Case Study #1
Modifying a Product vs Changing the System

We recently worked with a medium sized Organisation that was suffering from a drop in productivity; this had been 'investigated' internally and put down to lack of competence and skill among the workforce. The workers were subsequently 're-trained' at considerable expense but the productivity levels continued to fall.

In a very short space of time, using observations 'in the field', interviews with staff and a review of some key company processes we identified that there was a quality issue with a specific key supplier, which the workforce had been overcoming by 'modifying' the supplied component in their workshop before installing it into their own product; why had this not been reported to management? The supplier was a local supplier, well-known to the workforce, who was suffering financial difficulties resulting in the reduction of his own workforce and our clients' workers were compensating at his expense.

The workforce wholeheartedly believed they were doing the right thing for their employer by modifying the product rather than return it to an already over-burdened supplier who would be unable to fulfil the re-order and would potentially be put out of business by accepting the returned products.

Once we had established the facts and importantly the context of the issue we learned that both organisations were heavily reliant on each other and so on our Clients' instruction, we were able to help both organisations resolve their respective issues.

Our client resolved his productivity issues, improving on his previous high performance and his supplier was able to remain in business thanks to a new financial operating model and partnering arrangement between the 2 companies. The introduction of some Human and Organisational Performance Improvement tools and improved communication links and techniques mean that both organisations are set up for future success where issues of this nature will be identified at an early stage so they can be dealt with at the appropriate level and avoided.

Case Study #2
Success involves changed values, communications and training

In September 2017 we began to work with a large organisation in the UK Rail Industry, after they attended our free 'Introduction to Human Performance' course. The organisation had implemented a behaviour-based safety programme almost three years earlier and despite the initial increased activity around reporting of near hits and unsafe conditions, they were repeatedly failing to hit their self-imposed targets for Behaviour-Based Observations and they had suffered a number of accidents of increasingly deteriorating consequences.

We conducted a diagnostic audit and a safety culture survey which involved a series of workshops, focus groups and a diagonal slice staff interview process to determine the status quo and to build a comprehensive picture of the variety of company objectives, initiatives and improvement programmes which were already underway across the organisation.

We then worked with the Senior Executive team to more clearly define its organisational values, objectives and strategic direction and to 'streamline' the number of focus areas, ensuring that everything was fully aligned.

We supported the Internal Communications team to ensure that messages were consistent and aligned to the new strategy, even helping to remove old posters and dated communications and briefings from office and workshop walls!

We delivered an education programme which gave the organisation from top to bottom, a deep understanding of Human and Organisational Performance methodology and worked with a 'steering committee' to tailor our tools, techniques and training programmes specifically for use in their organisation.

We then delivered in-depth training, coaching and mentoring for their own staff to ensure that the HOP programme would be sustainable. We continue to work with these HOP Practitioners (as well as those of our other clients) to ensure that they continue their education and training and increase their competence thanks to our Collaborative Customer Community programme.

To date we have worked with a number of departments across the organisation to implement the HOP programme, which continues to grow and develop as the organisation and its staff learn lessons from successful (and sometimes unsuccessful) implementation of programme elements, work hard to identify areas of organisational drift, increased error-invoking processes and procedures and error-likely situations and achieve increased engagement from the wider organisation, which is resulting in a 'pull' to accelerate the programme.

Staff and supplier engagement ratings are increasing and new communication channels have been developed resulting in significant improvements in the 'line of sight' for the Senior Executive team. Although it is early days the organisation is thrilled that it is still seeing a 'snowball' effect after 17 months, when its previous programmes were already beginning to lose effect by the same time. There is no miracle 'cure' of incidents, although severity and consequence have reduced and productivity rates appear to be increasing slowly.