



Survey Report:

Directors Views on Health and Safety

Prepared for

Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety

by

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background	4
The Survey	4
The Directors	5
Directors' views on health and safety	7
Board practices	10
Governance of Health and Safety in the Future	12
Accountability	12
Code of Practice	14
Directors' Skills	15
Making Boards more effective	15
Directors' final comments	17
Appendix One: Directors Survey	19

Executive Summary

A phone survey of current New Zealand Board Directors was conducted during February 2013 to support the work of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety. The survey sought to explore the views and experiences of Directors in their management of health and safety matters. Directors were also asked to comment on what future changes or improvements could be made to increase the effectiveness of Board oversight of health and safety matters.

Overall, the views of the Directors surveyed about health and safety are not that surprising. This is a group of very experienced Directors who volunteered to participate in the survey and most expressed strong views about the importance of health and safety and active Board engagement in health and safety.

The interviewees, who overall have a reasonably high level of awareness of health and safety, rated the Boards they sit on well in terms of their health and safety practices. Other less positive influences however appear to impact on the extent to which good practices are consistently applied. In particular comment was made about the extent to which Board Chairs rate health and safety as a priority and the level of experience of fellow Board members. The level of perceived health and safety issues and risks in an organisation also has a bearing on the degree of focus Boards apply to health and safety.

Directors had a range of views about the impact on Boards of having increased accountability for health and safety. Concerns about the capability and capacity of current Directors to meet additional responsibility, the clarity of responsibilities for different parties and a concern that any personal liability may flavour how Boards respond, are all important considerations in shaping how any additional responsibilities may be framed and implemented.

On the whole the Directors see the need for a Code of Practice that is practical, flexible and useable. It should provide a framework, be principle based and incentivise good practice, rather than have a compliance focus. In addition comments were made that Directors would need to be upskilled if such a code were to be introduced.

Directors responses suggest there is a lack of adequate operational and industry specific health and safety knowledge sitting at the Board table to fully understand current risks and to have confidence those risks are being managed. They propose regular training to improve knowledge, but also to enable the application of critical questioning and thinking.

A focus on practical initiatives to lift Board practices and improve transparency about health and safety performance appear to be priorities for the Directors spoken to, with training and performance reporting seen as key for improving Board effectiveness. The challenge of maintaining a focus on health and safety is also reflected in the comments by Directors who suggested on-going awareness raising and greater systematising of health and safety governance.

Background

A critical factor that influences how workplaces address health and safety issues is the strategic direction and priorities set by Boards of Directors. In the consultations that have taken place as part of the work of the Independent Task Force, a concern has been raised about the extent to which Directors are held sufficiently to account for health and safety. In particular, there is a view that health and safety is seen as a compliance cost, and is sometimes compromised in the pursuit of achieving financial targets or increased output.

In addition, the findings of the Royal Commission on the Pike River Coal Mine Tragedy are important in terms of context. The Commission concluded that the Pike River Board's focus on production targets set the tone for workplace operations, with health and safety being accorded a lower priority. Recommendations from the Royal Commission have been made that specifically relate to Directors, including imposing additional statutory responsibilities, developing an approved Code of Practice on governance practices for managing health and safety risks and the need for Directors to review and monitor compliance with health and safety law and good practice. It is clearly evident that any regulatory reform that emerges from the work of the Task Force is likely to address the issue of the responsibility of Directors for health and safety.

The Survey

In order to gather the views of Directors about health and safety and Boards' responsibilities the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety contracted Heathrose Research to conduct a survey¹. The Institute of Directors (IOD) supported the survey by identifying Directors to participate in the survey through their "Special Interests Group". This purposive sampling approach allowed Heathrose Research to access senior and experienced Directors, many of whom hold multiple Directorships, in private and publicly listed firms. In December 2012 the IOD emailed the Directors advising them about the research and its objectives, and inviting their participation in the survey.

Members who were willing to be approached for the survey were asked to agree to their names and contact details being provided to Heathrose Research. While there was a target of 30 Directors for this survey, 21 Directors volunteered to be interviewed and contact was able to be made with 17 current of them. All 17 agreed to participate and were interviewed². These Directors had significant experience and were involved in a wide range of industries. All of these Directors were interested in health and safety and in health and safety improvements, therefore the findings may not be generalisable to all Directors and Boards.

