A New ‘Servant’ Leadership Role for the OSH Practitioner--
Promoting and Underpinning Corporate Social Responsibility

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Abstract

If a business is to be sustainable, it needs consider not only its profitability but also its employees, customers and the local community. This is in addition to any ecological or environmental issues. Eccles et al (2013) found that companies integrating social and environmental issues into their strategy were found to perform better than those who have not adopted such an approach.

A priority for many companies now is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This involves going beyond legal compliance and being seen as acting responsibly towards people, planet and profit. It is important because the ethical investment market is growing and as such social performance is influencing these investment decisions. A company’s reputation in social and environment areas can influence customers and potential employees. CSR has implications for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) because it involves embedding an exemplary health and safety culture not just focusing on bare legal requirements for employees’ safety and health. Therefore OSH practitioners need to link safety and health to arguments and evidence about how it can improve a company's reputation.

Poor safety and health standards can have a negative effect on a company’s financial status. Accidents or incidents can also lead to a poor reputation, which subsequently leads to loss of income from sales and an inability to attract the best employees. Business reputation can therefore be an important factor in influencing a company to be proactive about health and safety.
This paper highlights a possible ‘servant leadership’ role for the OSH practitioner to help them embed an exemplary safety and health culture and underpin Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It discusses:

- The nature of CSR and why it is important
- how safety and health can underpin CSR
- what type of leadership is necessary to achieve a high level of CSR
- why a ‘servant leadership’ style could suit the OSH practitioner.

**Corporate Social Responsibility**

The Business Council for Sustainable Development defines Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as:

‘The continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large’. (WBCSD Stakeholder Dialogue on CSR, The Netherlands, Sept 6-8, 1998)

CSR is therefore a concept by which companies integrate environmental and social tasks into their business activities and take account of the relationships with stakeholders that could be affected by decisions made by the company. It needs to be viewed as a long term activity. It is characterised by its voluntary nature, which leads to companies doing more than what is required in legislation. CSR activities can give a company more credibility. It can lead to an increase in trust and an appreciation of the need for transparency in business dealings.

European Commission recently redefined CSR as:

‘The responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society’, with the final aim of ‘maximising the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholder and other stakeholders and society at large (and) identifying preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts’. (COM (2011) 681)

This expands the scope of CSR from a voluntary context to one of active responsibility and aligns CSR better with core business and increases its relevance for companies.

CSR has three pillars (Montero et al (2009)):

- The economic pillar, which focuses on fair trade, corporate governance and ethical practices
- The environmental pillar, which includes a reduction in the negative impact of what the company, does on the environment, for example reducing emissions, using environmentally friendly technologies and being aware of the need to protect the natural habitat of wildlife. This can also include animal welfare.
- The social pillar, which focuses on education, employment conditions, diversity and health and safety.

When defining something it is also sometimes useful to consider what something is not. Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSIR) is unethical executive behaviour that shows disregard for the welfare of others” (Pearce and Manz 2011). At the highest level in the organisation, this
can be individuals seeking to maximise their personal gain. At lower levels, it can include sabotage, theft and aggression. However, CSR exists on a continuum (Jones et al 2014).

You cannot define what socially responsible behaviour is, for example, on the basis of the particular product that a company produces. There is even scope for companies whose products may have negative social or health consequences e.g. alcohol or tobacco producers to engage in CSR by working on solutions to particular social problems that minimise the harm that their product does, for example – sensible drinking programmes (Lindorrf et al 2012).

Finally it is important to note that the impact of business on society is wider than just creating wealth for shareholders. CSR takes into account the impact on a larger group of stakeholders from employees to local communities as well as societal outcomes. As Sowden (2005) points out, the concept of CSR allows the interests of the company and those of society to be reconciled.

What Is Included in CSR?

