



Are you there yet?

Moving safety from  
current to future  
state

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The evolving process of safety management has undergone many refinements to culminate in the contemporary shape of systems as we now understand them. But we have now also come to understand that no matter how well designed, these systems alone are not sufficient to make sure *people don't get hurt*. What has become clear is that consideration must equally be given to *the way* in which safety management is carried out.

Organisations vary greatly in size and complexity of their operations. This includes the exposure to varying hazards and risks. Irrespective of this, organisations must manage safety issues appropriately and indeed engender a 'culture' of safety that is robust and durable.

An organisation's journey to this culture is often referred to as *Safety Maturity*. The journey of *Safety Culture Maturity* engages the philosophies of Professor Patrick Hudson and others to ascribe an organisation's progress towards cultural maturity - from a basic crisis/highly reactive position where there is little concern for safety, through to a culture where safety is almost invisible, as it is integrated into the natural way things are carried out within the business.

Figure 1 describes the stages defined by Hudson. From left to right an organisation moves from the 'pathological' to the 'generative' culture. Rules and compliance dominate the first three stages, but as the culture moves towards generative, the rules become more of guidance.

SAFETY MATURITY				
Pathological	Reactive	Calculative	Proactive	Generative
The organisation cares less about safety than it does about being caught. Attributing and avoiding blame are driving forces of the culture. Safety is still not realised nor sought.	The organisation regards safety as important and looks for fixes to accidents and incidents after they happen. Blame is still a strong component. Error is not understood but learning is beginning.	The organisation has mechanically applied systems in place to manage hazards. Personnel mostly comply but do not necessarily believe those systems and rules are critically important.	The organisations systems are less mechanically applied and perceived as valuable. A sense of unease, a desire for knowledge and individual accountability are characteristics.	The organisation has integrated safety behaviour into everything it does. The values systems associated with safety are fully internalised as beliefs, almost to the point of invisibility.
NO RULES		RULES BOUND		RULES GUIDED KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN

Figure 1: Hudson's Safety Maturity model

The 5Cs model depicted in Figure 2 correlates the level of harm to the degree of safety maturity. As an organisation progressively matures the level of harm (incidents/injuries) declines. Like Hudson's model the first three stages are mostly rule driven with a strong reliance on management and supervision.



Figure 2: The 5Cs Maturity Model

The correlation with Hudson's model is depicted in Figure 3.

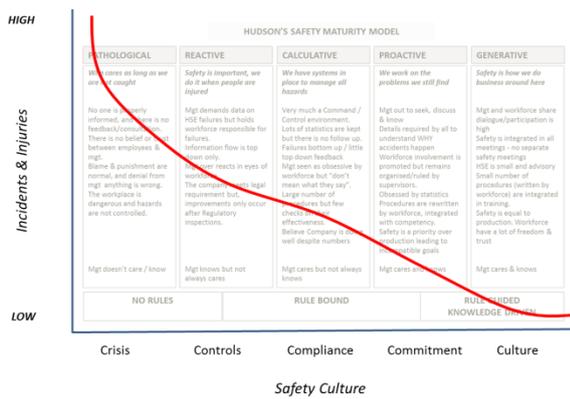


Figure 3: Hudson's model correlated to the 5Cs

Hudson's model and the 5C Maturity model describe the various stages of the safety journey. This same journey can be described as moving from *current state to future state* – not a new concept but increasingly important in the safety space.

Companies' current state is not always in a basic/crisis/pathological mode. They sit at varying levels of maturity. Depending what level they are at they will require different applications and interventions to help them along to their desired future state.

There are four distinct phases that enable the journey to future state.

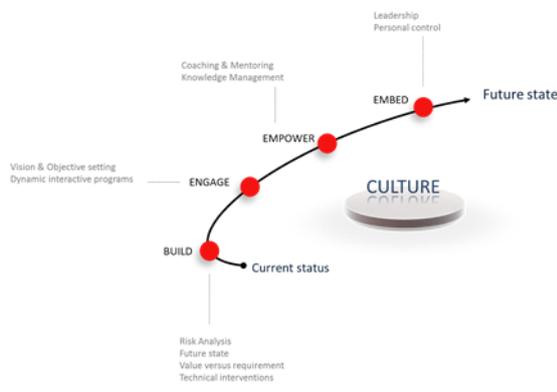


Figure 4: Current to Future State curve

We can map these phases against the two maturity models as in figure 5:

Figure 5 has two descriptions of *current state* position – pathological to generative (after Hudson) and crisis to culture (after the 5Cs). An organisation may sit anywhere along these lines depending on their level of *Safety Maturity*. Above those descriptors lie the activities and requirements for an organisation to move toward their *future state*. From the 'build' phase through to the 'embed' phase.

