

How to prevent further fatalities in the Italian manufacturing industry

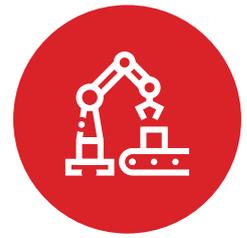


Thought leadership: **Manufacturing**

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Thought leadership Manufacturing



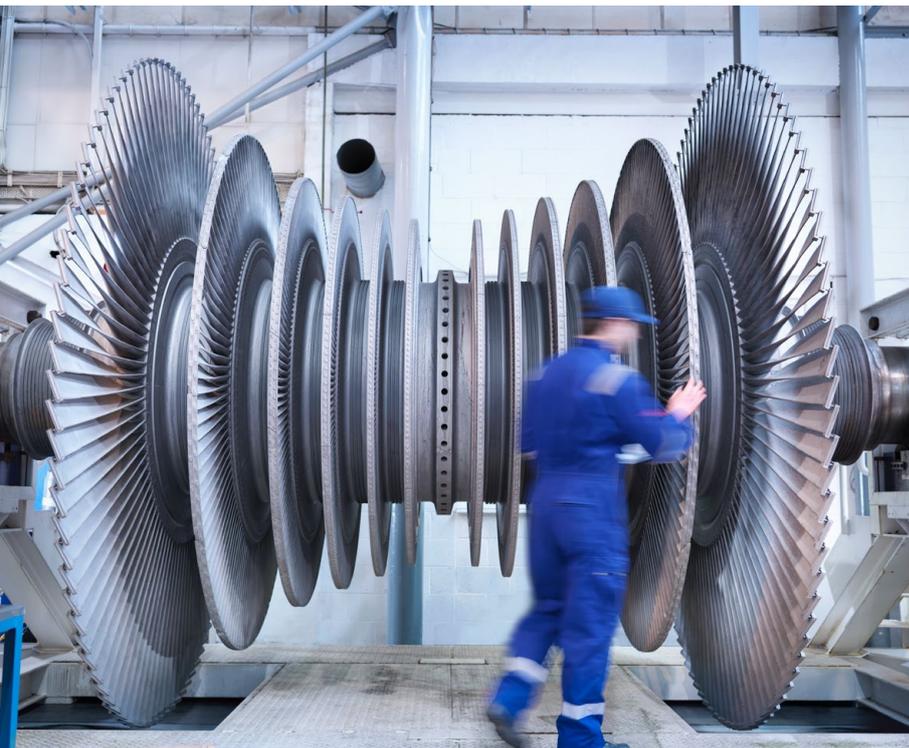
Recent months have seen a long-awaited recovery in Italian manufacturing output. That's good news for the national economy. The bad news is that this upswing has been marred by a significant rise in fatal accidents. The alarming increase of 35% in the first five months of 2021¹ is adjusted for man hours worked, so cannot simply be attributed to greater activity compared to the same period last year.

That is concerning. Is the haste to make up for lost production time causing companies to slacken attention to safety at work? The reason is likely to be more nuanced since the number of injuries at work has stayed roughly stable over the last 12 months.

A look at the circumstances surrounding the fatalities indicates that organisations are not focusing sufficiently on activities with a high-risk potential but are applying a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Furthermore, the need to resume operations at full speed seems to be affecting the care with which activities are planned and carried out - with deadly consequences.

¹ www.inail.it/cs/internet/docs/bollettino-trimestrale-marzo-2021pdf.pdf?section=comunicazione



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Observing the current situation, the sector should strengthen three critical areas:

1.

Safety Culture

Shared values, norms and beliefs are what define organisational culture. Applied to safety, these values and beliefs can vary from organisations aiming to achieve zero accidents to others who are striving to achieve incremental improvement. The goal will depend on the safety maturity of the organisation. (See the dss+ Bradley Curve™ on the following page.)