Some of the common activities undertaken as part of CSR include:

- Community investment and environment, including reducing energy, water and waste
- Giving aid to local organisations and communities in developing countries
- Helping to build the skills of the local people through community based development
- Supporting staff fundraising activities or payroll giving
- Offering staff volunteering opportunities, therefore raising awareness and providing learning and development activities

Concern for the wellbeing of employees should also constitute one of the main aspects in any firm’s corporate social responsibility.

An example of a company that has integrated CSR into its aim is the Belgacom group. This is a large telecommunications group based in Brussels. It aims to promote a fair, diverse and safe work environment and culture, and has developed a code of conduct structured around what it calls the three Ps (People, Planet, and Profit). It lists six key priorities for CSR that include value for both the company and society. These include:

- Enhancing access to communications. (This could have a benefit for the company by increasing market share and a value for society by ensuring children were protected on line).
- Enabling a low carbon economy. (This could result in cost savings for the company but also increased business opportunities through being seen as a 'green' company and also benefit society by conserving resources).
- Communicating on electromagnetic fields and health. (This helps to mitigate health risks and improves reputation with customers).
- Promoting a positive working culture (This could benefit the company by improving workforce retention but also work life balance and reduction of psycho social risks, with a knock on benefit for the economy).
- Developing a responsible supply chain. (Again this mitigates business risk and enhances relationships with suppliers but can also improve environmental and ethical standards from a societal point of view).
• Supporting communities. This leads to enhanced trust and reputation with stakeholders and improves standards of living in the communities where the company operates.

• Full details can be seen on the company website http://www.belgacom.com/group/eu-en/annex_responsability/Resp_CSR_Strategy.page#.VNPcVZ2sUTE

Another example is that of Marks and Spencers, who originally launched their ‘Plan A’ in 2007 with the aim of becoming the world’s most sustainable major retailer. The latest Plan A is structured around four pillars:

• Inspiration: – inspiring their customers and other organisations and supporting local communities and living healthier lifestyles. This includes launching a Global Community Programme to help strengthen livelihoods and create resilience across their value chain.

• Intouch: listening actively and act thoughtfully. This includes creating “a deeper connection with employees, suppliers, customers and their respective communities through more open dialogue”.

• Integrity: always striving to do the right thing. This includes leading their sector in sustainable consumption.

• Innovation: aiming to improve. This includes prioritising business model innovation and putting circular economy models into practice.

For more details see http://planareport.marksandspencer.com/

Why Is CSR Important?
Why would a company want to spend corporate resources on CSR? The basic premise of CSR is that companies have a responsibility to shareholders beyond earning. One important issue is whether CSR has a negative effect on financial performance but in fact research has found positive support for a relationship between CSR and financial performance. Many companies voluntarily adapt components of CSR because they believe it brings benefits. An alternative motivation for social or environmental CSR is to meet regulatory requirements. Economic motives might be that there is a demand for products that are produced in a socially responsible way.

As societies have become more affluent, companies that externalize their social costs have become less acceptable. For example once a pollution of a river would have been regarded as the price a community paid for jobs but this is no longer acceptable Werther (2005). Contractor management is important because companies cannot afford to import risks from suppliers. If a company’s workforce is from the local community, the company will wish to be held in high regard in order to maintain its social licence to operate’ and ensure retention and recruitment of high calibre local employees.

The supply chain is therefore a critical factor and management of supply chains should include the use of well-designed pre-tendering requirements or procurement standards that require adequate health and safety standards to be met by prospective suppliers. The contractual
arrangements must also clearly specify health and safety requirements and rules pertaining to subcontracting, welfare arrangements, monitoring and incident reporting. Supply chain management requires active and ongoing monitoring from the client/employer to ensure that their expectations are being met on the ground. Companies need to work constructively with their supply chain firms to encourage better health and safety standards and a mutually beneficial relationship. This can include shared health and safety training and resources.

**Measuring the Benefits of CSR**

Reporting improves the transparency and credibility of a company with regards to CSR. Another reason is to maintain or repair the company’s reputation or in response to shareholder pressure. CSR reports can be used both internally and externally within the company. Companies can have many motives for publishing CSR reports, for example:

- To raise awareness of CSR within the company
- Inform stakeholders about a company’s performance
- Help monitor progress against CSR targets.