The questionnaires were set up in Survey Monkey and the data entered during the interviews by the researchers. All the Directors were sent the questionnaire in advance so they had time to consider their answers. The interviews took place in February 2013.

¹ Attached as Appendix One.

² Note while this sample is small researchers on sample size, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) argue that twelve interviews suffice for most researchers when they aim to discern themes concerning common views and experiences among relatively homogeneous people. Guest, G., Bunce, A., and Johnson, L. (2006) How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18, 59-82.

The Directors

The Directors interviewed sat on an average of 3.4 Boards each, more than 80% had over 10 years Board experience and their experience spanned a wide range of New Zealand industries.

Eight Directors currently serve on more than five Boards. In total the interviewees sat on 58 Boards with most sitting on a range of different types of Boards as illustrated in Table One below. The Boards were in organisations where there were 10,000 employees through to organisations where there were 4 employees.

Table One: Types of Boards Directors sat on

Board	Number of Directorships
SOE/CCO	9
Public Sector	6
Listed Company	8
Co-operative	4
Family Business	8
Not for profit	14
Other ³	9
TOTAL Boards	58

In addition to being on a number of Boards the Directors also had a depth of experience with 14 having been on Boards for more than 10 years. The Directors held a variety of roles across the Boards they sat on. Eleven are currently Chairs or Deputy Chairs, 14 hold Independent Director positions, and only five hold Executive Director roles.

The Directors sat on Boards across a range of industries⁴. Table Two below shows the industries the Directors were involved with.

³ These included private companies, overseas companies, education organisations.

⁴ ANZSIC06 classifications were used at industry level.

Table Two: Industries Directors are active in

Industry	Number of Directorships (n=58)
Accommodation and Food Services	2
Administration and Support Services	0
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	8
Arts and Recreation Services	3
Construction	7
Education and Training	3
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	5
Financial and Insurance Services	7
Information Media and Telecommunications	4
Health Care and Social Assistance	4
Manufacturing	2
Mining	2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2
Public Administration and Safety	2
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	0
Retail Trade	1
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	5
Wholesale Trade	1
Other Services	1

The majority of the Directors (14) said that they brought industry specific skills to their Boards. This was closely followed by 11 who said they brought financial skills, nine who said they brought marketing skills and nine who brought risk management skills. The next most cited skill was merger acquisitions with seven Directors saying they had this. The least mentioned skill that Directors brought to Boards was legal skills with only two directors saying they brought this. The Directors also mentioned other areas of skills they had including human resources (2), health and safety (2), governance (2), and commercial skills (2).

Nine thought they had been primarily nominated or recruited for their technical skills, while the remaining eight thought they had been nominated or recruited for the range of other skills and experience they had.

Directors' views on health and safety

Directors were asked for their views on a range of factors to do with the regulation of health and safety. Fifteen of them thought they had a clear understanding of the legislative requirements in relation to health and safety. In keeping with the fact that the majority thought they had been recruited for their industry skills all of them either strongly agreed or agreed they had a good understanding of the industries of their Boards and the same numbers strongly agreed they had a good understanding of the industry specific health and safety issues. However, fewer of them thought the latter was true of other Board members, with only four strongly agreeing and nine agreeing that this was the case.

The Directors were asked who they thought was primarily responsible for health and safety. Here the most agreed to response was that it was everybody's responsibility.

Everybody's responsibility. Should be higher on the agenda for people who want to be outstanding Directors ...

There is a mix of responsibility ... key responsibility is the Board, but the guy on the floor also has responsibility to his mates.

This was followed by those who thought it was the responsibility of the Board and that the Board needed to take the lead.

Boards must provide the environment in which management can deliver and be accountable for health and safety. If the Chair of the Board doesn't really care about health and safety then management won't either. The Board tone is critical. Regulations aren't too bad for directors but Boards must set the tone.

