

Robin Sheremeta

Vice President, Safety & Health Leadership

Teck

prepared by Weeklysafety.com

As Teck's Vice President of Health & Safety Leadership, **Robin Sheremeta** gave a great speech at the **2012 Teck Annual Meeting** on Teck's Safety Journey, including what's next for their company as they continue to improve their safety program.

Teck is Canada's largest diversified mining company and is committed to responsible development.

Transcript from: [2012 Teck Annual Meeting](#)



Robin Sheremeta

Teck



Teck's Safety Journey

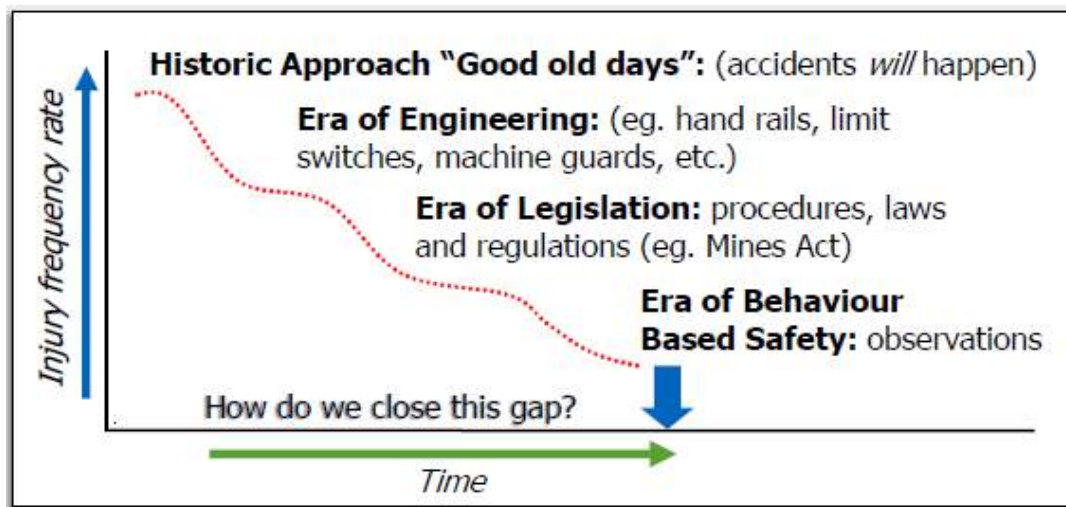
[Begin Transcript]

So, today I'm going to do an attempt at walking you through a little bit of the safety journey that we've been on. We've been on it for a little while. I think that probably a safe way of describing the first milestone would be to go back to 2005, when we brought together for the first time ever, in Teck, 27 courageous safety leaders from all parts of our company to meet in one place and talk about safety.



ROBIN SHEREMETA - TECK, VP SAFETY & HEALTH LEADERSHIP

[00:30] One of the things we talked about at that meeting was this idea of the evolution of safety. There was a time in mining when ***we just assumed accidents happened***. It was a way of life and it was tragic and we moved on from that. In time, obviously, we found ways to make our site safer through engineering controls, through legislation in the form of procedures and safe work plans and things like that. We even entered into a little bit of an area of behavior-based safety at one point, when we started to realize that it was really about people, where we'd see some big improvements. Probably the most important thing we talked about was the fact that we had a gap. That despite all these efforts and attempts to address some of the problems, we still had a number of injuries and we hadn't found a way yet to close that gap.

