

# 2015 CEOs WHO “GET IT”




- LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
- SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
- PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT
- RISK REDUCTION

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**WHILE THIS IS MY FIRST OPPORTUNITY** to introduce CEOs Who “Get It” to our *Safety+Health* readers, the reason for the recognition is just as vital as it was more than a decade ago when the first class of CEOs was selected. We continue to recognize these individuals for their accomplishments because we know that strong safety cultures thrive in organizations where leaders take an active role.

At the 2014 NSC Congress & Expo, we asked visitors to the NSC booth to vote for their greatest safety challenge. The biggest challenge by far was leadership commitment and engaging employees (62 percent), followed by reducing risk (18 percent), safety management systems (11 percent) and measuring performance (9 percent). It takes effort and commitment to lead from the top, but employees will tell you that it makes a difference. So we remain committed to spotlighting success, sharing stories and hopefully inspiring others to step up to the challenge.

All of this year’s CEOs understand that building a safety culture in their organization starts with them – the choices they make, where they focus their efforts and the expectations they set for others. At Greenberry Industrial, employees notice that the safety director’s office is right next door to President and CEO Jason Pond. This is a physical reminder to every employee in the organization that safety is central to their success and not just a passing mention.

However, while commitment needs to start at the top, these leaders also realize that all employees need to be actively engaged in safety. Brigadier General Robert Castellvi, Commanding General of the Marine Corps at Base Camp Lejeune, expects every team member to accept responsibility for his or her safety; take an active role in identifying and mitigating risk; and support the workforce through teamwork, camaraderie and a sense of family.

These CEOs also put safety before profits. Many, such as Brad Childers, president and CEO of Exterran, empower employees to make the final call when it comes to their own safety. In person and through corporate communications, Childers encourages his employees to use their “Stop the Job” authority if they believe their safety is compromised.

If you are struggling to get your leadership to understand the importance of safety, I urge you to share this article with them. Also, pay attention to the advice each honoree gives on how to secure buy-in from the C-suite. Being a CEO Who “Gets It” doesn’t mean that safety comes easy, but it does mean these leaders are dedicated to safety for the long haul and committed to continuous improvement for both their organization and themselves.

Congratulations once again to this year’s honorees for their dedication and inspiration.



**DEBORAH A.P. HERSMAN**

PRESIDENT & CEO  
NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL



## MICHAEL S. BURKE

CEO  
AECOM

*With nearly 100,000 employees serving clients in more than 150 countries around the world following the acquisition of URS, AECOM is a premier, fully integrated infrastructure and support services firm. Los Angeles-based AECOM is a leader in all of the key markets that it serves, including transportation, facilities, environmental, energy, oil and gas, water, high-rise buildings, and government.*

*With nearly 100,000 employees serving clients in more than 150 countries, it can be challenging to engage every single employee. That is why we reach out to our employees from their very first day on the job and have an active safety communications program with multiple touch points throughout the year. By instilling a "Culture of Caring," we watch out for fellow colleagues, contractors and families, and we work hard to connect with employees emotionally via our "Safety for Life" program.*

### **Why is safety a core value at your organization?**

It's critically important to me that all of our employees around the world return home from work safely every day. Our nearly 100,000 colleagues around the world drive AECOM's success, and safety is the No. 1 priority in everything that we do. Working for a company that places safety first is our commitment to our employees, and a key reason we attract the best talent. We are dedicated to achieving zero employee injuries, zero property damage and zero threats to the environment – every day.

### **Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?**

As AECOM's CEO, I have a responsibility to ensure that our people are able to serve our clients in a safe environment and return to their loved ones at the end of the day. I can't think of a more important responsibility for any CEO. Additionally, safety is a key factor to success in our industry. Prior to becoming CEO, I observed that the average safety statistics across our industry were not impressive. As a result, I wanted AECOM to be ahead of that average – to do all that we could to ensure the safety of our people. That's why we created "Safety for Life," a comprehensive program for the workplace that goes beyond the office or project site and gives employees the tools to incorporate safe behavior into their personal lives.