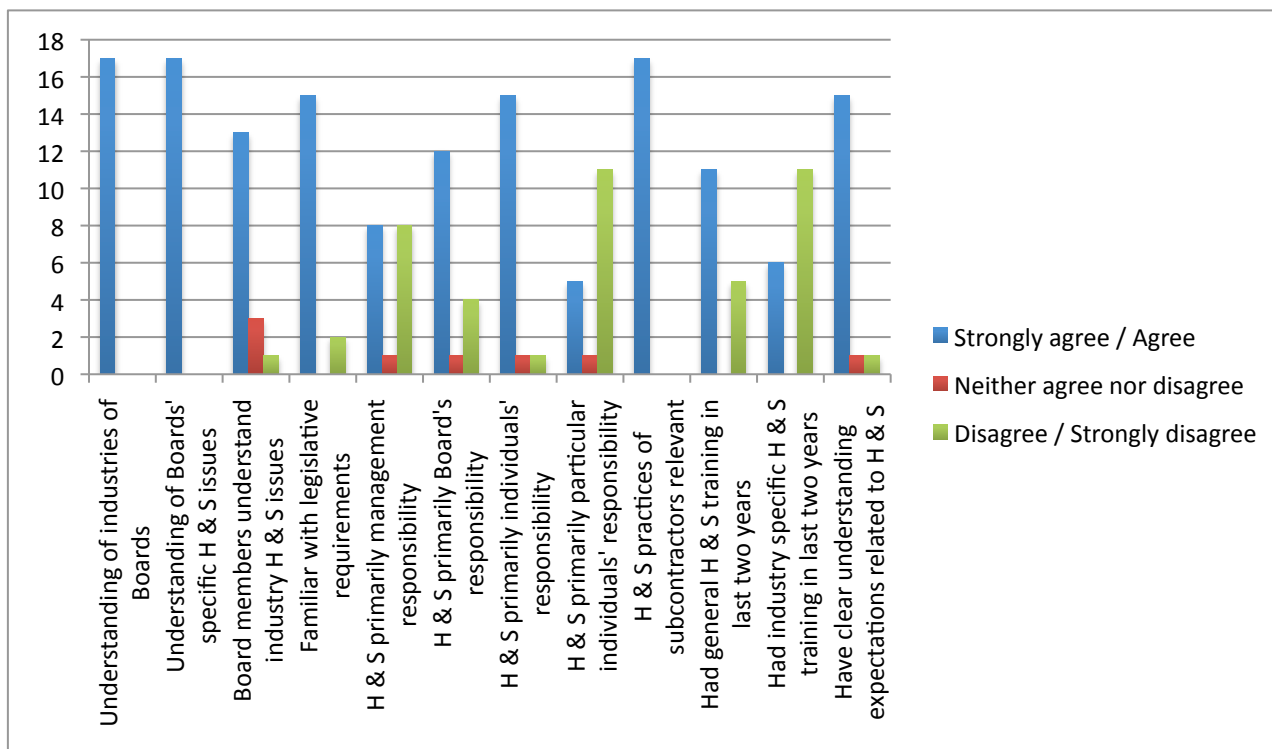
The current legislation makes it clear that Boards are responsible for health and safety.

The Directors also thought that the health and safety practices of subcontractors were of relevance to their board, with seven strongly agreeing and 10 agreeing that this was the case.

The majority of Directors (11) had attended general health and safety training in the last two years and six had attended industry specific training. Of these six, five had also attended general health and safety training.

The graph below summarises the Directors' views across a range of health and safety factors and responsibilities.

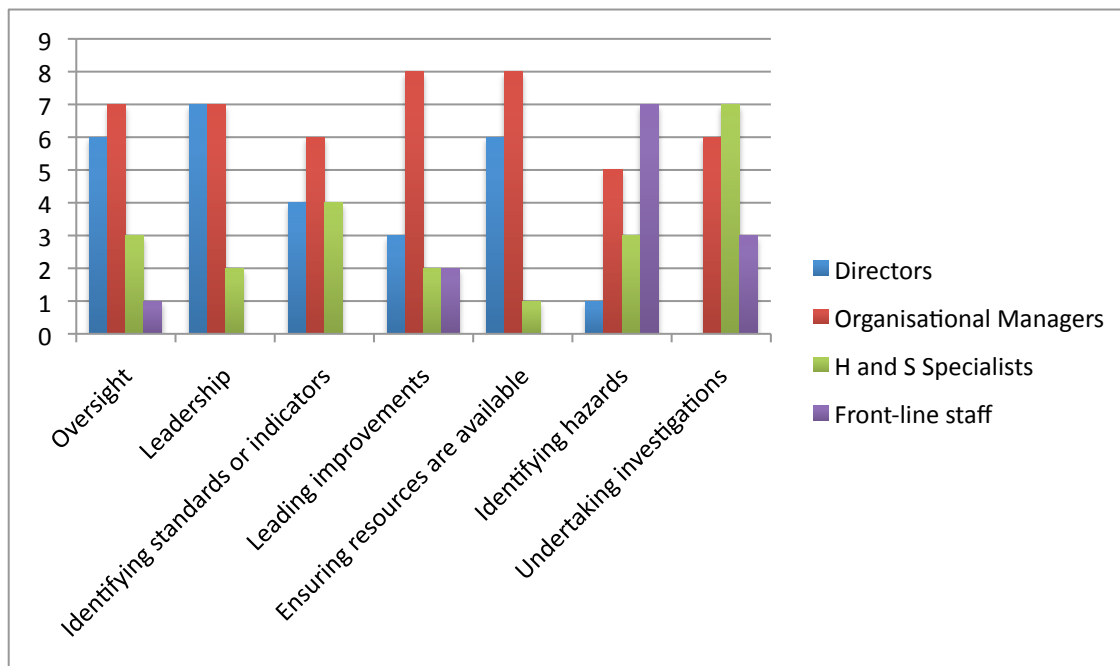
Graph One: Directors' views on health and safety practices



