

## **Developing competence in safety management for business success**

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The railway business environment in Europe is changing rapidly with the split of infrastructure from train operations, the entry of new freight and passenger companies, and the development of pan-European freight and passenger operating companies. At the same time the Railway Safety Directive and Interoperability Directive are changing the way railways are regulated with an increasing focus on risk and objective based regulation, leaving the 'how to do it' to company management. There is also an ever increasing external stakeholder pressure on companies to 'get safety right' driven by the financial markets, new more aggressive legislation and relentless media pressure.

To respond to this changing world, railway companies need to strengthen their risk-based approaches to safety management. However, this alone is not sufficient - companies need to have sufficient competence of senior staff to be able to effectively lead and manage safety. This introduces greater safety leadership and management competency requirements for many senior staff. How do you make the business case for the competency development, and then actually delivery it?

This paper will examine how to win the business case for developing competence and then deliver the competency development.

Our experience of working with senior staff in railways around the world, and in other sectors such as food and drink, petrochemicals, utilities and construction has enabled us to identify five number of key success factors

1. Safety cannot be left to only safety professionals, and these professional will need new skills to better engage with the senior management and external stakeholders
2. Active engagement in safety leadership is required by the Chief Executive and entire Executive Team including in the competence development process
3. Both the business case and the competency development need to be underpinned by a gap analysis - what skills are required and what is the current position
4. Independent verification of the gap analysis ensures best practice from within and outside the sector is considered
5. Any training or other competency development activity needs to be business-based, focused and time-efficient to ensure senior staff see safety management as a strategic imperative

We will illustrate the five key success factors and show how organisations have addressed these issues in practice.