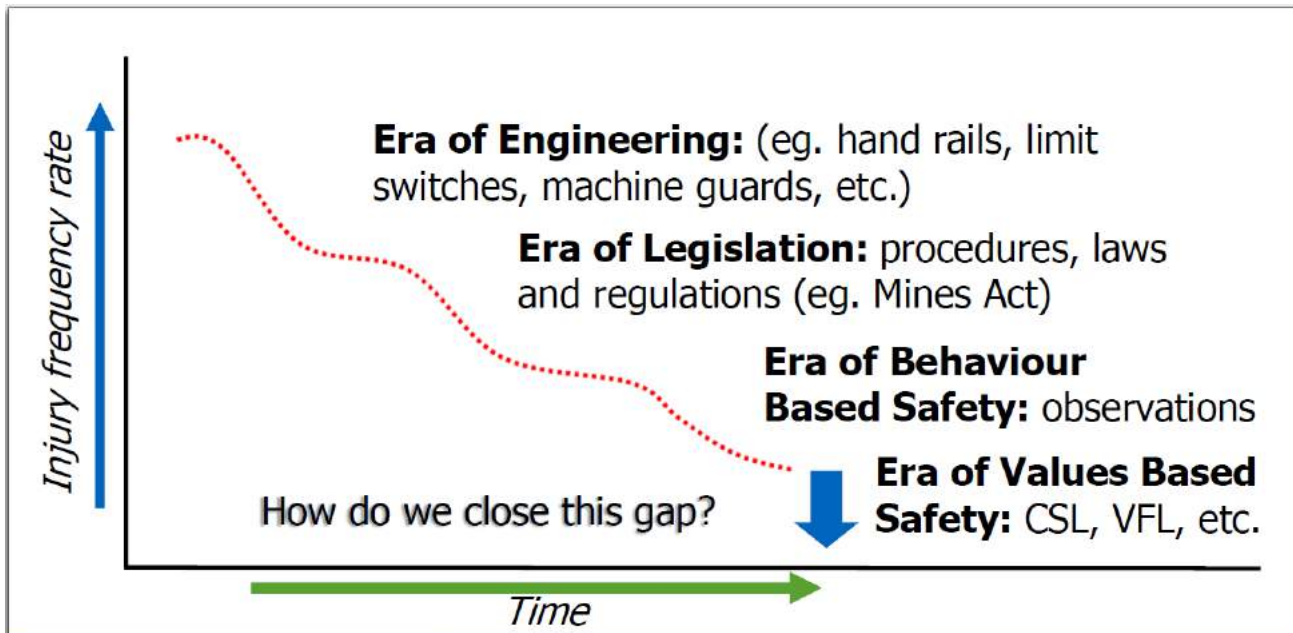


[01:19] So, you start talking about how and why these things work, and what we started to realize in those meetings was that we were focused on the technical side. That was quite natural because the majority of people that approached the problem came from the technical side. They were engineers and safety professionals and we were concentrating on standards and auditing, risk assessment, training procedures... things that are very, very important but the piece missing in the puzzle was that cultural side. That was a little more tricky to figure out because it involves people.