In addition to the responses above, we asked which two groups shared responsibility for specific aspects of health and safety in the workplace. The groups identified were Directors, organisational managers, health and safety specialists, and frontline staff. As might be expected Directors and organisational managers feature strongly in the aspects of oversight of systems; leadership and direction; and ensuring resources are available to support health and safety initiatives.

All the Directors thought that leading health and safety initiatives was the responsibility of organisational managers, but their views were varied as to whom this role should be shared with. Identifying hazards and taking steps to eliminate, isolate and minimise them was mainly seen as the responsibility of front line staff and shared mainly with organisational managers. Health and safety specialists were seen as having responsibility for undertaking accident/incident investigations with most of the directors thinking that this should be shared with organisational managers.

Graph Two: Health and Safety Responsibilities (n=9, each to provide two responses)⁵



Note: Each column does not add to 18 as some Directors identified one group only as having responsibilities and one Director thought that everyone shared responsibility and provided four responses.

Discussion

Overall, the views of the Directors surveyed about health and safety are not that surprising. This is a group who volunteered to participate in a survey on health and safety and most expressed strong views about the importance of health and safety and Board engagement in health and safety. They clearly see a strong role for Directors in the health and safety matters of the organisations for which they are Directors.

⁵ This question was added part way through the survey to tease out responses more fully so was not answered by all respondents.

Board practices

Directors were asked about the practices that two Boards they sit on use for health and safety⁶. Overall the practices of 31 boards were described. The results are given in the table below.

Table Three: Board Practices (n=31)

Practice	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree
H & S is an item on the agenda and discussed at every Board meeting	21	2	8
H & S discussed regularly on an as required basis	20	7	4
All serious harm accidents reported to Board	29	2	0
Board has active interest in results of H & S investigations	25	3	3
Board is committed to taking leadership on H & S improvements	25	4	2
Board assesses current capacity and capability to deal with H & S issues ⁷	17	6	7
H & S is one of the top priorities to the Board in assessing organisational performance	19	2	10
Sometimes difficult to balance H & S with business/performance pressures	6	1	24
H & S addressed as part of our Board's risk management strategy	22	2	7
Public reporting includes adequate discussion of Health and safety matters e.g. annual report	17	8	6

In summary:

- health and safety is an agenda item on 21 of the Boards, serious harm accidents are reported to all Boards
- the Directors thought that for the majority of Boards (24) it is not difficult to balance health and safety with business or performance pressures
- health and safety is addressed as part of the Boards' risk management strategy in over two-thirds of the organisations
- there were mixed views on the extent to which health and safety was a top priority for their Boards in assessing organisational performance with this also being the case in two-thirds of Boards.

⁶ While one Director sat on only one Board, two other directors answered questions about one Board only.

⁷ Data from one Director is missing.

The Directors interviewed were invited to provide additional comment about the health and safety practices of their Boards. Comments fell into issues about specific industries, health and safety culture, reporting and more detailed practices. These are outlined below.

In the Finance sector, health and safety is seen as a minor risk compared to other risks that Boards in that sector deal with. Discussion of health and safety at Board level is likely to happen, for example, after a robbery where support is required for staff. A similar situation was commented on in relation to the IT sector where a risk assessment was carried out.

Employees were office based where *“things like OOS, lifting and falls”* were looked at, but the *“urgent pressures of the daily work are considered more important”*.