### **How does your organization measure safety? What are the leading indicators that show you how safe your organization is, and where do you see room for improvement?**

Safety is a "Core Value" within our organization, and although we utilize recordable-incident rates, lost-time and workers' compensation costs as factors in safety performance, our key focus is on leading indicators. Leading indicators, such as senior management observations, program audits, office safety inspections and behavior-based safety processes, support our goal of both management

and employee participation in the "Safety for Life" program. These activities also support our focus on enabling our people to make an individual commitment to our "Zero Incident" philosophy.

### **What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?**

With nearly 100,000 employees serving clients in more than 150 countries, it can be challenging to engage every single employee. That is why we reach out to our employees from their very first day on the job and have an active safety communications program with multiple touch points throughout the year. By instilling a "Culture of Caring," we watch out for fellow colleagues, contractors and families, and we work hard to connect with employees emotionally via our "Safety for Life" program.

### **What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

I believe that one of the most critical behaviors that leaders must promote in the development of a successful safety program is to lead by example. I make it a point whenever I visit our leaders and employees to emphasize that there are no compromises on safety. Developing a culture of safety by establishing and utilizing a proactive safety program within the work environment is a key component to any leader's future success.

### **What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

Our safety staff's success with senior management has focused primarily on being able to seamlessly integrate the "Safety for Life" program into all of our offices and projects throughout the 150 countries in which we work. Subsequently, senior leaders have seen what a "world class" safety program can do for the positive attitude and behaviors of our employees, and they appreciate how this culture improves employees' experiences and differentiates us within the industry.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Reduced total recordable injury rate by 60 percent in one year
- Implemented "Safety for Life" program and adopted "Life-Preserving Principles" to achieve vision of zero injuries, property damage, and threats to the environment
- Celebrated United Nations' World Day for Safety and Health at Work by recording special audio messages sent to all employees





## BRIG. GEN. ROBERT F. CASTELLVI

COMMANDING GENERAL

MARINE CORPS INSTALLATIONS EAST –  
MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE

U.S. MARINE CORPS

The **MARINE CORPS** is America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness – a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward deployed and forward engaged; shaping, training, deterring and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our nation's leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today's crises with today's force, today.

### **Why is safety a core value at your organization?**

It is imperative that safety remains a core value throughout Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) because our primary mission is to support the war fighter – the Marines and Sailors who train aboard our bases and stations in order to win wars in defense of this great nation. Likewise, protecting the lives of every person who works, trains, resides aboard or visits any of my installations is a top priority. Losses, whether on duty or off, seriously degrade mission readiness and threaten our operational capabilities.

### **Describe your personal journey to becoming a leader who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?**

Early in my Marine Corps career, I learned that everything I do as a leader is based on the premise that people matter. As a young Platoon Commander, leading my Marines allowed me to incorporate the values of self-reliance and self-discipline, hone the skills of a strong leader, and exercise my tenacity to do the right thing. As a commander today, I am an unapologetic advocate for the Corps and take the safety of my people very seriously. Each day, I encourage every person to seek self-improvement in order to obtain and maintain their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual balance. The absence of any of these elements

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Expects every member of his team to accept responsibility for safety; take an active role in identifying and mitigating risk; and preserve the workforce through teamwork, camaraderie and a sense of family
- Directed development of a Command Strategic Plan, including a comprehensive safety management plan
- Reinvigorated efforts to advance OSHA VPP status for all command installations

puts us at risk of losing focus, which can have serious detrimental effects on our proactive safety and health culture.

### **What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?**

The biggest obstacle to safety I've experienced during my tenure as the Commanding General for MCIEAST is the aging civilian workforce, which is a double-edged sword. On one hand, they represent and provide the stability, continuity and enterprise experience that is required to operate a military installation charged with training and supporting the operating forces. On the other hand, those civilian employees are so focused on the task at hand, that they oftentimes become resistant to change, particularly new management styles or initiatives. To overcome that, I rely heavily on the implementation of OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program at all of my installations. Since VPP emphasizes and involves management leadership and accountability for worker safety and health, and active participation of employees in their own protection, it has really brought about a change in culture towards a workforce focused on mishap prevention and overall excellence in the various work centers.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.

