

A HEALTHY BREAKFAST

HSE professionals from Qatar's construction industry came together on 22 March for the second annual CWQ Health & Safety Breakfast Briefing to share ideas, best practice and successes.

Construction Week Qatar's editorial director Robert Willock introduced the event to 150 delegates.

"In these straightened times, everyone is doing more with less," he said. "So the real health and safety challenge is to do that without cutting corners and incentivising or penalising workers such that they take risks.

"Our work on Health & Safety will

never be done – we can never relax our efforts. Because in the end, one death or injury is one too many. All for the sake of something preventable. A moment of madness. An unnecessary risk. A lapse in vigilance...

"And so, events like this Health & Safety Breakfast Briefing make an important contribution to our industry's efforts to improve the welfare of its workers and other stakeholders."



Panel discussion (l-r): Robert Willock, Alan Crawford, Des, Leamy, Chris Daniels, Jerry Beades and Grahame McCaig.

WORLD CUP SAFETY SCRUTINY 'SHOULD BE WELCOMED'

Qatar should welcome the scrutiny of international attention on workers' welfare and health and safety being attracted by the FIFA World Cup 2022.

So said Fahad Al Jahrami, chief operating officer of, ASTAD, the event's associate partner.



Fahad Al Jahrami: Urged constructive criticism.

"With the upcoming FIFA tournament, the eyes of the world are upon us as we embark upon the bold development projects required to support this monumental event, and health, safety and the environment must remain paramount," said Jahrami.

"Of course, such concerns are not exclusive to this region. They are raised repeatedly for any globally recognized event that demands infrastructure upgrades – and this is only right. We should welcome such scrutiny, as it acts as a further incentive to ensure that our standards of health and safety are at the highest level."

He said that hazardous and unsafe working environments are often an unintended consequence of rapid growth and fast-paced construction. "When any country develops, it faces these types of issues – the question is whether to be reactive or proactive."

Jahrami encouraged industry

participation in events like the CWQ Health & Safety Breakfast Briefing, saying: "Constructive criticism, comprehensive debate and analysis need to be on our agenda and the development of policies tailored to the unique challenges we face must be our priority. It is only through effective communication and knowledge sharing that we can truly identify the sources of our issues and develop tailored, homegrown solutions to resolve them."

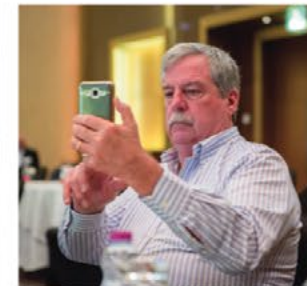
He revealed that ASTAD has been tasked with managing the delivery of more than 130 projects in Qatar, all with a total value of over QAR140bn; and that the wellbeing and health of its workforce is a priority, as evidenced by many project milestones.

"Just last year we celebrated more than 16 million man hours worked without lost time incidents on the HBKU Research Complex and also celebrated 10 million man hours worked without lost time incidents for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

"These achievements must become standard practice for us all," he concluded.



Colour-coded hard hats as advised by Chris Daniels (see p43).



'THE JOURNEY TO NOWHERE'

Construction bosses need to provide 'visible felt leadership' to get the health and safety standards they want, according to Grahame McCaig, the general manager at Gulf Contracting Company.

"Health and safety is ethically the right thing to do, and business wise it is the smart thing to do," he said. "But you've got to develop the culture.

He added that he is not a believer in the concept of the health and safety 'journey'. "It is an excuse that CEOs and chairmen use when something bad happens. 'We're on an HSE journey and we've hit a bump in the road. And we're going to continue going forward.' But when are you going to get there?" he asked.

See Cover Story p18.





Safety KPIs generate fake news

Positive HSE key performance indicators (KPIs) can create a dangerous illusion of safety, said Des Leamy, HSE & E director at KEO International Consultants.

"I receive a lot of contractors' reports summarising their safety performance and stating: 'We have no problems. We have had no accidents.' But is that no accidents because of good, effective management, or no accidents by accident?" he challenged.

"It's fake news, and an illusion of safety. We're addicted as professionals and as an industry to KPIs and in particular personal injury rate (PIR) frequencies. We use them as an indicator to measure our safety performance. PIRs are a measure of how many injuries occurred. But they are not a measure of the effectiveness of safety management systems. Low personal injury frequency rates can disguise a fundamentally flawed HSE management system. Yours stats could be going down because you had a lucky month not because you were effective in implementing your management system," Leamy added.

"We are making some dangerous assumptions and that worries me. That a contractor thinks he is doing brilliantly because his KPIs are going down. And if

everything is green on the dashboard – the director scans through it and thinks everything is good. But the report doesn't examine what is critical in his system."