One Director commented that one of the Boards s/he is on has no public reporting of health and safety and the company has a long history of *“low Board expectations around safety”*. However s/he commented that this is starting to change as the Board is lifting its expectations. This Director thought the issue of Boards having low expectations around health and safety was probably common for Boards in New Zealand.

In contrast to this another Director said that for his/her Board there had been considerable change in the attitude to health and safety.

It had *“gone from being below the radar [and] beyond the compliance mentality”*.

This Director thought that the Board still had way to go;

in terms of making sure that significant risks are denormalised and getting the idea of health and safety into everybody’s mind, but that they were on the way.

However s/he thought that the reporting of health and safety needed to be improved and there generally needed to be a lack of tolerance related to unacceptable risk.

In the case of large companies health and safety is often dealt with by Board subcommittees who reported back to the Board. This provides the opportunity for health and safety to be dealt with in more depth and it was the view of one of the Directors that this strengthened Board engagement.

Around half of the Directors thought health and safety was primarily a management issue. As one Director commented:

Not sure that Boards need to go overboard, management deal with it as appropriate.

And another said, *“I see health and safety as a management responsibility, [but] the Board needs to do better”*.

For those Directors who talked about two of the Boards they sat on, some suggested their Boards had similar practices in relation to health and safety and where there were differences they gave the following explanations for these:

- Different industries – e.g., some are physically high risk such as construction *“where safety is permanently number one in operating integrity”* and adventure tourism where *“health and safety reputation is critical to company performance”*, while others are perceived as lower physical risk such as the finance sector where the issues are those that are perceived as happening everyday in every day life

- Approach is driven by risk assessment and the consequences of poor health and safety practices for the business. For example in the energy business there are risks of explosions, “*which would be catastrophic*”
- Boards in different countries. For example one Director compared a New Zealand Board to an Australian Board and thought that the practices in relation to Health and Safety in Australia were far more regulated than those in New Zealand
- Frequency of health and safety issues dealt with
- Different size/scale of the industry that impacts on the level of expertise and knowledge that people bring to Boards. For example one Director noted that Board members had experience and knowledge of their professional field, but not in relation to health and safety
- Different culture of health and safety
- Different leadership and attitudes of the Board chairs. For example in one Board the Director commented that the Chair is extremely motivated while the other sees health and safety as a side issue. This Director thought that it was very difficult for individual Directors to have influence if the Chair was not interested
- The overall quality of the Directors, which in New Zealand respondents suggested, tends to be very poor as opposed to those internationally.

Discussion

The interviewees, who report a reasonably high level of awareness of health and safety, generally rated the Boards they sit on well in terms of their health and safety practices. Other less positive influences however appear to impact on the extent to which good practices are consistently applied. In particular comment was made about the extent to which Board Chairs rate health and safety as a priority and the level of experience of fellow Board members. The level of perceived health and safety issues and risks in an organisation, relative to other risks facing an organisation also has a bearing on the degree of focus Boards apply to health and safety.

Governance of Health and Safety in the Future

In order to inform future thinking about Board practices on health and safety we asked Directors about issues, concerns and the skills and knowledge that Board members might need should there be changes to the ways in which Board responsibilities for health and safety were regulated.

Accountability

Firstly Directors were asked whether they thought there were any concerns that would need to be addressed or issues that would arise if Boards in New Zealand were required to take on additional accountability for health and safety. The Directors views fell into four areas: Those who expressed no concerns; the extent and impact of accountability; the capability and capacity of Boards; and the time and resources required.

Those (5) who felt there were no concerns to be addressed considered that Boards were already fully accountable / responsible for health and safety. One of the Directors premised this lack of concern saying this would be the case as long as there was sufficient information about the reasons for the accountability and that there was full consultation about where this

accountability lies. Another thought that as a result of Pike River that Boards were starting to do more about health and safety and were “*setting a culture that was starting to filter down*”.

These views were contrasted with those (6) who had concerns about what Boards might be likely to be held accountable for in the future given they felt they were already accountable;

Accountability is already quite scary so I can't imagine how much more accountability Boards could take on.

Some expressed concerns about penalties that might be imposed and how this could impact on the number who might be willing to take on Directors' roles; that Boards might become too risk averse and “*focus on this rather than on the strategic direction of companies*”.

Some of the Directors (4) thought the main issue related to the capability and capacity of Boards to undertake any new accountability and there would need to be considerable training and upskilling.