### **What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

Get involved and stay involved. Expect excellence. Sincerely value your people, their safety and well-being. Develop and nurture a safety mindset as a fundamental way of doing things. Hold leaders accountable. Encourage dialogue, knowledge-sharing and employee participation. Ensure that managing risk is a primary focus and an integral part of all processes; that developing and enforcing regulations and policies are always directed toward the elimination of hazards and unsafe acts; and, finally, that an effective and viable safety program is maintained and continuously improved.

### **What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose leader doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

Know that preventable injuries and illnesses can cost your organization hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in direct and indirect costs related to mishaps. Money that's spent on mishap-related matters can have a significant and devastating effect on your bottom line, however you measure it. By investing in a strong and effective safety management program, the return on investment comes in the form of reduced illnesses and injuries among employees, reduced workers' compensation claims, reduced employee absenteeism and turnover, higher productivity, and increased morale.



## BRAD CHILDERS

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
EXTERRAN

**EXTERRAN** is an industry leader in natural gas compression products and services – plus a premier provider of equipment solutions for

petroleum production, gas processing, produced water treatment and aftermarket parts and services. The Houston-based company employs about 10,000 workers.

**Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?**

I have worked in the oil field for 20 years. I have seen firsthand the impact that our business can have when safety is not Job One. It results in the loss of life, which I have experienced, and in the loss of limbs and in the loss and impairment of the ability to provide for one's family, and to live a fully enabled life. Making the decision that we must do all we can to save lives and provide a safe environment became the only choice in the face of these risks. I choose to lead and emphasize a safe workplace; I want to meet with my employees in safety meetings and not see them in the hospital or meet broken families in the funeral homes.

**How do you instill safety awareness in employees on an ongoing basis?**

Workplace practices are all about routines. With the right routines, the organization can keep the important objectives front and center, in our sights and in our minds. Safety is no different. Having provided our employees with the right training, tools, procedures and the right to always stop the job in the event of an unsafe condition, awareness requires that we have the right periodic focused discussions, trainings and workshops around safety. At our company, every operating meeting starts with a safety moment, just as every operational work activity starts with a job hazard assessment. It is our way of consistently communicating our value – safety first.

**How does your organization measure safety? What are the leading indicators that show you how safe your organization is, and where do you see room for improvement?**

The primary metrics we use to measure safety include both leading indicators and the historical trailing indicators. On the leading indicators, we use observation cards and the successful tracking, fixing and eliminating the conditions that give rise to the observations. Our focus here is not necessarily on the number of cards, but more so on the actions to close the card. That closure creates a strong reinforcing loop that

builds upon itself. The next level of improvement for our organization will be to focus much more on the leading indicators.

**What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?**

The biggest obstacle to a safe workplace is leadership. It is all about leadership – leadership of oneself and leadership of one's team. It is about ensuring we have penetrated into the core beliefs of each of our leaders, that safety is not an important thing, but rather that it is the main thing.

**What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

- Do not underestimate the importance of safety performance. Saving lives, saving limbs and saving families is a high calling.
- Do not underestimate the cost of poor safety performance. In terms of morale and profitability, it may be the best investment your enterprise will ever make in its people.
- Get out in the field, be the ambassador, consider it a mission and a missionary journey to help keep your employees safe.

**What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

I would suggest to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't get it, be sure not just to report statistics and show graphs. You have to find a way to unravel all that in a way that strikes a chord with your CEO. Rather, take your CEO out into the field and have him or her engage in the activity that gives rise to the risks. Have him or her actually sort through safety observation cards and discuss the ideas that result in the resolution, in the role of a line employee. And I would definitely have the CEO involved in all incident reporting at the appropriate level. It is the hands-on actual dealing and managing the incidents, the facts and the hurt bodies and lives that bad safety performance can risk that will tangibly demonstrate the mission criticality of great safety practices.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Improved safety performance level so that Exterran now ranks close to those of the best-performing companies in the industry
- Established a new vision surrounding a goal of zero incidents
- Initiated the XFACTOR program, which introduces and reinforces safety information among various work groups across the company's different geographic regions



