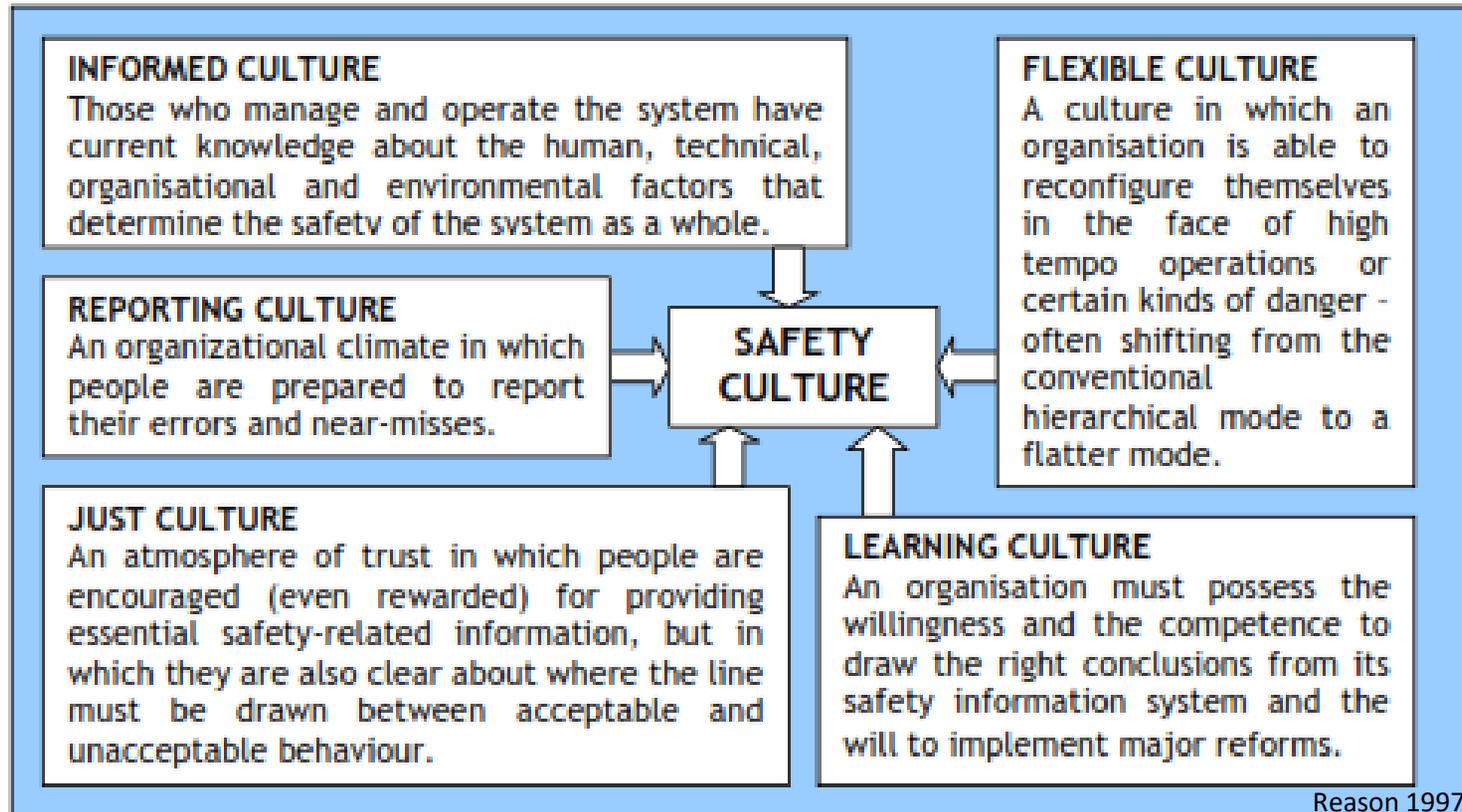Introduce the concept of safety culture

Key points of the presentation

Describe different principles necessary for an appropriate safety culture.

Why Safety Culture now?

- Business reasons
  - **Changing** world!
  - Railway system = **Collaborative system** with plenty of actors: e.g. RUs, IMs, Loaders, shunters, ECMs, maintenance workshops, other partners, contractors. No single actor can control all aspects → need of **trust**
  - SMS and risk based approach: Need of **information** to take decisions.
  - **Cost reduction**: Flatter organization (less hierarchical and control levels)
- New European legislation - Recast Railway Safety Directive
  - Recital 10
    "Member States should promote a culture of **mutual trust**, **confidence and learning** in which the staff of railway undertakings and infrastructure managers are encouraged to contribute to the development of safety while confidentiality is ensured."
  - Article 9 (2)
    "………Through the safety management system, infrastructure managers and railway undertakings shall promote a culture of **mutual trust, confidence and learning** in which staff are encouraged to contribute to the development of safety while ensuring confidentiality."

What is Safety Culture ? (1)

INFORMED CULTURE
Those who manage and operate the system have current knowledge about the human, technical, organisational and environmental factors that determine the safety of the system as a whole.

REPORTING CULTURE
An organizational climate in which people are prepared to report their errors and near-misses.

JUST CULTURE
An atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged (even rewarded) for providing essential safety-related information, but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

SAFETY CULTURE

FLEXIBLE CULTURE
A culture in which an organisation is able to reconfigure themselves in the face of high tempo operations or certain kinds of danger – often shifting from the conventional hierarchical mode to a flatter mode.

LEARNING CULTURE
An organisation must possess the willingness and the competence to draw the right conclusions from its safety information system and the will to implement major reforms.

Reason 1997

Definition:

A combination of values, beliefs, vision, purpose, policies, objectives and leadership styles that impact on an organisation's safety. A positive safety culture is characterized by awareness, assessment and action on safety matters in all these areas, and is supported by an open communications style throughout the whole organisation.

(Definition as used in draft CSM for Conformity assessment. Source: Definition from RSSB: Understanding Human factors a guide for the railway industry, p99)

- **What is Just Culture?**

Definition:

— A culture in which front-line operators and others are **not punished for actions, omissions or decisions taken** by them which are commensurate with their experience and training, but where **gross negligence, will full violations and destructive acts are not tolerated**.

(Definition as used by ERA in the safety culture programme. Source: (aviation) REGULATION (EU) No 376/2014, art. 2k)

- Organizational Culture?
  Safety Culture?
  An organization's culture has attributes that support good safety attributes, or it doesn't have.
  Examples:
  - Good safety practices require up and down information flow, if **informing is not a cultural norm** in all aspects of the organization

    → information flows will not exist in the safety aspect for very long.
  - If **employee involvement in planning is not a norm** for the organizational culture

    → employee involvement in safety planning won't last long.
  - If **employee responsibility for employee actions is not a norm** in the organizational culture

    → employee responsibility for safety won't last long.
  - If **clear and agreed expectations for performance are not a norm** for the organization

    → clear and agreed expectations for safety performance won't be a lasting norm, either.

- **Need to change?**
  - Up to each top management to identify
- **Changing an organisational culture is hard.**
  - It's like telling proud parents that their baby is ugly
  - both most frequent remarks heard from management is:

    "We're pretty good as we are. We're not broken, but you're telling me we have to change."

    "We have no time"
- **For ERA, The truth is that: To get better, to improve, change is necessary.**
  - Behavior-based change management incorporates changes in behavior, processes, and systems.
  - These changes, if **coordinated and designed thoughtfully**, can reinforce changes and minimize the time required to change organisational culture.

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

Making the railway system work better for society.

Follow us on Twitter: @ERA_railways