ISO 26000:2010 provides guidance (not requirements) on how companies and can operate in a socially responsible, ethical and transparent way. The standard was developed with global inputs from representatives from government, industries and consumer groups from different countries. More details can be seen at [http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/iso26000.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/iso26000.htm)

CSR reports should include OSH reporting. The type of OSH topics included in CSR reports can also include wellbeing initiatives, for example a screening and care programme for employees with illnesses that threaten their capacity to work (Koskela 2014).

Improved corporate reporting on OSH can be a driver to better performance. IOSH co-founded the Center for Safety and Health Sustainability (CSHS) with fellow professionals in the USA to create an international forum for this work. Recent research commissioned by CSHS has shown weaknesses in a ranking system for the world’s top 100 sustainable companies, some of which were identified as having sustained several worker fatalities. It also highlighted inconsistency in reporting methods and lack of comparability. It is therefore important to improve performance reporting and supply chain management to move health and safety higher up the CSR and sustainability agenda.

Proactive examples from other countries may provide useful background – for instance in order to inspire companies to actively promote social responsibility, Denmark has had a statutory requirement since for 2009 for large businesses to account for their CSR activities in their annual reports. The aim is to help to improve the international competitiveness of Danish trade and industry. ([http://csrgov.dk/legislation](http://csrgov.dk/legislation)).

Assessing the benefits and costs of CSR is a challenge for companies. Examples of CSR can range from giving donations to help eradicate river blindness by Merck (Sprinkle (2010) to unpublished cash and products to help relief efforts (e.g. after the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile) or doing something to avoid negative publicity. Giving employees time off to do voluntary work can benefit the company as well as the community, by increasing the skill base of the company as well as enhancing company reputation in the community.

CSR can also be viewed as a part of a company’s risk management. It can reduce the chances of incidents/accidents occurring and the chances of litigation and damage to company reputation.
It can help manager these risks by also ensuring that reputable and sustainable business practices are being followed throughout the supply chain.

Other benefits from engaging in CSR include tax deductions and credits for making charitable donations or using ‘green’ materials. Companies can get free advertising. There can also be efficiency gains e.g. using sustainable design practices to reduce after sales costs (e.g. in the automobile industry).

Back in 1999, The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) concluded in their report ‘Meeting Changing Expectations’ that a CSR strategy offered business benefits and made a positive contribution to the wellbeing of society. It also provided a chance to show the ‘human face of businesses. However to implement such a strategy it was important to take part in open dialogue and work in partnership. Companies needed to respect local and cultural differences at the same time as maintaining high global standards.

CSR provides business with a chance to show that when companies invest in foreign countries, they will not compromise social and environmental standards. They can work in partnership with local communities to implement sustainable principles. They can recognise local social priorities and show that international business need not have a negative impact on local communities. So CSR is not a cost or burden but can be regarded as a means of enhancing reputation and credibility. The rationale for the business case for CSR is that it will result either directly or indirectly in a corporation’s improved financial performance, meaning that they will voluntarily behave ethically to lead to positive social and environmental chance. Indirect benefits include an enhanced corporate image and the reduction of reputational risk (Hart 2010).

The results of a public consultation on the EU Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy confirmed that CSR actions are not only good for society, but an important way for companies to reduce risks, encourage longer-term thinking and generate customer and employee loyalty. If a company is going to realise the strategic benefits of CSR it needs to have CSR integrated into its mission and objectives and be able to identify how the company can capture private benefits e.g. recycling waste products (Burke and Logsdon 1996).

So to summarise the benefits of CSR can be:

- higher employee morale
- Better relationship with communities and government
- Reduced likelihood of regulatory intervention
- Increased reputation
- Presenting a lower risk to investors.