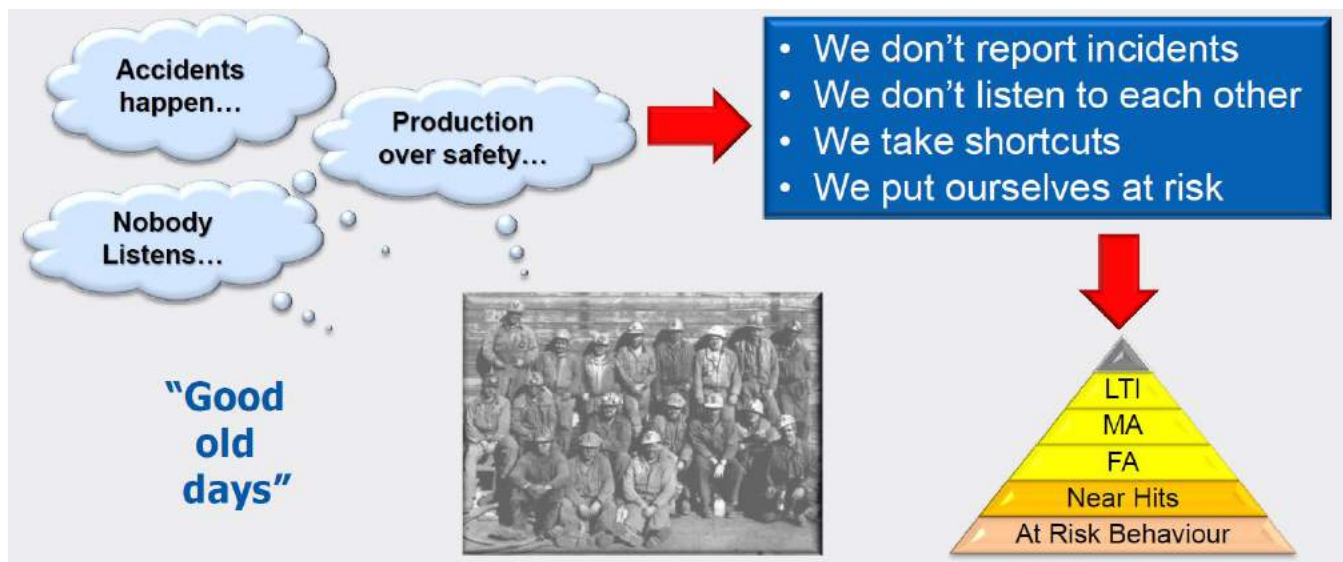


[01:50] There was a fellow at this meeting that presented something to us that we'd not seen before. It was this idea of a value-based approach to safety, that in time would become things that we're more familiar with now like courageous safety leadership and visible felt leadership. I guess the easiest way to describe it, it's a little tricky, but this idea of values and beliefs kind of plays out in the way we behave as a culture.

VALUES AND BELIEFS PLAY OUT IN THE WAY WE BEHAVE AS A CULTURE



[02:15] If you go back to the good old days, really our culture was defined by some values and beliefs like, *Nobody listens to me, I bring stuff up nothing happens, nothing gets fixed, accidents happen, production is more important than safety* – so all these kind of beliefs and values that existed back in the day caused us to act a certain way. We wouldn't report incidents when they occurred, we didn't listen to each other, we took shortcuts and we put ourselves at risk. And the natural outcome of that is what most of us are familiar with, the safety triangle, where you have at-risk behavior which then leads to progressively worse injuries.



[02:52] What we wanted to do, and what we were trying to find a way to progress in, was to establish a new set of values, a new set of beliefs. These would be things like, *I'm responsible for safety, I'm personally responsible it's my moral obligation*. Things like, *we can prevent all serious injuries, we don't have to work that way*, and *my actions impact others*. And that really spoke to leadership. When we have those values and beliefs, things start to change. We start to report incidents so we can learn from each other. We listen to each other's ideas. We lead by example and we manage our risks. When we do that, ***we achieve our vision of getting everyone home safe and healthy every day***.



[03:32] This brought into the strategic plan a different view about safety. It was going to become a balance between the technical side, which we absolutely have to be excellent at and continue to progress, but it also brought into this whole cultural approach this idea of engaging employees through leadership and commitment. To create a safety leadership would become that vehicle that would help get us there. We felt it would be the catalyst for change in our organization. We thought it would engage employees. What we wanted to create was a value-based safety system. Ultimately, we felt it would lay the foundation for that shift in culture, where we would actually *create a culture of safety* within Teck and help us achieve our vision.

WE ACHIEVE OUR VISION OF GETTING EVERYONE HOME SAFE AND HEALTHY EVERY DAY

COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

[04:14] It's a little tough to describe Courageous Leadership in a 10-second version, but probably the best way to think about it is: It's a process that we take people through over the course of 8 hours. They're in groups of about 25 people. We start the day out just talking about context around *What does courage mean? What does leadership mean?* within the context of safety. We then face some of the challenges we have, because we have a number of challenges. We openly talk about them in those groups and bring those things to the table; start to actually create a dialogue around them. Throughout the course of the day, we start to build a sense of what culture we really want to create, what that would look like in a perfect world. Then we try to tackle the challenges that we've talked about earlier in the day, in that light.



[04:58] Ultimately, at the end of the day, *what we're trying to do is create this connection between the heart and the mind around safety*, and why our actions are so important in getting our employees home.

- Would create the catalyst for change in our organization
- Would engage employees in a values based approach to safety
- Would lay the foundation for a Culture of Safety in Teck and help us achieve the vision...