Leamy recommended "trying something different". He advised: "Invest some time and energy and each month choose one crucial element of your system, investigate it as the work is being performed, and critically analyse what you are doing. Test if you are following procedures. Find out where the gap is and what is required by the system."

"People don't always follow rules and procedures. So stop pretending that they do and reporting that as fact. Worker non-compliance is a known phenomenon. So we need to have a proper system that takes account of that and proper supervision that monitors that, and addresses the non-compliance."

He added: "It's not about numbers, but a descriptive narrative and a value judgement on the critical risks in the business, the appropriate process to manage that risk, and the professional considered view that those critical risks are adequately controlled. If you can address that in your monthly report it's better than a dashboard where everything is green."



Michael Robertson of Carillion asks a question.

Adding quality control to HSE

Aligning health and safety with quality and environmental management systems can bring benefits to construction companies.

Christopher Daniels, QHSE director at ASTAD, said that everything on a site tends to focus on safety and the other functions [quality, health and environment] get left behind.

"But a catastrophic quality incident can be just as serious as a fatality," he argued. "We are all familiar with the zero-harm culture [in health and safety], but on the quality side, it is about zero rework. Getting things right

Conference snapshots



Dr Shridar Devidas

SLEEPWALKING INTO INJURIES

Dr Shridar Devidas, HSE & welfare manager at ASTAD, highlighted a study that showed workers on an average sleep for between 5 to 5.5 hours. "This subject definitely needs focus," he said, pointing to statistics that link sleeplessness to accidents, with workers sleeping for less than five hours at highest risk and those sleeping for seven to nine hours at lowest risk. *(See injury-rate table below left on p42.)*



Alan Crawford

LANGUAGE BARRIER

Alan Crawford, senior HSE specialist, Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy FIFA World Cup 2022, called for improvements in on-site messaging. "You see an abundance of health and safety signage everywhere – it's almost like wallpaper. And it becomes invisible after a while. Whatever you communicate has to be very relevant and targeted to the people working at that particular time in that workplace."



Des Leamy

WHITE COLLAR WORRIES

Des Leamy of KEO responded to an audience question about industry failures to address health problems among white-collar workers. "Only in recent times have we identified stress as a health risk to everyone. We haven't taken this seriously enough. The focus of the industry has been on site, where the significant risks are, and we haven't looked at [mid-management]. But it is definitely the next stage."



Grahame McCaig

RECRUITMENT AGENCY FEES

Grahame McCaig of GCC shared one of his worker welfare concerns. "Something that bugs me – this requirement in Qatar that employees don't pay an agency fee when they get a job. But it's legislated by the Indian government that a recruitment agent is allowed to charge a fee. Why do we foist this on the contractor who is deploying the labour? It's almost impossible to guarantee."



Jerry Beades

ENFORCE THE REGULATIONS

Jerry Beades, Qatar country manager for JMCI Demolition, said that top of his wishlist for improving health and safety in Qatar would be better enforcement of regulations. "When you drive around Doha and see people hanging off the sides of buildings, seven or eight stories up, then enforcement is definitely needed for the guys who ignore regulations on site," he said.



Chris Daniels: Aim for zero rework.

first time, and minimising errors.

"Safety plus quality equals productivity. If we have a strong commitment to safety and a strong commitment to quality – a clean and tidy site and a planned work activity – then productivity will improve."

Daniels identified 10 to 12 potential areas of synergy in combining the systems, including training, supervision, performance reporting, management review and auditing.

He also highlighted the benefit of an integrated ISO certificate demonstrating quality, environmental health and safety standards, among others. "If you go to your creditors and present one of these certificates, or if you are doing challenging work somewhere in the world, you'll be in very good shape," promised Daniels.

awarded for quality, safety, security, health and environment achievements. "As you enter a location it would say on a big notice board: 'You are entering a three-star site'. And those locations would try to improve their implementation in order to get five-star recognition."

He also suggested a colour-coding system for hard hats. For example, labourers in blue, riggers and banksmen in red, health and safety men in green, and site supervisors in yellow. "The supervisors are the secret to our success. Because as managers we can only do so much. We need those lieutenants to implement this behavioural culture. They can communicate effectively in the right language to the labour. So direct training towards your supervisors," he urged.

"Are your quality and safety guys in two separate offices and having separate meetings?" he then challenged. "We are a stronger unit together. We have more resources, we can cover more area."

Daniels recommended a five-star site assessment system with one star each

	Estimated annualised injury rates / 100 workers						
Hours of sleep	<5	5-5.9	6-6.9	7-7.9	8-8.9	9-9.9	<10
Injury Rates	7.89	5.21	3.62	2.27	2.50	2.22	4.72