Why Don’t Some Companies Engage in CSR?
The recent economic downturn resulted in reduced budgets. There is also a lack of appreciation of the benefits of responsible corporate behaviour or the opportunities to demonstrate such behaviour. CSR is a long term activity and it many companies have a tendency to short-termism and requiring a very quick return on investment. They take a narrow view of business responsibility, focusing solely on direct financial matters and not on reputation, stakeholder relationships or partnership working. Also, customers demand goods that are supplied as quickly and cheaply as possible. Long supply chains that cross countries and continents make this more complicated. It is also difficult to quantify the benefits of CSR. Finally, there can be lack of leadership and Board level commitment in this area.
What Should a Company Do to Kick-Start CSR?
According to Burke & Logsdon (1996), the following steps are useful:

- Identify stakeholders, who are critically important for achieving the company mission.
- Determine the socially valuable CSR roles – projects, which could benefit these stakeholders.
- Assess the opportunities offered by these CSR projects to enhance the company’s attainment and strategic objectives or solve problems facing the company.
- Assess the degree to which these CSR projects offer benefits which can be captured by the company as opposed to other companies or society at large.
- Anticipate future changes in the company’s environment and changes in the needs of key stakeholders, which could be met by proactive CSR policies and activities.
- Determine the baseline of legislative requirements to identify opportunities for voluntary activities.
- Identify opportunities to create positive visibility with key internal and external stakeholders for CSR activities.
- Measure and compare the value or potential value expected from various CSR projects.

How Does OSH Fit into CSR?

It is clear that legislation, although important, is not the key to excellence in occupational safety and health. It has to be accompanied by the promotion of a culture of risk prevention. The search for a good occupational health and safety environment and the promotion of a culture of risk prevention are two of an organisation’s main social responsibilities and are therefore an integral part of CSR (Sowden and Sunil, 2005).

EU-OSHA’s report on ‘corporate social responsibility and safety and health at work’ explored the Interactions between CSR and OSH at company and policy level (EU-OSHA, 2004). The authors concluded that health and safety at work is an essential component of CSR.

OSH is relevant for all three pillars of CSR. It can give companies an opportunity to raise their commitment to OSH by ensuring OSH risks are adequately addressed by contractors and suppliers and motivating other companies to make OSH improvements through example and ‘peer pressure’. OSH practitioners can work in partnership with those in procurement in reviewing products, services and suppliers for potential CSR impact and the benefit/risk they present to the company. Working with suppliers is important. It’s about recognising that procurement is not just about cost savings but value, including shared social value.

It’s also important to integrate OSH into environmental and sustainability issues and here OSH practitioners have two distinct roles in CSR (Patton 2010). They need to be aware of any company sustainability initiatives that aim to protect natural resources and protect employees from environmental harm. The second is to understand the safety function from a sustainability point of view. This involves keeping employees and others affecting by company operations safe, protecting communities, and safeguarding the supply chain.

With its focus on the company’s stakeholders, CSR embraces both the internal needs of employees as well as the eternal needs of society. From an OSH perspective, this means on the one hand taking care of employees’ safety and health in excess of legal requirements, for example looking at issues related to ergonomics, employees with disabilities (making reasonable adjustments), language barriers, cultural differences, young and older workers and psycho social
issues. On the other hand, it involves considering external implications, such as using OSH as a criterion in the selection of subcontractors or in marketing. In this way, OSH is addressing the needs of the company and this illustrates social responsibility.

Therefore, employers should ensure that as part of their CSR they consider the health and safety of their employees, including psycho social issues, such as work related stress and active promotion of employee well being. Looking after the workforce and developing its capacity (mentally, socially etc.) has strategic importance for companies and society, particularly in view of the ageing population and the fact that research suggests that two thirds of all lost working days have some link with work related stress. There is a need to be aware of the societal impact of psycho social risks at the workplace but also of the business impact of psychosocial issues in society (Jain et al 2014).

