

IASS 2008 Panel Discussion of SMS

Questions and Answers

Moderator: David Mawdsley, Aviation Safety Advisor to Superstructure Group

Panel Protocol

- The panel was assigned 90 minutes which was divided into 3 sessions of about 30 minutes.
- In the first session the moderator and each of the panellists presented a brief introduction of their view of SMS based on the supporting papers which they had prepared.
- The second session was a discussion with the panel members chaired by the moderator.
- The third session was devoted to questions from the audience to the panel via the use of question cards.

Discussion Issues

- ✚ What is the biggest obstacle to SMS Implementation which you have experienced?
- ✚ What is it that makes the biggest contribution to effective SMS Integration across your organisation as a whole? What is the key resource (common information source for integration)?
- ✚ SMS is being used to manage growth, change and recession. What do you feel is the component of SMS which is most effective in these scenarios?
- ✚ How do you measure the performance of your SMS? What sort of metrics do you use?

Spare Questions to Panel Members i.e. Moderator to Panel

- ✚ ICAO said in 2007 that only about 10 per cent of airlines have a reasonably implemented SMS. You mentioned IOSA – the IATA Operational Safety Audit. How would you rate it as a means of GAP analysing an SMS?
- ✚ You clearly prefer an SMS assessment system with an entry point at the system rather than the organisational level. How has this approach been received in practice by the airlines?
- ✚ With Transport Canada's focus on SMS implementation, how has this impacted on other parts of your safety oversight programme? (I have in mind your auditor general's report early this year)
- ✚ In your SMS, how do you preserve the balance between the data/process people and those that bring solid operational insight to achieve effective risk management mitigation?
- ✚ Faced with the enormity of SMS implementation is your organisation distracted or even stalled by the task of implementing SMS?

Questions from the Audience

- ✚ How does an airline manage the risk to which it is exposed ? Is it: ERM? Framework - Yes/No? Who is Accountable? Is it based on a standard e.g. ISO? Is the system qualitative/quantitative?
- ✚ To what extent can the safety manager influence management to resolve industrial disputes which can lead to reduced safety levels?

- ✚ Could you give an example of the metrics that you use to assess whether safety actions have effectively addressed the issue that was identified?
- ✚ In implementing the SMS requirements is there a suggested suite of measures that can identify how effectively the organisation is managing safety risks? (i.e. what can't be measured, can't be managed)?
- ✚ If no measures, how will the regulator apply a consistent audit standard?
- ✚ Sounds like most of SMS is accomplished by managers. Do the employees have any role?
- ✚ How do you make line managers accountable for implementing SMS? What are the benchmarks?
- ✚ Why has Qantas had so many maintenance related incidents lately? Why hasn't your risk management process captured these problems?
- ✚ The implementation of SMS in an organisation will improve the safety culture. But how do you measure it?
- ✚ Who in the industry is best positioned to "champion" safety management systems worldwide? ICAO? IATA? FSF? Other?
- ✚ Do you see a risk that – after having SMS implemented – the managers will point to a single guy (the safety manager) to take care of all the safety issues rather than managing their own risks?
- ✚ What is the new deadline for air carriers to meet the ICAO SMS requirements?
- ✚ What is the Transport Canada SMS assessment frequency and what resources are allocated to assessments in the various sectors?
- ✚ The reason for the above question is that from the organisation numbers described it looks like a huge resource burden for Transport Canada at least in the early stages.
- ✚ How much did Transport Canada's inspectorate resist the change in role and skills – and how did you manage that?
- ✚ Any particular methodology to perform hazard identification and risk assessment qualitative or quantitative or both?
- ✚ Do the operators know the standards that Transport Canada will use during the assessment?
- ✚ How should we link the SMS in airlines, airports, ANSPs etc? Do we need to? (EUROCONTROL)
- ✚ In an SMS environment, organisations must define the acceptable level of risk for each aspect of their operation. What steps must the regulator take to ensure organisational risk does not exceed the State's acceptable level of risk? From a regulator's perspective is it acceptable for the operators to have varying levels of risk?
- ✚ In view of Transport Canada's position of offering and utilizing "delegated authority" as a means of oversight in certain areas of commercial air operations, it appears that TC has taken two steps back from regulatory oversight of the industry with the adoption of SMS. How does TC plan to remain engaged and proactive in the industry if direct oversight of the industry is abdicated by delegating authority - and implementing SMS?
- ✚ Would you recommend that States (regulators) world-wide mandate SMS systems?

- ✚ And with that, for whom do you mandate it? E.g. airlines, maintenance providers, airports. If yes, how small or large?), service providers? How deep do you go? Can a regulator reach outside his/her own country to international service providers?
- ✚ Don't you believe that scoring the SMS of organisations will make safety a competitive factor? Is this positive?
- ✚ Will the scoring given to operators under the new criteria be published publicly by TC?
- ✚ To what level in your company do you report? Do you appear at your Board meeting?
- ✚ How do you see the integration of QA and SMS?
- ✚ How will Transport Canada remain engaged with Industry after awarding "Delegated authority" in the SMS environment? Assessing rather than auditing is a somewhat nebulous term and seems to imply that the entire process will now be performance based rather than prescriptive. How will TC differentiate between the two?
- ✚ How does QMS interact with SMS? Does QMS Audit a company's SMS? If not, what feedback loop is involved?

Some Conclusions

- ✓ We need to keep our eye on the basics: identify risk, assess risk, manage risk and simplifying the business of SMS
- ✓ An integrated SMS is not a single system or single department – it is a system of systems
- ✓ Use a common data/information source for the company wide risk management process
- ✓ Establish a system for measuring the performance of the SMS
- ✓ Establish a system for tracking conformance of the integrated safety management system.
- ✓ Establish a causal framework for your risk management programme – like Qantas and HEACO are doing.
- ✓ It's vital that the Regulator and Industry work together on SMS implementation.
- ✓ Take note of the new approach to oversight and assessment of SMS by Transport Canada – beyond auditing!
- ✓ The increasing use of SMS to help manage expansion like HAECO and Vienna Airport.
- ✓ From Eurocontrol comes the concepts of SMS maturity levels for the Air Traffic Service Providers and Regulators – The Roadmap Approach, which is the future – an integrated, performance based SMS.