

Case Study.
Stora Enso.
Europe.
Pulp, paper & timber.

Turning safety around

Finnish pulp, paper and timber producing site Stora Enso Veitsiluoto tackles the cause head-on with dss⁺.

For years, Finnish pulp and paper manufacturer Stora Enso had achieved ever decreasing Lost Time Accident (LTA) rates. But in 2010 things changed. First, safety performance at its Veitsiluoto mill in Kemi plateaued, and then incidents began multiplying. There was nothing dramatic the company could pinpoint. Causes were common – slips, trips and falls, but some had serious consequences. The company noticed it was not only the number of accidents that was on the rise, but also their gravity.

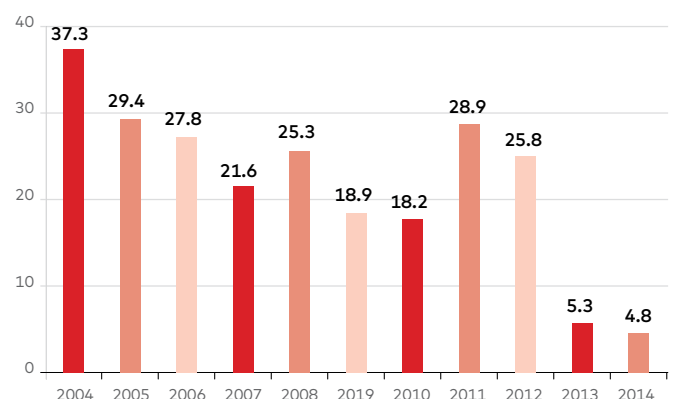
After months of further incidents and a rise in its insurance premium, Stora Enso Veitsiluoto realised it could not continue on this path. Not only were the incidents endangering their employees, but they were also affecting staff recruitment, funding and development plans.

Mill manager Juha Mäkimattila recognised that:

"... safety functioned more at the systems level. It did not really penetrate the organisation and reach people, but was always managed as a side issue. Although our safety performance was above the Finnish industry average, it was still far below the Stora Enso target."



The mill eventually decided to call in a specialist for advice. It was aware of safety improvements achieved by other companies in conjunction with dss⁺, a work safety management consultancy, and asked them to carry out an assessment of the Veitsiluoto site.



Lost Time Accident Rates at Stora Enso Veitsiluoto
2004 – 2014

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dss+ project manager Sami Karvinen recalls what they found: "The mill had a good safety system in place. Most of the personnel knew the rules and what they were meant to do, but too often they did not understand why the rules were there. From what dss+ has seen in its many safety consultancy engagements, if operators cannot understand the immediate benefit of safety precautions, they frequently depart from prescribed actions to, for example, speed up work or simplify a task." dss+ had found a culture of dependence on rules in which employees did not think about safety for themselves. dss+ believed the way forward was to develop a much more independent culture by focusing on the motivation behind and influences on people's behaviour.