## ROGER FRIEDE

PRESIDENT  
FRIEDE & ASSOCIATES

*Commercial success and a commitment to community service helps FRIEDE & ASSOCIATES stand out as a dominant building contractor in the region, contributing to*

*numerous significant economic development projects in the area. The Reedsburg, WI-based company employs 24 workers.*

### ***Why is safety a core value at your organization?***

We are a commercial/industrial construction company and, as such, our employees are exposed to a number of work-related risks in the daily performance of their jobs. Without the proper safety training, these situations can be hazardous. With a goal of zero incidents, safety is a part of our culture and considered with each decision made by management, office personnel, superintendents and all field employees. Every team member at Friede & Associates, including the person we hired yesterday and the person we may hire tomorrow, must place safety in front of all actions. There is absolutely no task that is so important or necessary that we might consider sacrificing safety, to even the slightest degree, in an effort to perform it.

### ***Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?***

Safety is about protecting people, whether it is our employees, subcontractors or clients. It is essential that we constantly focus on safety as we expand and grow.

When I started in the business more than 25 years ago, safety was an afterthought for most companies and, in fact, getting hurt in construction was thought of as "part of the job."

Initially, safety only received attention in the industrial setting, but as safety awareness expanded to the construction industry, contractors looked at safety as a necessary evil and only did the bare minimum.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Launched celebration of 10 years with no lost-time incidents
- Promotes off-the-job safety and health programs and corporate-wide wellness programs
- Sets expectations for employees to attend various safety conferences that are available throughout the year
- Fostered commitment to green building design, and meets with owners and subcontractors to create job-specific safety policies

As I came to realize the importance of safety, I created a safety manager position to implement and improve the safety culture in our company. After expressing my commitment to safety, I encouraged our safety manager to lead with safety incentives and recognition for positive safe work practices. The company culture has evolved to where it is today, where we are recognized by numerous associations and industry journals as being one of the safest small contractors in the area.

### ***What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?***

Make it personal. I would tell them to make safety a part of their corporate culture, and set the tone from the top. You need to set the standard, take responsibility on a day-to-day basis and ensure your leadership teammates are role models for these behaviors as well. Safety must involve everyone and it begins with your commitment to it and flows as a continuous improvement process that encourages the entire company to make recommendations for improvement, which produces critical updates to the company's safety initiative.

Make it visible and set goals and communicate regularly on your progress. Recognize and reward success. Just like other investments, safety, health and environmental performance must be measured, reported, evaluated and continuously improved. It should be part of your company's regular review process.

Most importantly, it comes down to people and our obligation to them as leaders. We're successful because safety isn't just a program, it's a way of life for us. I know our safety obsession has saved lives.

### ***What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?***

For a safety-conscious culture to grow, you need to be a champion of safety in your organization with a leadership team that is committed to being safety role models. Safety must be embedded as a core value throughout the workforce, supported by each person's commitment to stay safe and be responsible for the safety of those around them.

As employers, we have a moral obligation to provide a safe and healthful work place for our employees. This in turn provides improved morale for employees. No one wants to work for a company that has little or no regard for him or her as a person.

Today's project owners scrutinize your safety profiles with a rigorous prequalification process and if you don't measure up, you won't get their business.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.





## KIMBERLY J. HARRIS

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
PUGET SOUND ENERGY

**PUGET SOUND ENERGY** is Washington state's oldest local energy company. It serves 1.1 million electric customers and more than 770,000 natural gas customers in 10 counties. The company, located in Bellevue, employs 2,700 workers.

### ***Why is safety a core value at your organization?***

PSE's customers depend on us to provide safe and reliable electric and natural gas service to them every day. Their safety and the safety of our employees is our foundation – it drives everything we do. Simply put, if we're not safe, then we're not doing our job and delivering on our promise to our customers.