Very few Directors have sufficient knowledge and understanding of health and safety and how to achieve a high standard ... a lot of Chairs have no idea [as] a lot have come up through the professions [and] not been at the coal face.

The big issues are capacity, technical understanding and understanding what the governance role is. It is a cultural issue, an attitude issue and a training issue. From a Director's perspective there is still another deep level of understanding that is missing that needs to be addressed.

The other issues raised by the Directors (3) related to the resources that will be needed to upskill Boards and the time it might take to do this.

It will take time, expertise and a co-ordinated approach to resources that are already there.

There was also a concern expressed that smaller companies would find it more difficult than larger companies as they do not have the resources required to fully implement health and safety.

Two Directors expressed concerns about the levels of responsibility that need to be held by companies and individuals. One Director felt that if Boards were to take full responsibility then others would take less and the other thought that responsibility for health and safety sat with those working on the shop floor.

Discussion

Directors had a range of views about the impact on Boards of having increased accountability for health and safety. Concerns about the capability and capacity of current Directors to meet additional responsibility, the clarity of responsibilities for different parties and a concern that any personal liability may flavour how Boards respond are all important considerations in shaping how any additional responsibilities may be framed and implemented.

Code of Practice

Directors were asked if a Code of Practice to guide Directors on good governance practices in relation to health and safety were to be developed what it should include. As with previous answers the Directors held a range of views. There were two who thought a Code of Practice was not needed as there was already guidance available through resources from PriceWaterhouseCoopers and the The Institute of Directors, namely the resource “The Four Pillars of Governance Best Practice”. Another thought that a code would be of limited value as the companies who need it won’t think they do and that it could encourage a “*tick box approach*”.

The remaining Directors had given considerable thought to what should be included. The points consistently made were that it should provide an overall framework for how health and safety should be approached, be written in plain language, contain examples of good practice and have the legislation as a “*backdrop*”. It also needs to be flexible as the needs of SMEs differ to those in large companies. There was also a view expressed that;

it is not about having a set of rules, it is about attitudes in the workforce and everyone is responsible, from the Board to those on the floor.

In keeping with this one of the Directors thought a code should be principles based and that it was about incentivising, rather than compliance.

Other comments from the Directors about what should be included in a Code of Practice were:

- Descriptions of health and safety management systems, including how to establish health and safety committees
- Guidelines or case studies that show what good practice looks like or how companies can move from a compliant to a mature system where health and safety is “*embedded in the culture*”
- Legal responsibilities and liabilities
- Hierarchies of responsibilities for example the deliniation between governance and management responsibilities
- Hierarchies of harm and guidelines around acceptable standards for each level “*a minor cut – might have a higher tolerance for that, but no tolerance for anything that causes death*”
- Monitoring, with a clear process for how progress and achievement can be measured
- Company reporting so that Boards are getting good information on which to make decisions.

One of Directors went on to describe the way in which a framework could be used to drive the practice of Boards.

The framework should drive the Board calendar throughout the year, with a specific focus on various parts of the framework on an annual cycle, for example, the health and safety plan, reviewing the policy, reviewing risk assessment, training, how it is working on the ground, what hazards are being reported, monitoring, reviewing and auditing ... Where there are a lot of health and safety issues there should be a health and safety subcommittee that has a yearly programme based on the framework

Discussion

On the whole the Directors see the need for a Code of Practice that is practical, flexible and useable. It should provide a framework, be principle based and incentivise good practice, rather than have a compliance focus. In addition comments were made that Directors would need to be upskilled if such a code were to be introduced.

Directors' Skills

Directors were asked to comment on the knowledge and skills they thought Directors needed in order to be able to effectively monitor and review the health and safety performance of organisations. The most commented on knowledge was that related to the industry, in particular what health and safety risks and practices look like in particular businesses;

Boards have to have regular site visits and health and safety should be part of it

Need to have Board members who understand what actually happens in business and who do know the range of actual risks businesses are managing

Understand the nature of the business and the risks and the ways of managing those risks

Need to get more people with a background in managing business, but many Boards have lots of professionals that have theoretical views rather than practical ones [and] this is not always helpful. Need enough people who get it ... for example, lawyers are not what is needed

The Directors also thought that in addition to industry knowledge Directors need knowledge about the company, the Health and Safety in Employment Act, legislation, regulations, health and safety in the industry, good practice, and resources that are available.

