Achieving exemplary health, safety and environmental (HSE) performance requires more than attention to systems and procedures. More and more people recognise that culture change is the key to delivering and sustaining HSE improvement.

A major pharmaceuticals manufacturer asked ABB to help it improve HSE performance at one of its sites. Performance was acceptable when compared with industry norms, but did not match the business’s aspirations for world class leadership. Recent improvements had also left the business unclear as to where next it should focus its efforts.

ABB was asked to assess whether the culture within the business aligned with the company’s safety objectives and in particular whether it supported the aspiration of a continuously improving safety performance. ABB were also asked to identify any areas of weakness and propose appropriate improvements.

Solution
ABB has first-hand experience of operational management, and we understand the practicalities of managing cultural change in busy and demanding business situations. Our approach to culture change goes beyond simply identifying the issues, but extends to delivery of a complete implementation programme which involves the workforce directly in bringing about culture change.

ABB started by carrying out a B-SHARP™ culture assessment for the site. Over a period of a few days, we interviewed a cross-section of the workforce ‘from top floor to shop-floor’ to diagnose the organisation’s safety culture. This allowed a picture of the organisation to be held up to the management team, a picture constructed from the views of the company’s own employees.

Results showed that much had been done to create a site which worked safely, but there were some specific areas which needed to be tackled in order to achieve the world class safety performance.
Areas identified for improvement were:

- Behavioural safety training in the workplace
- Management training to support more effective safety management
- Its processes for reviewing safety management arrangements

The outputs of the assessment were reviewed at a special meeting of the senior executive team. This allowed the outputs to be shared and the implications considered against the aspiration of world class performance.

ABB helped the team define a targeted implementation programme ensuring maximum benefit for the resources invested. This programme is now being pursued, with ABB providing the skills needed to deliver quickly and sustainably in the priority areas.

Benefits
- Identified areas of improvement to achieve world class safety performance
- Compliance with HSE legislation
- Ensured benefits from invested resources are maximised
- Changes implemented quickly and sustainably by involving the workforce directly