### ***Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?***

At PSE, we strongly believed we were safe. But that didn't hold up when, in 2010, we benchmarked ourselves against other utilities our size that offer the same service. We found that we were in the third quartile for our industry, so we made the decision to develop a five-year plan to improve our safety program. At that time, we were told by industry experts that it would take the full five years to achieve our goals. Yet it took us less than two years to move into the first quartile of safety performance, and we have stayed there ever since.

### ***What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?***

PSE's pledge – "Nobody Gets Hurt Today" – epitomizes the biggest challenge with safety. It's never finished and has to be top of mind for every single task, whether you're a line-man, a pipefitter, a call center agent or a plant operator. I want everyone to go home safe every day. That can only happen if we're focused and diligent about safety.

### ***How do you instill safety awareness in employees on an ongoing basis?***

We start every meeting in the entire organization with a safety moment. It's a reminder that no matter what you're doing or where you are in the organization, safety is the foundation. In 2014, we added an electronic monthly safety message that is required viewing by all employees. There's an increased dialogue around safety as a result, with employees using what they've learned in their jobs and sharing it with friends and family as well.

### ***How does your organization measure safety? What are the leading indicators that show you how safe your organization is, and where do you see room for improvement?***

We have three objectives that we measure every month:

1. Reduce injuries in the workplace.
2. Get employees back to work following an injury.
3. Educate and train employees on effective safety and wellness strategies.

While these objectives don't change, we're always trying to improve on how we achieve them. For example, we know that sprains and strains is where we still see most of our injuries, so in 2015 we're tailoring employee training to match the needs of our two distinct employee groups. Field workers will have "industrial athlete" programs focused on the specific tasks they perform, while office workers will continue to focus on ergonomics to prevent musculoskeletal disorders.

### ***What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?***

I'm a proponent of benchmarks and measures. Objective data allows you to understand your current state, pinpoint what needs to change and track how you're doing. Measures are also essential for the high level of employee engagement you'll need to drive change and instill a total safety culture. It's what spurred us from the third quartile to the first quartile in less than two years.

### ***What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?***

Every employee and team has a role and responsibility when it comes to safety. So even if you don't have a corporate safety goal, you and your team can make a difference. For instance, several groups at PSE took the initiative to become CPR-certified as a team. No one asked them to make that commitment – they did it on their own and the impact could be potentially lifesaving. I think that's an excellent example of leadership from within.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Formulated a five-year strategic safety plan dedicated to creating a zero-harm, injury-free culture
- Implemented an integrated strategic plan for business that distinguished safety as the foundation for business success
- Reduced total incidence case rate by 44 percent
- Creates daily communications under the corporate logo "Nobody Gets Hurt Today" that are prominently displayed at all business locations



## WILLIAM "BILL" S. MCINTYRE IV

CHAIRMAN, SHAREHOLDER  
AND CO-FOUNDER

AMERICAN CONTRACTORS  
INSURANCE GROUP

Founded in 1981, **AMERICAN CONTRACTORS INSURANCE GROUP** is a construction industry-owned insurance company with executive offices in Dallas. ACIG has 80 employees, and its primary lines of business are workers' compensation, general and auto liability, and subcontractor default insurance.

### **Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?**

In the beginning of my career in property/casualty insurance, I mainly focused on reducing the cost of insurance/risk by negotiating lower rates with insurance companies. As I became more involved with large-premium payers, I came to realize that because premiums are based on losses, the better way to reduce the cost of risk was to reduce losses through implementing enhanced safety practices.

With my understanding of the insurance mechanism, I became very proficient in helping CEOs "connect the dots" between the moral obligations of protecting their employees and the financial rewards of doing so. This led me to partnering with contractors in ACIG to establish a vehicle to maximize the safety effort and the financial rewards.