Everyone Going Home
Safe and Healthy
Every Day



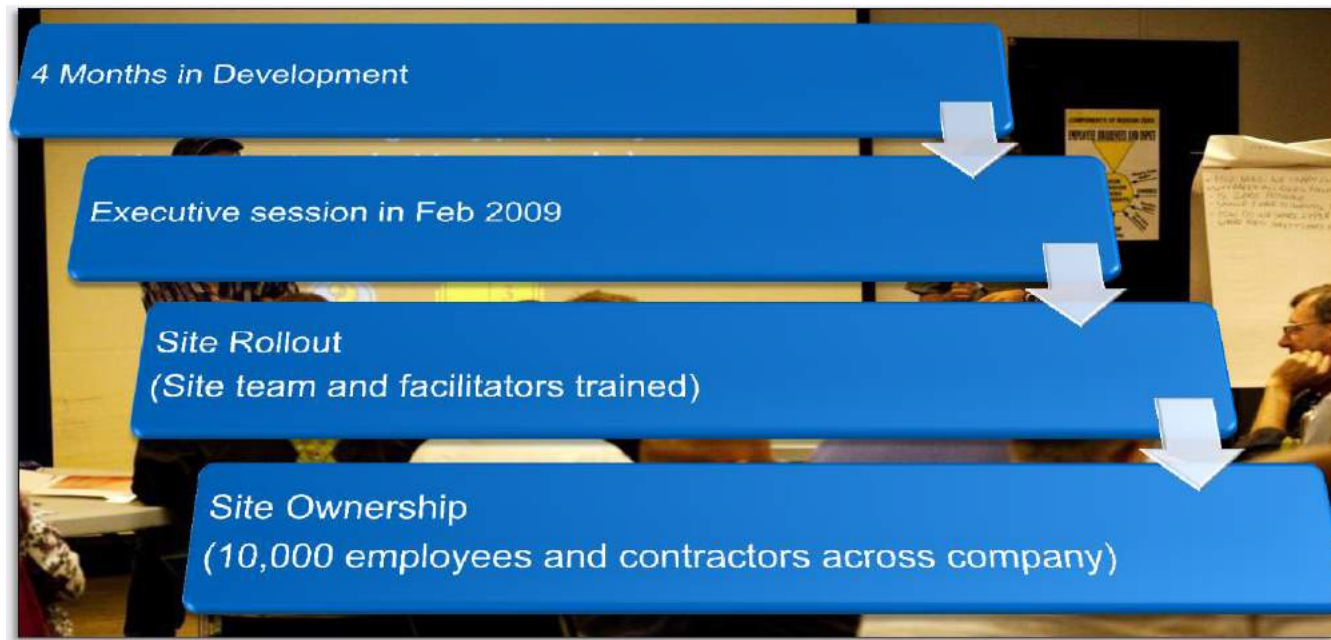
**WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO IS CREATE
THIS CONNECTION BETWEEN THE
HEART AND MIND AROUND SAFETY**

[05:08] Many of you that have been through the course will recognize a little image in the bottom right, that's the journey step. We talk about values and beliefs and attitudes and behaviors and all those things that make up the culture that we live in.



EVERYONE GOING HOME SAFE AND HEALTHY EVERY DAY

[05:22] In 2009, that was the official roll out for us. There was four months of development. We were fortunate to be able to work off of much of the work that had been done previously by other companies and by other people in our own organization. We held our first executive session in February of 2009. Then we went out to each site individually and helped roll out that program to the site.



