

A GUIDE TO THE GUIDE: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

Why do writers write? Because it isn't there.

—Thomas Berger

YOUR TOUGH SAFETY CHALLENGES

If you picked up this book, chances are that you're a leader out in operations, searching for answers to the challenges that go along with seeing to it that the people you're responsible for go home safe. Every day. During my 13 years as a line manager in a chemical plant, responsible for the safety of hundreds of people in operations and maintenance, I faced similar challenges. Over the last decade, serving as a management consultant, I've had the opportunity to work with your peers, leaders like you in all kinds of industries: from mining gold to hauling chemicals on the high seas. If you think seeing to it that everyone goes home safe at the end of every work day is a critical responsibility, I can assure you that you're in good company: more than twenty thousand of your peers in industries all over the world are looking for answers to the same challenges you face in managing safety performance.

How do I know that? Because I've asked. One of my favorite questions to ask a leader like you is: "As a leader, what are the top 10 toughest safety challenges you face—every day?"

Over the span of nearly a decade, I've heard from twenty thousand of your industrial peers, a big majority of whom are front-line supervisors. No matter what the industry—oil and gas exploration, production and refining, mining, construction, chemicals, maintenance, power generation and distribution, pipelines, trucking and transportation—or where in the world we happen to be standing when asking the question—from northern Alberta to southern Argentina; from California to Indonesia—the answers to this question are always fundamentally the same.

Narrow the challenges down to 10, and the list looks like this:

1. Compliance: getting people to all the follow the rules—all the time.
2. Complacency: convincing people that they can get hurt doing the work they're assigned.
3. Attitude: getting people to buy into the idea that safety is that important.
4. Change: dealing with changing rules, policies, and procedures.
5. Recognizing hazards: getting people to recognize what can hurt them.
6. The boss: leaders—and customers—who don't always "walk the talk" on safety.
7. Experience: green hands who don't have enough of it, and senior people who have more than enough—and the bad habits to prove it.
8. Near misses: finding out about them, and doing the right thing before it's too late.
9. Production: getting the work done *and* getting it done safely.
10. Time: finding the time to do everything that is expected—and manage safety performance.

Are you surprised by anything on the list?

Hardly. Take the time to contemplate the challenges you face in managing safety, and you'll likely come up with a similar list. The problem is that most leaders are too busy dealing with the challenges to spend time thinking about them. Or to do the research, benchmarking, and observation of the best practices needed to determine the "what to do" and "how to do it" in order to deal effectively with these real-world leadership challenges.

What a difference a day can make ... for better or worse

Providing *practical* answers to these kinds of challenges is exactly why this book was written, and what it is intended to do. Sure, there's a place for academic research and leadership theory about safety management. But in the heat of battle—and most days, leading the outfit to get the product out the door and do that safely is just that, a battle—leaders want practical solutions that are guaranteed to work. And they want those solutions in a readily useable form: simple, practical, and effective.

Alive and Well at the End of the Day is a book about the practice of leadership, specifically as it relates to managing safety on the job. If you're facing the same kinds of leadership challenges as your peers all over the world—attitude, accountability, behavior, compliance, complacency, culture —this is the right book for you to read.

The answers are here: proven techniques that successful leaders in operations all over the world—who have faced those same challenges—use in seeing to it that people work safely. This is a book written for use by leaders out in real operations—and in real time.

You'll find the answers laid out, one challenge at a time, in a very logical sequence. For many of the challenges there are real-world scenarios that illustrate how the challenge manifests itself out on the shop floor, and examples of how the techniques might look when properly executed. You won't need much imagination to picture the problems—likely you'll think many of the situations came from your operation, maybe even someone on your crew.

FINDING TIME: ONE OF YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGES

Most of us grew up being trained to read books from beginning to end. The presumption is that a book is written sequentially, each chapter building on the one preceding. By that logic, you can't appreciate the last chapter unless you've read all the chapters leading up to it.

Of course, the presumption by the author is that the reader actually has ample spare time to read the book from beginning to end. In this day and age, how realistic is that?

Alive and Well at the End of the Day started out to be a short book—the kind of book a busy leader like you might actually have the time to read, cover to cover. There was a problem with that: the challenges leaders face in managing safety performance are too numerous and too complex to be dealt with in a brief or incomplete way. So, to do the subject of leading safety performance justice, this is a long book. You would still do well to read it from beginning to end—if you have time.

I didn't.

Not when I had a management job in operations. Likely you don't either. Therein lies a very fundamental problem. Your time as a leader is precious. You're looking for help, but don't really have the time to wade through pages of written material to find it.

Quick answers or a complete course ... designed to fit your needs

That's why you find this chapter, "A Guide to the Guide," at the beginning. Think of it as the troubleshooting guide in the owner's manual. You know how that works: a condition, symptom, or problem is described, followed by instructions for fixing the problem. It's a great approach to getting the information you need—fast. No need to spend time on what's working well.

This book wasn't written on the assumption that it needs to be read from beginning to end, or that you have the time to do that. If you don't, here is the alternative approach: read the chapters that offer immediate help for the specific challenges you face right now. Save the other chapters for later, when need dictates or time permits.