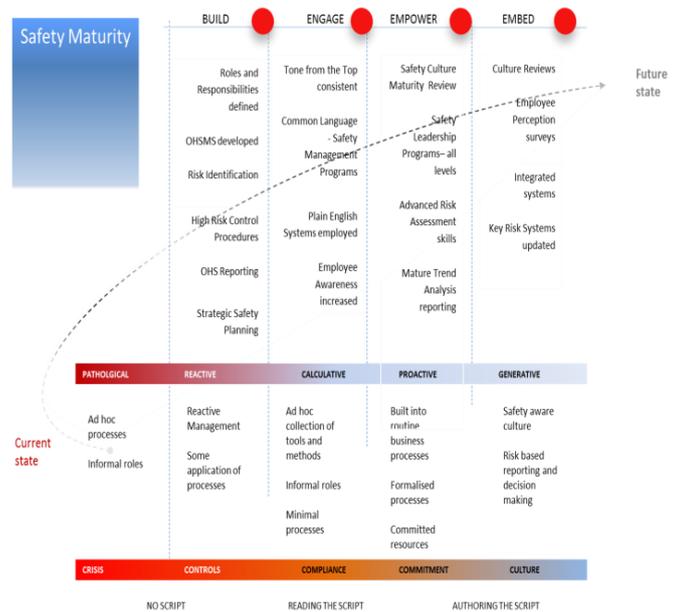


Figure 5: Current to Future State phases

## Explanation of the phases

### BUILD



Probably the most important step in the journey from current to future state is the *'Build'* phase.

Roles and Responsibilities defined

This is where a company begins to establish new platforms and systems of work, especially the core processes and components of the OHS Management System.

OHSMS developed

Risk Identification

The list in the accompanying graphic is not exhaustive. Included in this phase are activities such as

High Risk Control Procedures

- surveys
- gap analysis
- audit

OHS Reporting

These tools enable an organisation to understand their current state.

Strategic Safety Planning

### ENGAGE



Once the platform is under construction, it's time to engage your people to ensure alignment across the organisation.

Tone from the Top consistent

From the senior levels down, instruction in the new system and its working mechanisms sets the scene for a robust platform upon which the safety culture is built.

Common Language - Safety Management Programs

It dovetails into the next phase where safety leadership expertise is requisite at all levels.

Plain English Systems employed

Employee Awareness increased

EMPOWER 

Safety Culture  
Maturity Review

Safety  
Leadership  
Development—  
all levels

Advanced Risk  
Assessment  
skills

Mature Trend  
Analysis  
reporting

The level of leadership at this phase requires a serious maturity in order to enable people to achieve. The word *empower* is very instructive here – it's exactly what an organisation needs to do in order to build a strong and robust safety culture. Leadership, at all levels, enables this empowerment

Organisations increasingly adopt more sophisticated systems and training to maintain the upward movement to future state.

EMBED 

Culture Reviews

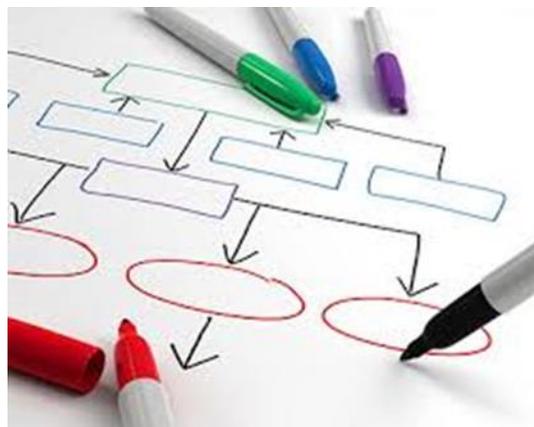
Employee  
Perception  
surveys

Integrated  
systems

Key Risk Systems  
updated

This is the pinnacle of the change process but it needs regular attention to keep things 'hot' so to speak.

The need here is to continually review and where necessary amend systems, as well as driving deeper into the organisation's perceptions and beliefs in order to keep it current.



## Conclusion

No matter what the current state of safety is, organisations need to be constantly mindful of reviewing and improving their approaches. This is integral to building but especially maintaining a strong safety management process and culture.

By regularly assessing the level of maturity organisations can stay on top of issues and lapses, utilising a variety of suitable approaches.



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