Promotion of CSR will enable a company to view health and safety risk management more positively and strategically. This will involve managing risks including health and safety in the supply chain and going beyond the legal minimum required. Companies that go beyond legal minimums on health and safety at work benefit society by reducing injury, illness and death and facilitating extended and healthy working lives. Globalisation, leading to long, complex supply chains, means companies supplied from the developing world can help raise health and safety standards in these countries, benefitting whole nations.

As Camplin (2011) points out CSR can be seen as an opportunity to integrate OSH aspects into a broader framework. It can make the relationship between the company’s social concern and its reputation in the market more evident. It allows companies to commit themselves publically to workplace health safety and welfare.

A company’s culture influences the effectiveness of the OSH systems in place. Social responsibility requires a balance between people, profits and the planet. It means that economic decisions should be balanced with issues related to employee safety and health. OSH professionals should link safety initiatives with how they can be value for money and show the value added benefits (e.g. compliance with employee rights or extra benefits to improve employee health) to reinforce their case. See the IOSH Life savings website for case study examples.

OSH must be seen as a reputational risk to be taken into account. Therefore it is up to the OSH practitioner to point out these areas of risk to the company. The OSH practitioner needs to be ‘a champion of planet, people and profits’. To justify expenditure on safety, OSH practitioners need to demonstrate how it will impact on the bottom line. The value of OSH goes beyond this however as companies also have ethical responsibilities. OSH practitioners need to be able to show that good OSH management can contribute to good corporate governance and social responsibility.

To summarise, OSH practitioners can play a critical role in CSR. Many of the health challenges, including healthy ageing and extending working lives are long-term and affected by decisions made years earlier. For example, work-related health conditions are often ‘long-latency’ and so exposures suffered today will lead to long-term societal costs; while conversely, action to prevent disease and promote health and wellbeing will lead to future societal gains. Importantly, the ‘big global challenges’ (e.g. economic, demographic, social, technological and environmental) rely on socially responsible employers and governments and skilled and effective workers, for their successful resolution (Jones 2013).
Leading CSR and Servant Leadership

If CSR is to be central to the organisational culture, this requires a refocusing of corporate leadership to include social purpose. (Knudsen 2014). It also requires a new type of leader to emerge – the ‘servant’ leader.

The term servant leadership was first used by Robert Greenleaf in 1970. As the name would suggest, this term describes individuals who aim to serve others but then also make a conscious decision to lead. Leadership is therefore a special way to serve. The style of leadership is very different from those who are motivated to lead by the need for power or personal financial gain. The servant leader empowers others – by helping them to reach their true potential and be independent (Finlay (2012).

Historically leadership was seen to flow from the top to the bottom of companies. The separation of managerial and worker responsibilities were traditionally prescribed by the scientific model of management, as advocated by Taylor (Fry 1976). Therefore strong centralized leadership was seen as the norm. Subordinates did not play a role in leadership. Later, transformational leadership was about a leader offering rewards and incentives in exchange for complying with orders. In transformational leadership, the vision and inspiration also stems from the leader. Servant leadership differs from transformational leadership (Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson 2008). It includes showing concern for the interests of employees and encouraging them in their career development, delegating important work responsibilities and emphasizing the importance of giving back to the community. It contrasts with traditional leadership styles, which emphasize the individualistic, ‘need to be strong to serve’ characteristics.

It also differs from transformational leadership in that transformational leader’s first focus is the company and personal growth of employees is considered as part of how this can be good for the company. Humility, empathy and creating value for the community are not part of transformational leadership (Reed et al 2011). Servant leaders, however, recognise that it is important to empower people. They have a vision for the future and are able to break this down into small attainable goals. What differentiates it from transformational leadership is the moral objective of serving others (Boone & Makhani 2012). As Sarkus (1996) describes it “this leadership model establishes service as the ‘gift’ that attracts followers who, in turn, pass along the same gift”.