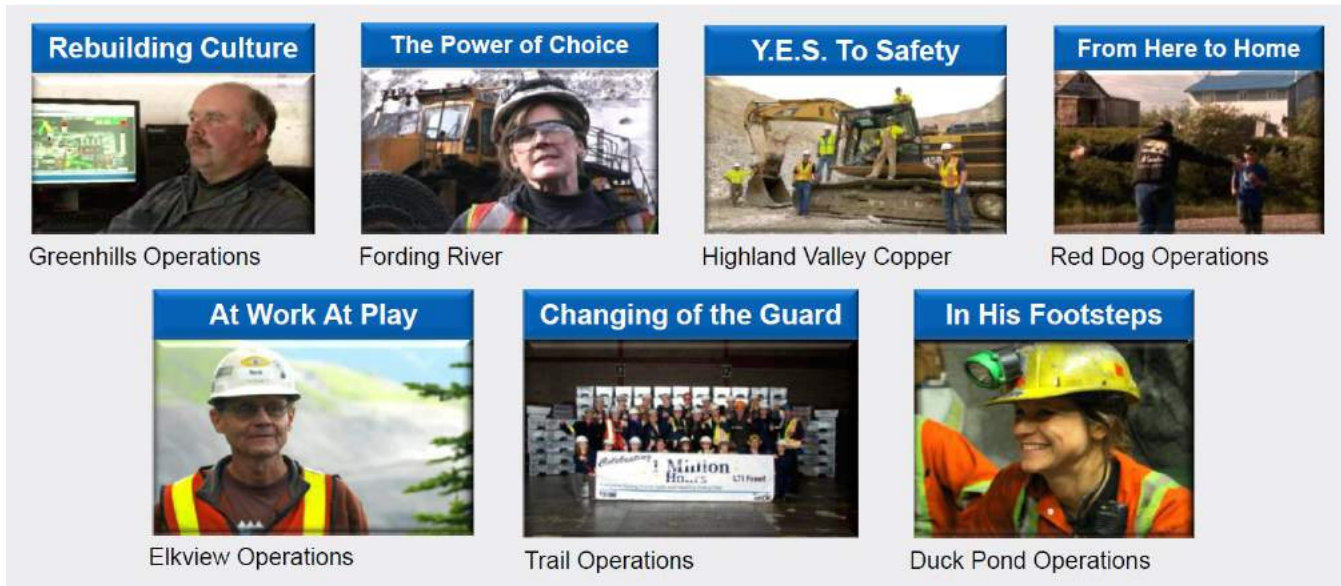
[05:45] What was really special about Courageous Leadership, is it wasn't owned by the company, it was owned by each operation. They took it themselves to their own employees through their own facilitation. We hired nobody to help us deliver this product. It's our own product. So, that gave a site ownership.

[06:03] Into the beginning of 2010 we had trained over 10,000 employees and contractors and continue to train every new employee that enters our company today in the same program. Obviously, we didn't want to lose any momentum from that. That was a seed to get us started as a company in this direction. Through the course of 2010 and 2011, we've been creating additional stories and strategies from around the company. It will help build on what we started in 2009.

**IT WOULD LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR
THE SHIFT IN CULTURE...**

**WE WOULD ACTUALLY CREATE A
CULTURE OF SAFETY WITHIN TECK**

[06:30] One of the most special things that happened last year, was the engagement that the sites had in those stories. I've just shown a few pictures of contributions from the different operations but they represent absolutely fantastic effort to share their experiences, both their successes and their failures, in the courageous safety leadership light, with every employee in this company. That's something that we felt played a huge role in keeping the momentum in this program.



[06:56] There are next steps. This is a journey we're on. We've been through a few stages of it now and we're into what we call phase three but more importantly, it's the next steps in our journey.

[07:07] In Spring of 2011, we brought together 28 courageous safety leaders. One more than the first time in 2005. We started working on this next phase. We had several review sessions, vetting meetings, and after several months of development, we've created what is the next steps in our process.

NEXT STEPS



ROBIN SHEREMETA - TECK, VP SAFETY & HEALTH LEADERSHIP

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[07:15] The exciting part, on March 14th this year, we brought together all the General Managers from across the company and the Executive of the Senior Management Team, and we had our first session. That will be the start of a process. It will roll out across the company, just as it did in 2009, where every employee will share in this journey with us.



[07:45] So, what began in 2005, with our first health and safety conference with 27 courageous safety leaders has become a company-wide effort, where we're trying to build momentum around more than 12,000 courageous safety leaders. This is the value.

[08:03] As Don said earlier, ***“At Teck, more people go home safe and healthy every day, than ever before in our company.”***

[End Transcript]



To learn more about Robin Sheremeta's history with Teck, visit his biography page on the Teck website: [Officers – Robin B. Sheremeta](#)

To view the full 2012 Teck Annual Meeting presentation, including the slides in this transcript as presented by Robin Sheremeta, visit [Teck Resources 2012 Annual Meeting Presentation](#) on LinkedIn Slideshare.

To watch the video of this speech, published by Teck Resources Limited on YouTube, click here: [Robin Sheremeta speaks about health and safety initiatives at Teck.](#)

For more information and resources on worker health and safety, visit [weeklysafety.com](#) and [blog.weeklysafety.com](#).

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