Training was also raised as something that all Directors should have to undertake;

There is a need for governance level health and safety training. Directors ... need to demonstrate that in the last five years they have done the relevant training.

Another Director thought that all Directors should have ongoing professional development. In addition, Directors need to have the skills that enable them to ask the relevant and appropriate questions so they do not just take company reporting at face value.

Discussion

Directors' responses suggest there is a lack of adequate operational and industry specific health and safety knowledge sitting at the Board table to fully understand current risks and to have confidence those risks are being managed sufficiently. They propose regular training to improve knowledge, but also to enable the application of critical questioning and thinking.

Making Boards more effective

The Directors thought there were a number of things that could be done to make Boards better able to make health and safety a priority. The most cited factor (7) related to training with one Director commenting that, "*Training needs to be more than just about one day of*

training with the Institute of Directors, training needs to include observation of safety in practice”.

The next most cited factors related to health and safety reporting and the sharing of that information. This includes:

- making health and safety an annual reporting requirement so that industries can see trends and make comparisons
- good systems for reporting progress, *“[it is] not about reporting what looks like is happening in a tick box sense, it is much more important to report progress in behaviour and attitudes. [We] often see the former, but it doesn’t capture the heads and hearts of people in the organisation*
- making health and safety a core part of reporting, seeing audit and risk going together
- sharing information on a regular basis so that health and safety becomes a positive rather than a negative
- sharing examples of best practice information that *“can be used to ask pertinent questions to effectively deal with health and safety”.*

Three Directors thought there needed to be greater awareness of health and safety for Directors as there were those who were not aware of their responsibilities or the consequences of not adhering to safe practices, for example, going to jail. Awareness raising also needs to happen so that it does not fall off Boards’ agendas.

Three Directors thought there should be penalties/prosecution for Directors of companies that fail to meet safety standards.

Two Directors were adamant about the need to make good appointments to Boards with one of these saying there is a need to have health and safety experts on Boards.

We have recently gone out to find a person [for the Board] with good knowledge of health and safety as the key requirement. It is unusual ... [we] don’t usually start with this requirement ... [we] need to make this more usual.

Finally one Director thought Boards should give greater priority to health and safety. This person commented that after the Global Financial Crisis Boards got caught up with ethical issues, *“but not about killing workers”*. S/he also commented that there needed to be a more coherent approach in the system, that there were resources, for example those developed by the New Zealand Society for Risk Management, that do not make their way into governance documents.

Discussion

A focus on practical initiatives to lift Board practices and improve transparency about health and safety performance appears to be a priority for the Directors spoken to, with training and performance reporting seen as key for improving Boards’ effectiveness. The challenge of maintaining a focus on health and safety is also reflected in the comments by Directors who suggested on-going awareness raising and greater systematising of health and safety governance.

Directors' final comments

At the end of the survey Directors were given the opportunity to make any final comments on health and safety and governance. Fourteen directors took the opportunity to do this.

The general theme of their comments related to seeing change starting to happen, but that it takes time to make a cultural shift and that there is a need for leadership. There were mixed views on the place of regulation and the implication this has for the way in which Boards view and manage health and safety. Some of the Directors comments are provided below.

Evolving Practice

Overtime I've seen the practice evolving. Have noticed the pressure on Boards to ensure that everything that can be done is done. Good practice is increasing and evolving.

Lost time injury rate at X are 12% of what they were a few years ago. [Health and safety] is seen as important so it can be done. Management attitudes change if Boards ask them to report. Until you are measuring it you are not going to make the gains.

Observation over the years is that companies that put a lot of effort into this will see steady improvement in health and safety outcomes by putting in place training, the right equipment and procedures ... but to get below one lost time injury, effort has to be much more cultural and based on real behaviour changes.

Leadership

Need an attitude change at the Board table ... and have the culture at the Board table. It is also driven by the CE and senior management taking ownership. Singling out an individual and making them responsible is not the way to go.

Boards have to set the tone and leadership. Every agenda needs to have health and safety. Chairs are critical [and] need to set the tone at the top.

Regulation

The risk, post Pike River and the Task Force, is that politicians will head to regulation and regulation could easily be detrimental.

Needs a big wake-up call. Pike River, mines and memories fade ... Don't assume it will be done with strong advocacy and training. Don't ever shrink from a regulatory response.