Transformational leaders are seen as innovators, which is important during times of change. However the qualities needed to be a transformational leader do not necessarily include qualities such as ethical decision making, maintaining a high level of personal accountability or holding people in high regard. On the other hand servant leadership as mentioned above, emphasizes serving others and this type of leadership is based on a relationship of trust. Servant leaders tend to be introspective and are humble – they seek the advice of others. Servant leadership is thus inspirational, moral and participative. There is a low need for power and these leaders have a high level of empathy and good communication skills.

Aspects of servant leadership can vary in different cultures. For example, egalitarianism and empowerment were more important for effective leadership in Nordic and European cultures and empathy and humility were more important in Asian cultures community (Mittel and Dorfmann (2012).
Being a servant does not mean that other people dictate what you do, but rather that your focus is on developing others. At the heart of servant leadership is the need to make a difference at work, in the community and at home with the family (Covey 1996). As Blanchard (1996) observed, it is about ‘turning the corporate pyramid upside down’ – people are responsible and the management are responsive and take action to ensure people can meet their goals. Top down leadership can stifle creativity but servant leadership aims to create a climate of personal growth, and to do so it is necessary to value others’ contributions, to encourage others to accept responsibility, to give feedback and to champion positive change.

Coaching rather than controlling is important. Servant leaders generate enthusiasm, build on the strengths of others and are results focused. Listening is an important quality of a servant leader. Workers are encouraged to give feedback on ideas and decisions are made after consultation. Servant leaders encourage others to go above and beyond their normal jobs and perform organisational citizenship behaviours. This involves altruistic, prosocial activities that help to improve organisational performance.

Why might the OSH practitioner be suited to this style of leadership? They are motivated by wanting to make the workplace a better i.e. healthier and safer place. They are committed to a culture of care and have an opportunity to influence others in the workplace.

Recent scandals in the finance sector have illustrated the importance of leaders who put the interests of others before their own interests. Transformational leaders with their charisma and focus on organisational objectives may sometimes abuse their position. Servant leadership clearly focuses on the interests of others and epitomises ethical leadership but also being aware of one’s own strengths and weaknesses and limitations and being prepared to acknowledge the strengths of other employees (Marinova 2014).

So to promote corporate social responsibility, companies need a different type of leader, one who is focused on better outcomes for their employees/colleagues and the community. Rather than someone with high personalized power, who believes in a ‘win-lose’ frame of mind and pursues power to be superior to others, there is a need for a leader with socialized power, who is motivated by the need to positively influence others and use their charisma to serve and develop others.

Many Fortune 100 companies in the USA, list servant leadership as a core company value. Not only can it improve the ethical culture of a company but servant leadership can increase collaboration and creativity within the company, which can lead to improved performance (Hunter et al 2013).

Hunter et al (2013) carried out a survey of a large US retail company. The results of their study indicated that servant leadership could have a positive influence on others in the company by creating a climate for service. It helped to create a work environment that ‘promotes the virtue of serving others’ and a workplace of choice for employees. This means that servant leadership can help to reduce staff turnover costs and improve employee performance, teamwork and customer service. As companies become global, success may also depend on sustaining CSR activities – converting their goods and services so that they create wealth not only for the shareholders but for local communities.

Sometimes companies resort to CSR in response to bad publicity because of corporate scandals or accidents in an attempt to rebuild their reputation. This can be prompted by a change in corporate governance in response to a crisis situation. An example is that of Coca Cola, who a
decade ago were accused of using water contaminated by pesticides in one of its bottling plants in India. Although it was subsequently found that these pesticides were harmless to health, the company reputation was tarnished. A later incident involved waste water being discharged into agricultural fields and the Ganges and sludge being dumped illegally. The then CEO had a strong personal commitment to environmental sustainability and used this crisis to spearhead a number of sustainability initiatives (Doh et al 2014).

One of the natural extensions of servant leadership is strong corporate social responsibility and community service, modelled by the leader and practiced by company employees. Servant leaders volunteer in the community and also encourage employees in their voluntary work. This helps the servant leader become a valued and appreciated member of the community. Volunteering can also benefit the organisation by increasing skills and expanding networks. The servant leader does not see themselves as the ‘top of the pyramid’ but within the pyramid. – listening, understanding and moving in a direction to unite everyone in a common vision. So it’s not just a management style but also a set of attitudes that leaders need to develop (Blanchard (1996), Liden (2008)). As Blanchard (1996) pointed out ‘Servant leaders don’t think less of themselves they just think of themselves less’.