BOOK GUIDE

Accountability	When things go wrong, people aren't held accountable. ➡	Chapter 11
Attitude	How do I change people's attitude to get them to work safely? ➡	Chapter 8
Buy-in	How do I get people to buy in to the importance of safety – and take responsibility for their own safety? ➡	Chapter 2
Change	I'm constantly faced with changing safety policies and procedures. ➡	Chapter 10
Changing Behavior	How to I get people to follow the rules, even when I'm not there? ➡	Chapter 8
Compliance	How to I get people to follow all the safety rules we have? ➡	Chapter 6
Complacency	Given the repetitive nature of our work, how do I prevent my crew from becoming complacent? ➡	Chapter 7
Control	As the leader, I may be responsible but I have no control over what happens. ➡	Chapter 21
Culture	How do I create an excellent safety culture in my organization? ➡	Chapter 14
Equipment	I'm handcuffed by the equipment I've been given to operate, but there isn't a lot of money available for upgrade. ➡	Chapter 19
Experience	A lot of our people are new and don't have a great deal of experience. ➡	Chapter 21
Execution	If only I could just get the people in my organization to do all the things they are already supposed to do. ➡	Chapter 15
Hazard Recognition	How do I get people to recognize the hazards they're exposed to on the job? ➡	Chapter 7
Influence	As just one leader in a big organization, can I really do anything that will make a difference? ➡	Chapter 19
Investigations	How do I get people to own up to what actually went wrong – and what they did to contribute to the situation? ➡	Chapter 16 Chapter 18

Figure 1.1

Investigations	How do I get people to own up to what actually went wrong – and what they did to contribute to the situation? ➡	Chapter 16 Chapter 18
Leading	What do I actually do as a leader to get people to work safely? ➡	Chapter 3
Leadership	What kind of a leader do I need to be to get great safety performance? ➡	Chapter 18 Chapter 22
Lessons Learned	What are the lessons other leaders have learned when managing safety performance? ➡	Chapter 20
Measurement	There must be a better way to measure safety performance than simply by counting serious injuries. ➡	Chapter 17
Middle Management	If my leaders don't change, we'll never be able to achieve great safety performance. ➡	Chapter 18 Chapter 19
Near-misses	I know we have many near-misses that I never hear about. ➡	Chapter 7 Chapter 17
Positive Reinforcement	If we were to eliminate every risk, we might as well quit the business. ➡	Chapter 8
Risk Management	I know we are having near-misses that I never hear about. ➡	Chapter 7
Risk Taking	My people are taking risks that I think are unacceptable. ➡	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
Safety Meetings	Our safety meetings are just plain boring. ➡	Chapter 12
Safety Suggestions	I can't remember the last time I got a good safety suggestion from someone on my crew. ➡	Chapter 13
Solutions	When there has been an accident, how can I come up with a solution that really will prevent it from happening again? ➡	Chapter 16
System	Is it the system that gets people hurt, or someone's choice of behavior? ➡	Chapter 18
Time	I have so many things on my plate that I just don't have enough time to manage safety performance. ➡	Chapter 4
Training	How do we make sure our training courses are up to the test of teaching people what they need to know to work safely? ➡	Chapter 15

Figure 1.1 Continued

READ CHAPTER 2 FIRST

No matter what kind of challenges you face, Chapter 2, “The Case for Safety,” is the place to start. “The Case for Safety” describes the *real* reasons why safety is always the most important thing to get right for every leader in operations. More important than getting the product to the customer or making sure the customer is satisfied with the work.

Even if you’re already sure you know the reasons for that, it’s still a chapter worth reading. It explains the most fundamental idea in the book. But then, the basics never go out of style, and there have been more than a few leaders who never fully appreciated the case for safety until it was too late. You’ll read some of their stories in this chapter, and will be able to appreciate why you never want to be in their shoes!

Building toward a complete understanding of managing for safe results

Once you’ve read Chapter 2, go for solutions to your most pressing problems. In *Alive and Well* you’ll find ways to deal with each of the specific safety leadership challenges in the chapter list. In each chapter you’ll find a fuller explanation of the nature of each of these challenges: why each isn’t some minor irritant and can’t be easily solved by a safety meeting or another safety policy, and why leadership is required to make a real difference. Often the challenge will be illustrated by a case study or scenario.

Then we’ll delve into potential solutions. Instead of theory, we’ll offer concrete strategies and tactics—what to do and how to do it—that have been successfully used by leaders. In each chapter we’ll also show you, with examples, how to implement these techniques. See Figure 1.1 for a guide to this book.

All that is designed to help you improve safety performance, or stay at the level of excellence you are currently achieving. Getting there is half the battle; staying there is the other part.

JUST IN CASE

You might be one of the lucky few in the ranks of leaders who have managing safety performance down to a science and don’t think they need any help. If so, luck probably has little to do with your success. But if you have any nagging doubts about whether you really do have all the bases covered, try reading Chapter 20 next, “The Top 10 Mistakes Managers Make in Managing Safety Performance.” If nothing else, that chapter will provide a cross-check to ensure you haven’t overlooked something that might prove fatal.