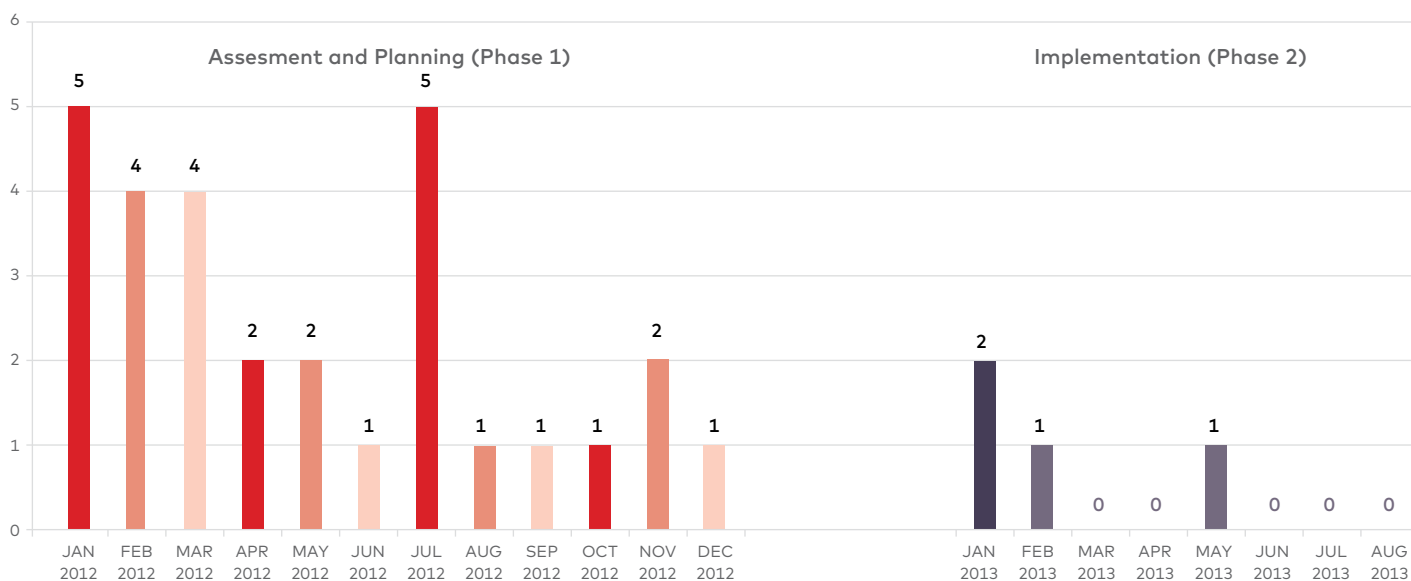
Engaging people's minds

In 2013, Stora Enso Veitsiluoto embarked on an improvement programme in cooperation with dss+ called "Safer Veitsiluoto". This programme was designed by dss+ to, firstly, train up the executive board and all its managers and, secondly, internal trainees who could pass on their knowledge to all of the mill's 750 employees. "It was a massive effort. Veitsiluoto was obviously

determined to change safety performance around," Karvinen says. "In just seven months, they carried out 55 internal training workshops, each attended by between six and 16 people. That's almost eight workshops a month."

Mr Mäkimattila took part in the training for managers. "It was very hands-on. We got a much better understanding of the basic principles of safety leadership and especially the importance of people's behaviour." He also felt the employee training carried out by dss+ coached internal trainers gave everyone a common approach to safety.

Employees who attended the one-day workshops were asked to think about their work patterns and conditions and bring examples from their daily work to the training sessions. In this way, trainers and employees could jointly address specific issues and develop methods to deal with future challenges. It also led to a dialogue on safety, which encouraged employees to make suggestions, provide feedback and become engaged in the process of improving safety performance.



Number of LTA Accidents

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Stora Enso Veitsiluoto OHS manager Camilla Ahlblad believes the new Safety Leadership Team and very clear, goal-oriented and highly visible safety targets had the greatest effect. "The training programme laid the groundwork. Now, we have to keep safety alive through daily activities, frequent communication on safety, regular safety walks, an internal safety reward system and visible senior management commitment that demonstrates safety is a key requirement at every level."

The difference a year can make

One year is not a lot of time to turn around the safety culture of a site that employs 750 people. So, what changes can Stora Enso Veitsiluoto see?

Aki Heinikoski, a process operator, describes the focus in the past as: "There is always the challenge of trying to balance the demands of production with productivity and performance." He sees a clear difference in the amount of time being devoted to safety now, but questions the cost. "Half our working time is now spent on safety. What happens to the 'real' work?" But other operators disagree. Matti Soraranta says, "The accident frequency change feels good. Now that we have to write things down and think about them, safety stays in your mind much better." Management assistant Soile Ollikainen has a similar view. "Now, safety has gone more to the spinal cord. It is one of the important things in life. It doesn't just apply to work, but also at home or in traffic."

Hard facts

These opinions provide a snapshot of the change in mood and attitude towards safety, but is this reflected in the statistics? Ms Ahlblad says that four out of five shifts have reached their safety target. Overall, the mill has achieved a drop in the LTA (Lost Time Accident) rate from 28.5 per million man hours in 2012 to 5.3 per million man hours in 2013 – a decrease of more than 80 per cent. "The TRI (Total Recordable Incidents) frequency rates have also been cut in half," she explains.

Senior management has been very involved in the entire process, taking part in accident investigations and



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CAMILLA AHLBLAD, OHS MANAGER, STORA ENSO VEITSILUOTO

monitoring safety indicators on a monthly basis. Ms Ahlblad says: "dss+ has helped us clarify the role that management has to play in improving safety. We now have clear tools to help us discuss and monitor safety. We have a safety leadership team that keenly follows safety results. As safety indicators have improved, we have also noticed that people's professional pride and job satisfaction has increased. There is also a noticeable change in cleanliness and order throughout the site. Most importantly, the severity of the type of incidents has also fallen dramatically."

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For Stora Enso Veitsiluoto, the effort, time and cost invested in improving safety performance has paid off. The mill is continuing to use the tools set up with dss+ and will run more training sessions next year, using the by now experienced internal trainers. Stora Enso has also put in place a corporate safety award. All employees are able to nominate a team. Out of 100 nominations in 2013, Stora Enso Veitsiluoto won the best leadership improvement category.

"The work continues and cannot stop. Our goal is zero and on the way there the target for the end of 2014 is an LTA rate of 3.

JUHA MÄKIMATTILA, MILL MANAGER,
STORA ENSO VEITSILUOTO

Continuing the journey

The results that Stora Enso Veitsiluoto has achieved in just over a year show a tremendous shift from a dependent safety culture to one that is en route to becoming independent. The site is doing all it can to continue on that journey towards an interdependent workforce in which employees not only look out for themselves, but each other. Stora Enso has set itself the target of providing everyone with some kind of safety training every year. As Mr Mäkimattila says: "The work continues and cannot stop. Our goal is zero and on the way there the target for the end of 2014 is an LTA rate of 3." Watch this space.



Assignment

Develop a more independent safety culture to deliver an improved safety performance.



Offering

Workplace and process safety assessments, leadership training & coaching.



Impact

Reduced LTA (Lost Time Accident) rates
TRI (Total Recordable Incidents) down by 50%.

dss+

Protect. Transform. Sustain.

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