Disadvantages of Servant Leadership

There are some disadvantages to servant leadership. Some workers may regard the humility, which characterises servant leadership as a weakness and this may prevent them from participating. However servant leadership is not an easy option. It will not work in companies where there are no core values. It needs trust.

The OSH Practitioner As Servant Leader

With regards to OSH, traditional leadership is focused on compliance with regulations and avoidance of prosecution and fines. Workers are trained how to comply with regulations and reactive measures are used monitor these, such as audits and inspections. It is assumed that employees behaviour is guided by self-interest and safety is not integrated but can have a’ bolt on’ status (James 2003).

The implementation of traditional safety compliance strategy involves the minimum staffing levels and resources to meet legal requirements and a lower level status for safety professionals. Safety is enforced by safety personnel and is imposed ‘top down’ with company rules and regulations.

‘Value based’ leadership in safety, such as servant leadership, goes beyond compliance; standards are imposed by the company rather than being just based on legislation. Managers ‘walk the talk’ and there is importance placed on developing a good safety culture. Although there is a management driven vision – employees participate in setting objectives. There is leadership and accountability at all levels and shared decision making. The approach is positive and proactive rather than reactive. Employee’s behaviour is guided by their beliefs.

The implementation of value based strategy involves company safety values and well as legislation. Staffing levels reflect that necessary to meet perceived and actual risks and there is appropriate status for safety professionals, including some at executive level. Safety is accepted as adding value and is integral to processes. Safety standards are regarded as vital to the company. It is a corporate value because it demonstrates concern for the company’s most valuable asset their employees.
From a safety point of view, this would mean that a servant leader in an executive position within a company would be willing to listen and be influenced by workers, supervisors and managers in a company. Servant leaders can create a sound vision for safety advancement. The vision would be to go beyond compliance because safety makes good business sense and because it is morally right.

Servant leaders clearly articulate goals. Safety is not just the health and safety manager’s job but a part of everyone’s. Because servant leaders value others – they are prepared to listen and treat people with dignity and respect. They understand the importance of trust and a culture is established where workers know their safety is a priority.

Servants are ‘servant first’. i.e. they like to help others who provide service and support. Therefore they have to make a conscious choice to lead. They look for ways to celebrate good safety performance and continuously monitor and provide feedback. If there are problems, the focus is always on the behaviour not on the individual, who is still accepted as a valued individual.

Rivkin et al (2013) argue that servant leadership is positively related to employees’ health because of the way servant leaders create work environments, that meet employee needs. They help to establish a shared social identity. And as Haslam (2009) pointed out, this influences employees’ psychological health because it engenders an atmosphere of trust, support, justice and community.

Linking Health and Safety and Servant Leadership

OSH therefore has to be a value not just a priority. To achieve this it is important to integrate safety and health into business practice and instil it into the culture of the organisation. Sarkus (1996) developed a seven C model of Social influence in Safety Management. The aim of the model is to show how to influence individual and group behaviour. The seven principles are: Caring, Coaching, Correcting, Confirming, Collaborating, Clarifying and Conciliating. Caring is regarded as the foundation of a good safety culture. This is about everyone in the company showing concern and support for each other and can be manifested in such behaviours as visiting an employee who is ill or holding team celebrations to mark excellent safety performance.

If employees care, then they will be prepared to coach each other. A coaching environment means that questions and feedback are accepted as the norm. Correcting means stopping at risk behaviour. This prevents lip service to safety where a policy dictates a way of behaving safely but this is ignored in practice and leads to dual standards. It is also important to praise employees for working safely and this is called ‘confirming’ it the model.

