Thank you for your kind introduction.

It is an honor and great pleasure for me to be with you this week at the seventh annual Kuwait Chapter PDC and to meet the distinguished guests here this evening as well as my fellow ASSE colleagues.

What an impressive event and what a beautiful and unique venue.

I bring you official greetings and well wishes from the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of ASSE.

You should know that the Kuwait Chapter is held in very high esteem by ASSE’s Board of Directors.

Your successful chapter operations and your world-class conferences are a model for all chapters to follow.

You deserve to be proud of your accomplishments.

I have personally followed your activities and successes for some time and I am most impressed. I am also proud that Kuwait Chapter is a significant part of our ASSE global network of safety professionals.

Let’s ‘Connect the Dots’ on why we are here today. It is about Occupational Safety and Health. And we all know safety is an ongoing journey with a focus on continual improvement.

Continually learning about best practice, new tools and resources is part of that journey and will assist us in saving lives and preserving health… in short, protecting people, property and the environment.
This conference is a fantastic opportunity to do just that.

So today, in the spirit of continual improvement, I would like to respectfully challenge each of you to hone your skills at communicating with your organizations’ business leaders.

Learn to make the rock-solid business case for the commitment to occupational safety, health and environmental excellence as an essential competitive advantage for your organization.

Because when it comes to safety and health in the workplace, we know that sometimes the difference can be, literally, a matter of life or death.

In order to creat the business case, we need to look at our company’s business, where the business is headed and how we fit into the needs of the business….how we can add value.

In a world where brands are significantly impacted by catastrophic oil rig explosions or factory fires, each time with human and environmental cost, business models are now moving towards enterprise risk management with an emphasis on RISK for long term sustainability.

Fellow Safety Professionals, risk is the language of business.

CEOs, CFOs, board directors, investors, the operational side of any organization; they all understand risk.

And proving the value of the OSH professional in risk identification and assessment dispels the notion that the safety profession is only concerned with compliance –about being the “Safety Police’ --a concern which is global in scope.
Risk assessment is an integral part of an organization’s Enterprise Risk Management process; and safety professionals must be recognized as possessing the necessary knowledge, skills and capability—the core competencies for managing a wide range of risks.

We still have some very important work to do to demonstrate our value to our business leaders.

Managing safety and health risk in an organization is an investment—as important of an investment as management can make in the business operations.

An investment which is almost guaranteed to pay significant dividends—not just in the obvious reduction in injury and illness and the soaring attendant costs and damaging publicity.

But also, significant dividends in employee morale…
…quality,
…reputation,
…productivity,
…and in the end—profitability.

In closing, let me challenge each of the business leaders and safety and health professionals here today to think about the value of Occupational Safety and health within your organization.

Ask yourself…
…Does the management of safety and health risks in your organization bring innovative, problem-solving solutions to internal and external business issues?

Over a decade ago, Joel P. Henning wrote that:
“Claiming legitimacy because we audit, oversee, and ensure alignment is a balloon about to burst…Claiming legitimacy because we show up and do programs that we have been doing for years is not enough.”

What Henning means by this is that in today’s highly competitive, rapidly changing and increasingly complex business environment, the demand on safety professionals is to demonstrate our value to the business and to business results, which is the life blood of any company.

To the safety professionals in this room:

Are you positioned to positively influence the ongoing direction of your company?

Do you enable the business of your company to be successful? Do you proactively, positively identify solutions that both reduce injuries and illnesses as well as costs.”

Are you a partner and collaborator in your company’s success?

Or…are you merely the safety police?

This is the challenge I leave you with today. Because every, single day your answers to the forgoing questions will determine whether or not you are relevant to your company’s business success

Thank you again for inviting me to be with you at this innovative, world class conference.
I look forward to the opportunity to meet each of you and to share our stories and learn from one another.

After all, isn’t that what the ASSE network is all about!