### **How do you instill safety awareness in employees on an ongoing basis?**

My mission has been to motivate the 41 CEOs involved in ACIG to promote continuous improvement and help them fight their biggest enemy – complacency – while improving and maintaining their safety cultures. We have two CEO roundtable meetings a year and an annual ACIG "Best Practices" meeting that more than 200 operational managers, including the CEOs, attend. These managers take new ideas back to their companies and provide the leadership to improve the safety awareness of their employees. That process

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Implemented "Project Life Saver" initiative that committed to reduce losses by 40 percent over four years
- Created two annual CEO roundtables for group companies that require top management to focus on safety
- Led the organization to its best overall safety performance regarding injury rates

is supported by an annual "Contractor Action Plan," approved by the CEO, to develop a well-defined roadmap for improvement for the coming year.

### **Why is safety a core value at your organization?**

On any given workday, our member contractors are responsible for the safety and lives of 100,000 workers at project locations and their offices, including their own employees, subcontractor employees and others. ACIG's commitment to safety is a reflection of our members' deep commitment to safety and quality. We are all committed to the zero-loss philosophy to reduce injuries, save lives and reduce the cost of our work.

### **What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

- Make a truly deep and personal commitment to safety. Become the Chief Safety Officer.
- Identify the metrics you need to become an agent of change. Develop the protocols for future statistics.
- Hold managers and profit centers responsible for the results, good or bad.
- Based on your financials, assume as much risk that is prudent under your insurance plans.
- Compare your results, both past and future, with outside benchmarks.
- Do blind perception surveys of top management, middle management and the field people on the state of the safety culture.
- Above all, take personal responsibility for injuries to your people and have the attitude that no one has the right to hurt your people.

### **What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

There is a greater tendency for the CEO and the COO to pay lip service to safety even if they thoroughly know and understand that supporting safety is the morally right thing to do. Combining the morality of an effective safety program with the financial reasons to do so makes getting the buy-in much easier. Unfortunately, most safety professionals are not knowledgeable about the complexities of risk financing and are often not "numbers" people.

To the extent necessary, ally yourself with someone who can team up with you to make the financial case. A good place to start is the CFO. Add a competent insurance person to the mix. Suggest a loss sensitive insurance program. In addition, identify CEOs who do "get it" and encourage your CEO to meet with them.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.



## JAMES R. MILLER

PRESIDENT  
BROWN AND CALDWELL

**BROWN AND CALDWELL** is an employee-owned, 100 percent environmental firm that offers full-service delivery of engineering, scientific, consulting and construction services. The Walnut Creek, CA-based company employs 1,500 workers.

*The Walnut Creek, CA-based company employs 1,500 workers.*

### **Why is safety a core value at your organization?**

"Always make health and safety a priority" is the No. 1 core value of Brown and Caldwell. We recognize that our employees are our most valuable assets and make every effort to provide them with the skills, knowledge and equipment necessary to protect them on the job. Our commitment to safety isn't just rhetoric – it's the way we do business. We understand that excellence in safety performance and excellence in project delivery and execution are all inter-related, and that the same fundamental corporate behaviors that produce successful projects also lead to outstanding safety results.

### **What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?**

I don't think we have substantial obstacles to safety in our organization, but actually are aware that one needs to "walk the talk" every single day to guard against complacency. We employ very bright individuals who would see through anything less than our full commitment to them and their well-being. As we continue to grow as an organization and bring new staff on board, it is vital that we promote and appoint leaders who naturally share and embrace our safety culture. Overcoming some aspects of human nature may be the biggest obstacle to a safety culture in any organization, especially in doing the right thing to stop unsafe practices regardless of one's rank in an organization. Rewarding and acknowledging positive behavior in such circumstances is a good pathway forward.

### **How do you instill safety awareness in employees on an ongoing basis?**

For Brown and Caldwell, safety is fundamental to the definition, planning, engineering, analyses, budgeting, approval and execution of work for all of our employees and subcontractors. Our program is cross-functional and integrates the resources of the safety, legal and human resources departments to more effectively manage the risks of the company and our clients. With this focus, we not only have safe and healthy employees, but our incident costs and loss history are substantially better than our industry at large.

