Foreword

Since writing *Out of the Box* in 2002, much has changed in the SH&E profession. Demands on SH&E professionals have grown—in some cases dramatically—while the size of most safety, health and environmental staffs have remained largely unchanged. Some of these increased demands resulted from increased federal and state regulatory scrutiny of businesses.

Even before the recession that began in 2007, companies were increasingly using in-house personnel rather than third party contractors for many field-related activities, such as testing and monitoring, to save on costs. Many of us have also had to become, if not experts, at least highly informed, on available technologies and costs in many areas. We’ve grown into insurance and legal experts, reviewing contracts, understanding indemnities, claims management, and various coverages.

Outside the SH&E realm we have to be familiar with computer systems, website design, video technologies, and social networking concerns. The so-called “people skills,” which are grounded in effective listening and communicating (and discussed in this book), are critical, whether it is communicating with third-party contractors and skilled trades or performing human resource tasks, including drug and alcohol testing. SH&E managers are often the front line for security, public relations, community affairs, company representatives, emergency response experts, and hiring and firing field personnel per management’s request. The list goes on. We have, in many cases, become the subject matter experts for all things administrative.

I’ve learned a great deal since writing the first edition. As a perpetual student of SH&E and life in general, many of the things that happened to me have been captured in this book. These lessons were a result of our changing work environment, scrutiny from boards of directors, stakeholder proposals, reactions of municipalities and the public regarding SH&E, and social responsibility and sustainability.
I have become increasingly aware that the public expects the SH&E professional to be in the know about all things that even peripherally touch the SH&E profession. The public also expects companies to be both more transparent and innovative in conducting their SH&E programs. Companies must always be prepared to demonstrate that they are using the best available technologies, that their records are accurate, complete, and up to date, and that they are in compliance with all applicable environmental and occupational health regulations.

I’ve also worked long enough to see a generational changing of the guard, where senior management that once shunned SH&E now welcomes us due to the importance SH&E plays in company strategies for growth and development. I’ve also seen companies embrace more progressive, employee-focused policies like telecommuting—managing employees remotely but still getting the work done and making money. Things like this that were once taboo to even mention are now practically considered mainstream.

The bottom line is that our workload and responsibilities have increased; we have to be ready to communicate not only with employees, field supervisors, and senior management, but also with the public; and we have to never stop learning.

When successful, these new areas of responsibility earn us new stripes and we are considered a credible resource. Where in the past, SH&E was where middle managers went to retire, now we are seeing SH&E raided by other departments because our staff demonstrates performance, excellent work ethics, and strategic thinking. Successful SH&E personnel are people who can add value to a company, not just prevent losses.

My goal in revising this book was to provide information and strategies that are not taught in college, and to be a “virtual mentor” and resource to turn to when career changing decisions need to be made.
Much of the information in the first edition is still here, answering questions like **what do you do when**:

- You are about to be laid off?
- You have to hire or fire an employee?
- Your company is about to merge with another company and your job may be in question?

Or, **how do you**:

- Get to the corner office?
- Negotiate your salary?
- Convince management of the financial efficiency of SH&E?
- Lead or participate in effective meetings?

I hope that when you face one of these questions, this book can help you make the right decision—or at least point you in the right direction. Perhaps you can learn from my experience and avoid some of my mistakes. Or perhaps you will break new ground, only using this book as a starting point. Whichever it is, I hope it helps you manage your safety, health, and environmental career.

—Mark Hansen