Developing excellence in the application of the Human Factors Analysis Tools (HFAT)

Human Factors Analysis Tools (HFAT) are designed to be an easily understood, methodical and comprehensive guide for the investigator in the human aspects to be considered during investigations and analysis. Investigators are trained to use the tool during a 2-day course, and are then licenced to apply the tools within their company.

Client feedback suggests that in some cases individuals do not have the opportunity to apply the tools immediately and so the learning is not reinforced. Others feel they would benefit from more support during initial applications of the tool. In response, The Kel Centre has developed a number of supportive initiatives to enable investigators to gain more confidence and experience in the use of HFAT. Organisations are now able to develop users beyond a basic knowledge of the tools so that they can guide others in the application of the tools.

One of the ways we help develop these skills is to support investigators during their internal investigations. Wood Group, a global energy services company, have used HFAT for a number of years and on occasion will ask for support in the application of HFAT during complex incident investigations. Colin Bruce, UK Senior Technical Manager for Wood Group PSN reported that "Investigation teams have found HFAT very easy to use producing excellent output which very quickly gets the team to the detail of which behaviours led to the incident and therefore which areas require focus to prevent a similar incident occurring again. On occasions where the behavioural aspects of an investigation are complex it is my experience that seconding a Kel Centre specialist into the investigation team brings immediate and significant benefits with the use of HFAT, advice on question sets for interviews, independent participation in the interviews and coming to a swift conclusion on the required behavioural changes in the organisation."

Support can also be offered remotely. In 2011 GSK, a global pharmaceutical company, asked for help to investigate a serious personal injury incident that had occurred in India. During this investigation TKC ran a series of webinars with the investigation team based in India where the team developed question sets and worked through the analysis together. Damian Jones, EHS Director for Asia Pacific GSK (GMS) reflects on the benefits of this approach "Basically to help us think in a different way about why somebody would do something seemingly inexplicable. That is not to say that we got absolute answers but it helped us ask questions that we may have otherwise not asked.” Regarding the process he comments "The first ABC (ABC stands for Antecedents Behaviours Consequences and is a methodology to analyse intentional behaviour) was slow but after we'd got the hang of it progress was much quicker".

Other initiatives have been the development of a 1 day HFAT+ course. This course uses actors to recreate an incident and gives delegates an opportunity to practice applying their skills in a more realistic environment.

Feedback from the first course included. "Very clear, interesting"; "Good refresher for HSE advisors that don’t use this tool often"; "Like the role play with regards interaction with actors and feedback at the end of each session". The course can be run as an open course at the Kel Centre or at client locations.

Lastly, we are also developing a method of assuring the competency of HFAT trained investigators through a process of coaching and testing. Organisations will soon be able to develop investigators who wish to become “super users” with the ability to monitor the performance of others and provide coaching to them.

If you would like more information please contact Johnny Mitchell: johnny@kelcentre.co.uk