### **How does your organization measure safety? What are the leading indicators that show you how safe your organization is, and where do you see room for improvement?**

In 2007, Brown and Caldwell established a system of leading indicators to measure performance at local, regional and national levels, holding leadership accountable for health and safety implementation. By focusing on effective performance, lagging indicators (such as incidence rates, EMRs and costs) have been reduced dramatically. Brown and Caldwell is proud to have been recognized by the National Safety Council as an Industry Leader for three consecutive years (and four of the last five), has worked more than 10 million hours without a lost-time injury, consistently maintains total recordable case rates less than one-half of its industry, and currently enjoys an EMR of 0.58. These results were achieved through a culture-based safety program – championed at the executive level.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.

### **What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

My advice to leaders who may just be beginning their safety journey in their organization is to make it personal, visible and sustainable. Safety excellence is a priority for executive leaders and must never be delegated to roles that are too low in the organization. Further, it must be instilled in all executives within the C-suite or leadership teams.

### **What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

To the safety professional within an organization whose CEO doesn't get it, I advise you to be persistent and to search for an ally with the corporate team who does get it and who could serve as your mentor to help get your message across. Honestly, if that doesn't work, or if it appears that the CEO would never get it or merely gives safety superficial attention, one should perhaps consider a career track elsewhere. It's my opinion that a leader who doesn't recognize safety as a core value likely does not have a compelling strategic vision for the firm's direction.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Lowered injury rates to less than one-half of industry average by focusing on a culture-based safety program
- Celebrated with employees after recently eclipsing 9 million hours without a lost-time injury, all during his tenure
- Implemented the "Be SHARP" program to focus on safety behaviors and empower employees to recognize, report and correct unsafe acts and conditions





## RANDALL A. NEUHAUS, PE

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
S&ME INC.

**S&ME INC.** delivers engineering, design, environmental consulting and construction management services for the built environment. Its purpose

is to provide safe, environmentally sensitive sustainable solutions that enrich its communities and improve quality of life. The Raleigh, NC-based company employs 995 workers.

### **Why is safety a core value at your organization?**

Safety is a core value at S&ME because we have learned that it is fundamentally important in everything we do. We owe our employees the training, tools and support that enable them to safely perform their work. We owe it to our clients to provide trained employees with the proper tools and equipment to complete their projects safely. And finally, we owe it to our employees' families to do everything in our power to return them home safely each day.

In addition, attention to safety has proved to be a good business decision for S&ME. By actively caring about our co-workers and their families, we have grown a safety culture that not only satisfies clients but also creates a positive work environment that attracts employees.

We are seeing that our safety culture extends into our employees' home lives. This year we realized a reduction in non-work-related medical claims, which decreases our health insurance premiums. Those savings are shared by the company and our employees.

### **Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?**

My journey really began in the years prior to my becoming president of S&ME in 2008. S&ME had some unfortunate incidents and, as hard as it is to say, I will say it: We had fatalities. I visited a family to inform the wife of the loss of

her husband and looked in the eyes of a 9-year-old boy when he learned his father would never be coming home.

As emotional as this experience was, I don't think that this moment was when my journey began. My journey started when one of our senior engineers asked me what I was going to do about safety at S&ME when I became president. I don't even remember what my answer to him was, but I could tell from his expression that he was disappointed in me.

I started thinking about safety and asked this engineer and our corporate safety director what we could do to make S&ME a safer place to work. We hired a safety consultant and I learned a great deal about safety and safety culture, and what effective safety leadership was all about. Leading by example was the first step for me.

My journey has evolved and I try to share our story so that other firms may learn from our experiences. I communicate regularly and strongly to the S&ME staff that my goal is for everyone to arrive home safely every day. I try to lead by example. It isn't always easy and the journey requires hard decisions from time to time, but the end result is without question worth the effort.

### **What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

Listen, communicate and lead by example. Everyone is watching you. The leader must have a strong message and a sense of conviction. Sometimes both sides look for scapegoats. Management blames the individual and the individual blames management. People have to understand we are all in this together and you must create a culture of actively caring employees who are committed to performing their job safely and are led by effective leadership. And finally, don't be afraid to make hard decisions, whether that is setting a policy like distracted driving or taking time to coach employees who made a mistake. Be willing to discipline if necessary for their own well-being and safety.