Collaboration is about the importance of worker involvement. If workers are involved in making proactive improvements, this creates a feeling of ownership and pride in the company. It is important to empower workers to make improvements and solve problems and to recognise when this leads to success.

Clarifying highlights the need to continue to communicate goals and objectives so that workers can ensure they are working in accordance with them. Conciliating is about helping others reconcile differences as unresolved conflicts hinder communication.
Communications
OSH professionals may be competent in their chosen field and technically excellent but this may not be enough to ensure that their advice and messages are heard at board level. Health and safety is not always a priority for senior management. This means that OSH professionals may not be involved in important decisions regarding work processes at an early stage.

Therefore it is important for OSH professionals to make functional alliances and communicate with “anyone who can make things happen” within the organisation. This can range from directors at Board level to supervisors and workers on a factory production line and make sure they are part of any discussion on risk. OSH professionals need to maximise their position and not get lost in the detail of doing the job. However they also need to be realistic about the level of engagement they can achieve and try to engage with the business at that level (Ludhra and Joyce 2013).

Health and safety can be regarded as complex and it is the job of the OSH practitioner to simplify the messages and make them relevant to the people they advise – using language that will fit into the business culture. Messages will need to be tailored to different audiences. This requires not only competence in occupational safety and health but good communication skills.

Evidence from IOSH part funded research looking at lessons learned from the 2012 Olympic park construction project indicated that key factors in the high standard of health and safety achieved there included effective communication and good leadership. Along with worker involvement, this helped to develop a climate of trust. Communication was multi directional and included formal network. Success was due to their co-ordinated approach to communication (Cheyne et al 2012).

Why Is OSH Good for Business?
IOSH sponsored research by Smith and Wadsworth (2009 found that where employees' perceptions and attitudes towards safety were more positive they had fewer accidents and a great sense of health and wellbeing. Results suggested an influential relationship between advice and performance and that safety culture was consistently related to safety performance. Positive employee attitudes to and perceptions of safety were associated with better individual safety performance, health and wellbeing.

Proactive health and safety management is linked to improved organisational performance and health at work. Ward, Haslam and Haslam (2008) carried out research looking at how different sized organisations in different sectors varied when it came to their performance, as measured by profit margins, turnover and sickness absence and the attitudes and wellbeing of their employees. They found evidence of a link between increased profit margins and a more proactive approach to health and safety management and a reduction in days lost to accidents. Regarding wellbeing, they found that higher levels of vitality were linked with a greater personal appreciation of risk and positive perceptions of the physical work environment. Respondents who worked in the same sector reported a more positive safety climate and experience better health and wellbeing if their organisation had a proactive approach to health and safety. OSH professionals are therefore in a key position to influence factors of benefit to the business.

OSH practitioners as leaders have to find ways to meet the needs of these different audiences and forge appropriate alliances to meet shared goals. Developing partnership working is therefore an important skill and servant leadership involves collaborating and appreciating the input and views of others and resolving any conflict.
Listening and understanding and valuing others are also important skills as well as being able to persuade others and provide constructive feedback. Servant leaders have integrity and humility and interest in serving a higher purpose and these are qualities that are important when providing a vision, which can be shared to see if it is achievable.

**Conclusion**

Servant leadership is very relevant to CSR because its definition includes a concern for others and a responsibility to the community. Servant leaders can encourage their employees (followers) to create value for others outside the organisation.

Service can be seen as being provided in various contexts. Those who work in service industries provide services for others but they also perform a service for their employer. From an OSH point of view the practitioner is providing a service by creating a healthy and safe working environment, both within the company and beyond to the community where the company operates and influences change in policies at both a company and societal level.

Being aware of the service aspect of OSH and following servant leadership principles can help OSH practitioners better understand those they are serving and ensure they provide improved OSH as part of a caring company.

As servant leadership is based on trust, relationships and ethical behaviour, it can underpin a culture where safety is truly valued. Servant leaders actively work to change society for the better and fulfil the IOSH vision 'A world of work, which is safe healthy and sustainable'.

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