Companies can steer their safety culture through routines, KPIs and processes that encourage and embed desired behaviours in everyday work. That can be through rituals such as regular safety briefings, safety contacts at the start of meetings, or safety observations. Communication of goals is also crucial, so all employees view safety rules not as restrictions that need to be obeyed but understand the benefit – to themselves, their colleagues, the company and the environment. Another key component of an effective safety culture is the visible commitment of senior management.

2.

Leadership

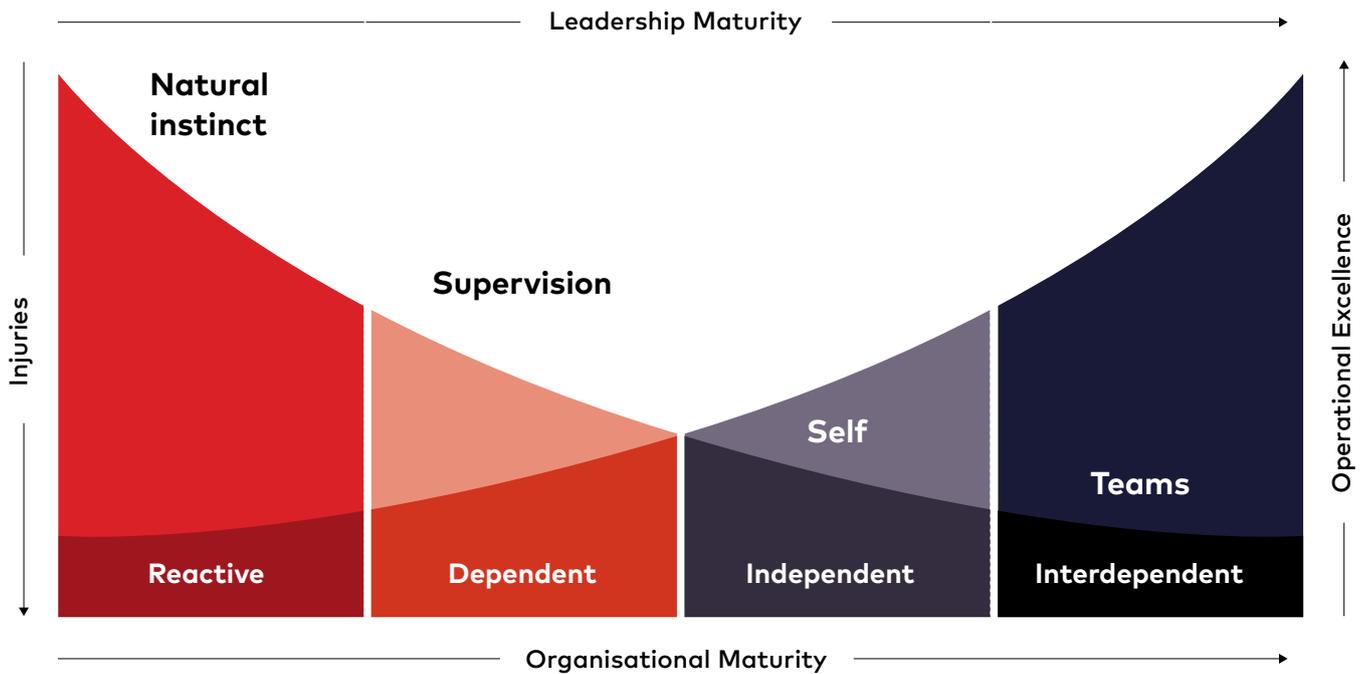
This is something that has been lacking over the last 15 months. During the pandemic, many managers had less direct contact with the workforce – partly due to social distancing rules, partly due to new forms of work. As a result, there were fewer safety audits or discussions and a marked drop in visible leadership presence on site. It is critical for the safety of the Italian manufacturing sector that this does not become the norm. When leadership is not visible and active, its ability to influence employees' behaviours is greatly reduced: as a consequence, safety culture is weakened.

