



# AT WORK

A SELECTION OF DIFFERENT EXAMPLES FROM THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE OF BOSKALIS

*Geo van Tintelen, Works Manager of the Buitensing Parkstad Limburg Project: "The longer you've worked together, the harder it gets to call each other to account."*

## TOO OFTEN IT REMAINS SILENT ON THE WORK FLOOR

**ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CALLING EACH OTHER TO ACCOUNT. AND WHY WE DON'T ALWAYS DO SO.**

**Generally speaking, Geo van Tintelen is satisfied with safety at the project, but things could be tightened up a little bit more. As it turned out to be difficult to call people to account about this, he organised a NINA workshop aimed at reflecting on your own behaviour and enhancing leadership skills.**

"What I see is that people find it harder to call each other to account the longer they've been working together. You've built a connection you don't want to put at risk: 'I shouldn't make a fuss, he did this job for me yesterday'. This creates a pattern. Moreover, some temporary workers are not familiar with NINA and the idea of being responsible for your own safety and that of your colleague. Calling people to account about such things is especially hard."

### NONCHALANCE

"We have a safe construction site, with – knock on wood – little or no accidents, but it is the last 30% we want to improve. Think of people walking away without a hardhat, who

remove some safety equipment and do not put it back (immediately), who do not clear up something. Perhaps they don't see the danger, or they just don't really care. But this nonchalance leads to discussions you do not want to have: 'yes, I know I should do it, I'll do it later'. What you see next is that people give up calling someone to account, 'because he won't listen anyway'."

### THE RIGHT TONE

"In March we organised two workshops for Superintendents and Project Engineers. What I want is that they show leadership, because if the supervisor does not speak up (anymore) things will go from bad to worse. Good leadership requires striking the right tone. This is what the workshop was about: how to call people to account more effectively? Sometimes you have to be tough, sometimes tactful: 'I see you doing this but why? Can I help you?' The effect is that you will get a discussion started more easily and more often. There will be more understanding among professionals. But one cannot change the culture with two workshops. Gradually the effect wears off. That is why we will certainly follow up on it."

### TRUST

The way we address safety (often) strongly depends on the attitude of the supervisors. Be aware of that, Geo says. "Project managers often

underestimate the impact of their input. If they – unintentionally – are indifferent about safety, this will have a major impact on the behaviour of the workers. I normally start a conversation myself. If I see someone doing work in the heat continuously in a stooped position, I say he can take his hardhat off if the circumstances allow for it. I trust him to walk on the construction site wearing his hardhat later on. If he breaches this trust, it will be easier to raise the issue. I hope that such conversations will make people think for themselves. And I myself would like to learn more about the backgrounds and mindset of NINA. It can help the team take safety to a higher level."



| Geo van Tintelen

*"Good leadership requires striking the right tone."*

Deepankar Das, Training Manager Anglo Eastern Manila:

# “IN MOST ASIAN SOCIETIES SENIORS AND ELDERS ARE PUT ON A PEDESTAL.”

**THIS CULTURAL BACKGROUND MAKES IT HARD FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE FEEDBACK TO THEIR SUPERIORS.**

Deepankar Das and Anand Dalela (Deputy Training Manager), both work at the training facility of Anglo Eastern in Manila, where they coordinate and conduct training sessions for crews of most vessels of Boskalis’ offshore fleet. Encouraging people to approach others about working safely is one of the biggest challenges they face.



| NINA sessions in Anglo-Eastern Manila training centre, 12th to 15th March 2018

Deepankar Das: “Approaching others, interacting and trying to get on the same page is crucial in the process of working safely. For many Asian employees however this could be quite very difficult, due to their upbringing in a high power distance society. When a Philippine junior officer sees his superior make a mistake, out of respect he may rather choose to stay quiet than to approach him. This can lead to dangerous situations, as lack of

feedback affects the assertiveness of the team and errors go uncorrected.”

### RESPONSIBILITY

“Let me give an example from our simulation room. Junior officers must monitor the navigation. At one moment the ship is supposed to change course, but the senior officer doesn’t execute the turn. I see that the junior knows it and feels uncomfortable, but he remains quiet. When this occurs I stop the simulation and we talk about it. Key is that people understand we don’t want them to disconnect from their culture, we only want them to behave differently at work. You may be a shy person, but when you are on the bridge the safe navigation of the ship is your responsibility, with all it takes, including approaching others when needed. In

general you see that during the training the awareness of their role according to NINA grows.”

### BEING APPROACHABLE

Anand Dalela: “In our training sessions we also pay attention to the behavior of seniors. We emphasize that good teamwork requires feedback from all members, so as a senior officer you must find ways to get this feedback. In other words: you have to become approachable. In role plays we show the effects of friendliness and toughness: when we are tough nobody talks, when we are friendly and open, people are more inclined to give feedback. This way one feels and experiences what we mean.”

### FUTURE

Deepankar Das: “As for the future: I am positive we can succeed, because I see that our existing crews, thanks to NINA, behave more assertively than new hires do. So the focus on NINA values and rules is surely paying off. Still, overcoming ones’ upbringing takes time. People fear they will lose their job when they speak up. To change this, management has to show that they genuinely care for the safety of their employees. Trust is the key issue.”

*“Lack of feedback affects the assertiveness of the team and errors go uncorrected.”*

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES IN NINA AT WORK? THIS IS YOUR PLATFORM!**  
[NINA@boskalis.com](mailto:NINA@boskalis.com)