Throughout the survey the views of Directors have indicated that health and safety is a challenging issue but one that Boards need to come to terms with and lead from the front. One of the Directors perhaps best summed the challenge up by saying,

I see the challenge of moving the health and safety environment forward and the biggest gap is around people's behaviour and attitude and the systems, policies and processes and how well engaged and committed employees are to those. Unless the

culture wins the commitment of those who deliver the work it will be a very slow process of moving towards a great health and safety metric of outcomes.

Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety: Directors' Survey

1. How many Boards do you currently sit on as a Director?
2. In any of your current roles are you
 - a. Executive Director
 - b. Independent Director
 - c. Board Chair
3. How many years have you held Director roles?
4. I'm going to read a list of technical skills that Directors may bring to the Boards they sit on. Please indicate which of these you bring to the Board(s) you sit on.
 - a. Legal
 - b. Financial
 - c. Marketing
 - d. Merger acquisition
 - e. Risk management
 - f. Industry specific
 - g. Other
5. Were you recruited or nominated specifically on your technical skills?
6. How many of the Boards you sit on are:
 - a. SOE/CCO
 - b. Public Sector
 - c. Listed Company
 - d. Co-op
 - e. Family Business
 - f. Not for Profit
 - g. Other
7. What industry (industries) do the organisations in which you are a Director work in?

8. I will now read a set of statements about your views on health and safety and how it is regulated. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.
- I have a good understanding of the industry/ies of the board/s I am on
 - I have a good understanding of the specific health and safety issues in the industries for board/s I am on
 - In general, member of boards I am on have a good understanding of industry specific health and safety issues
 - I am familiar with the legislative requirements arising from the Health and Safety for Employment Act, as they affect the organisations for who I am a Director
 - Health and Safety is primarily an organisational (management) responsibility
 - Health and safety is primarily the Board's responsibility
 - Health and Safety is primarily the responsibility of all individuals
 - Health and Safety is primarily the responsibility of particular individuals (e.g. H&S specialists)
 - The Health and Safety practices of subcontractors our organisation contracts services from are of relevance to our Board
 - I have attended general health and safety training in the last two years
 - I have attended industry specific health and safety training in the past two years
 - I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me as a director in respect of health and safety

Do you have other views on H & S and how it is regulated that you would like to make?

9. Responsibility for different aspects of health and safety is often shared by people at a workplace. For each of the actions outlined below, please indicate the two groups that you believe have the lead roles or responsibilities for those aspects of health and safety:

	Directors	Organisational managers	Health and safety specialists	Front-line staff
Maintaining an oversight of H&S management systems				
Providing leadership and direction for H&S				
Identifying standards or indicators for health and safety performance				
Leading H&S improvement efforts				
Ensuring resources are available to support H&S initiatives				

Identifying hazards and taking steps to EIM (eliminate, isolate, minimize) them				
Undertaking accident/incident investigations				

10. I'm now going to read out some statements about the involvement your Board has with overseeing H & S. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree which each statement.

- a. Health and safety is an item on the agenda and discussed at every Board meeting
- b. Health and safety is discussed regularly on an as required basis
- c. All serious harm accidents are reported to our Board
- d. Our Board has an active interest in the results of health and safety investigations
- e. Our Board is committed to taking leadership on health and safety improvements
- f. Our board assess current capacity and capability to deal with Health and Safety issues (e.g. level of training undertaken) and strategies to address gaps (e.g. major investment proposals)
- g. Health and Safety is one of the top priorities to the Board in assessing organisational performance
- h. It is sometimes difficult to balance health and safety with business/performance pressures
- i. Health and safety is addressed as part of our Board's risk management strategy
- j. Our public reporting includes adequate discussion of Health and Safety matters e.g. annual

Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the involvement that this Board has with H & S issues?

11. If you are a Director on another Board you will be asked the same questions as above in relation to a Board that is different.

12. What factors do you think explain the difference in your two boards?

13. If Boards in NZ were required to take on additional accountability for health and safety, are there concerns that you think would need to be addressed or issues that you think would arise?

14. If a Code of Practice to guide Directors on how good governance practices can be used to manage health and safety risks were to be developed in NZ, what should it include?

15. In your view, what knowledge and skills are needed by Directors to effectively review and monitor organisations' health and safety performance?
16. What needs to be done to help Boards be more effective in making health and safety a priority?
17. Is there anything else you would like to comment on about health and safety and governance?