3.

Governance

Companies that regularly achieve a good safety performance have strong frameworks to maintain operational discipline and support safety management. From a central safety committee, tailored KPIs that encourage the right behaviour to tracking and monitoring processes and actions, good governance underpins effective safety. Yet we see many companies delegating these responsibilities to the safety function instead of integrating them with daily production routines: the consequence is that safety is driven mainly by compliance rather than by a structured continuous improvement process.

The new "Leadership maturity" dimension



There is a direct correlation between an organisation's cultural strength and an organisation's safety culture, including injury frequency rate and sustainable safety performance.

The dss+ Bradley Curve, a proven, proprietary system, helps clients comprehend and benchmark their journey to world-class safety performance. Since 1995, it's enabled an effective safety culture for our worldwide clients. Using data collected in the dss+ Safety Perception Survey™, the dss+ Bradley Curve shows that a successful safety culture empowers people, while improving quality, productivity and profits.

In a mature safety culture (interdependent stage), safety is truly sustainable, with injury rates approaching zero. People feel empowered to act as needed to work safely. They support and challenge each other. Decisions are made at the appropriate level and people live by those decisions. The organisation realises significant business benefits through higher quality, greater productivity and increased profits.

The dss+ Bradley Curve identifies four stages of safety culture maturity:

- **Reactive Stage** - People don't take responsibility and believe accidents will happen.
- **Dependent Stage** - People view safety as following rules. Accident rates decrease.
- **Independent Stage** - People take responsibility and believe they can make a difference with actions. Accidents reduce further.
- **Interdependent Stage** - Teams feel ownership and responsibility for safety culture. They believe zero injuries is an attainable goal.

For more information, view the **dss+ Bradley Curve video**.

5 actions safety leaders can take now to better protect their organisation from the most acute risks.

How can you prepare for unexpected risks?

dss+ surveyed organisations in a range of industries across Europe, interviewed safety leaders who successfully navigated the COVID-19 crisis about their best practices, analysed regional variations, and gathered views on the safety outlook for the year ahead. Below figures come from the European Manufacturing panel.



Action #1

Educate on Risk

Only 39% of participants received an extensive training on safety over the last two years. Strengthen safety culture by educating on risks. Empower people through safety and risk management training and coaching, build safety into the everyday routine and improve communication of safety goals.

Action #2

Make Safety Positive

Only 12% of participants systematically celebrate safety achievements. Make positive reinforcement part of your safety programmes.

Action #3

Own it

44% of participants consider that their management always feel accountable for providing safety at work. Build and develop leadership capabilities to improve active role modelling, communication and visibility.

Action #4

Walk the Talk

Only 42% of participants always investigate incidents and set corrective actions. Reinforce the impact by improving operational discipline through a strong governance framework.

Action #5

Make it continuous

Only 5% of participants fully consider psychosocial risks in their safety approach. Integrate off-the-job and psychosocial risks into safety programmes.

The recent work-related fatalities in Italy have once again demonstrated that not all risks are equal. An effective safety culture that promotes operational discipline and increases employee engagement is likely to see a more proactive approach to safety and a sharper focus on activities with a greater risk potential.

To achieve the necessary step change in safety that is required to prevent more needless deaths at work, leadership needs to take an active role in steering and driving safety, integrating it into production routines, communicating and engaging with employees and ensuring a robust performance process is in place to track progress versus the set goals.

Business leader



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About dss⁺

dss⁺ is a leading provider of operations management consulting services with a purpose of saving lives and creating a sustainable future. dss⁺ enables companies to build organisational and human capabilities, manage risk, improve operations, achieve sustainability goals and operate more responsibly.

By leveraging its DuPont heritage, deep industry and management expertise and diverse team, dss⁺ consultants are on the ground and in the boardroom helping clients work safer, smarter and with purpose.

Additional information is available at www.consultdss.com



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