Visit [safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://safetyandhealthmagazine.com) for the full interview.

### **What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

I think you have to be a teacher. I remember the support, encouragement and, I need to include, patience that I received from my fellow employees at S&ME. Our safety director and the senior engineer I mentioned earlier "got it" long before I did, and I appreciate their advice. I try to listen and learn, and often need to hear it more than once. Demonstrate by example and provide facts. Be a teacher and coach, and your CEO will appreciate your genuine concern for the employees of your firm.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Developed a four-year strategic plan with the goal of establishing the company as a recognized safety leader in the industry
- Personally attended planning meetings and developed a process to adapt the typical behavior-based safety process to an engineering consulting firm
- Has taken his passion for safety on the road, serving as president of industry groups and speaking about safety at business conferences



## JASON POND

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
GREENBERRY INDUSTRIAL

**GREENBERRY** is an industrial constructor and fabricator based in Vancouver, WA. The organization currently employs 250 workers.

### **Why is safety a core value at your organization?**

For Greenberry, it was about the ability to be in business. Our customers have high expectations in regard to safety. If you don't meet or exceed them, you don't have a job.

### **Describe your personal journey to becoming a CEO who understands the value of safety. What experiences or lessons brought you to where you are now?**

I have been around the construction industry most of my life, and I have seen tremendous improvement in safety in that time. I still shake my head at some of the accepted work practices from the 1980s and earlier. That being said, there was one particular customer sales call I went on that really had an impact on me. It was after the recession hit, and there was no work available in our market. I traveled to Texas to meet with a very large oil company that did have plenty of work. The meeting started with them asking for our safety statistics. When I told them what they were, they said the meeting was over, as we could not work for them. I asked them to take some time to tell us what they would recommend to do, as we had come a long way. They took the next hour to do that. It hurt really bad, but we made a choice that day to make it happen.

### **How do you instill safety awareness in employees on an ongoing basis?**

We use a behavior-based safety program, and focus on pre-task planning at the individual level. We keep our training up to date, and we have daily safety meetings at all sites.

### **What is the biggest obstacle to safety at your organization, and how do you work to overcome it?**

I think changing attitudes with key leaders, and holding them accountable to make safety No. 1. The best thing I did

was start having a mandatory safety conference call every Friday, no matter what. All our sites' leadership participates. The positive peer pressure it creates is significant. We work hard at making these meetings positive, and to raise awareness of issues that happen. Sharing current lessons learned can prevent someone else from making the same mistake that could get someone hurt.

### **How does your organization measure safety? What are the leading indicators that show you how safe your organization is, and where do you see room for improvement?**

We measure safety-related near misses, incidents, first aids, recordable injuries, and lost-time injuries. Leading indicators are the near misses, incidents and first aids. We also take timely and complete safety incident reporting very seriously.

### **What advice would you offer to other leaders whose organizations are at an earlier stage of the journey to safety excellence?**

Get your key people in a room, and get complete buy-in. Then, it is all about follow-up, training and accountability. Above all, if you don't buy in, they won't either.

### **What advice would you offer to a safety professional whose CEO doesn't "get it"? How can safety pros secure buy-in from the C-suite?**

I would ask to sit down with him or her, and bring tangible data to support you. I would also ask to see if you can meet with your liability insurance broker and workman's compensation broker. I am sure they can show financial benefits and risk management benefits as well.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Recently marked 10 years and 5 million labor hours without a lost-time incident
- Participates with other executives in quarterly safety audits at shops and sites
- Initiated numerous daily safety-related activities, including flex-and-stretch programs, RADAR cards, job hazard analysis and observation cards, daily safety meetings, management safety conference calls, weekly dashboards, banners, stand-downs, and recognition activities



## Does *your* CEO 'get it'?

The National Safety Council looks to recognize leaders whose actions demonstrate a personal commitment to worker safety and health. It doesn't matter if your organization has 50 employees or 50,000. If you believe your CEO should be recognized, go to [www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com](http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com) and submit a form telling us why.