

## "Neurocentricity" - pivotal to occupational safety & success

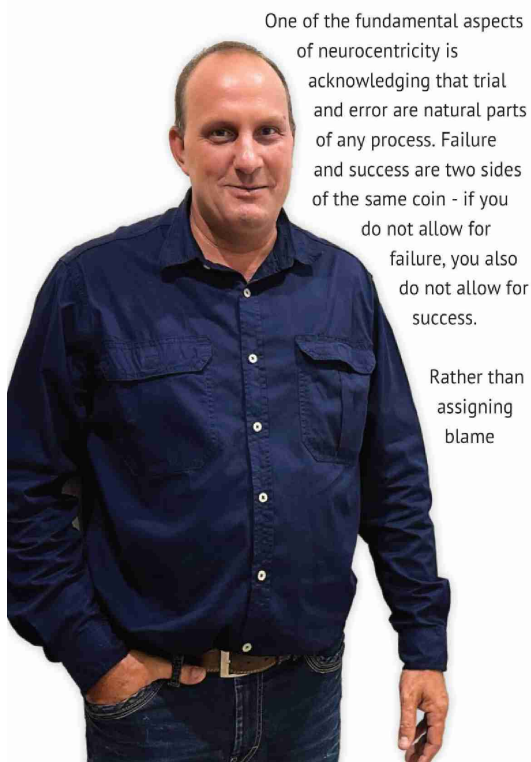
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**The pursuit of safety and success remains a top priority for organisations across industries. However, achieving these goals requires more than robust safety protocols and procedures.**

It demands a deeper understanding of human behaviour and cognition in the workplace and a willingness to implement organisational cultural change accordingly.

### What is neurocentricity?

Neurocentricity, as I define it, integrates neuroscience principles into organisational culture and behaviour. It emphasises the importance of empowering employees to take ownership of their actions and decisions, shifting away from a mentality of reliance on employers to one of individual accountability.



when things go wrong, neurocentricity encourages organisations to explore why errors occur and how to prevent them in the future. This shift in perspective not only enhances workplace safety but also cultivates a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

### The impact

Neurocentricity represents a paradigm shift in how organisations approach safety and performance management. Traditional safety protocols often focus solely on procedural compliance, overlooking the critical role of human behaviour in shaping safety outcomes. However, by integrating neuroscience principles into safety practices, organisations can tap into the intrinsic capabilities of the human brain to enhance decision-making, situational awareness and risk perception.

One key aspect of neurocentricity is its emphasis on creating a culture of psychological safety. In environments where employees feel empowered to voice concerns, ask questions, and share ideas without fear of reprisal, they are more likely to proactively identify and address safety issues.

I need to emphasise the importance of leadership buy-in in fostering such a culture. Leaders are essential in setting the tone for organisational behaviour and attitudes around safety. Without a positive attitude from leadership, expecting different outcomes is unrealistic. Leaders play a crucial role in inspiring change among employees by demonstrating their commitment to the concept and its implementation. Employees are more inclined to follow suit when leadership sets the correct precedent.

### A fresh approach

Neurocentricity offers a fresh perspective on how to approach safety training and education. Traditional safety training programmes often rely on memorising procedures and checklists by rote - which may not effectively translate into real-world decision-making scenarios - or suit everyone's speed and manner of cognitive processing. In contrast, neurocentricity advocates experiential learning

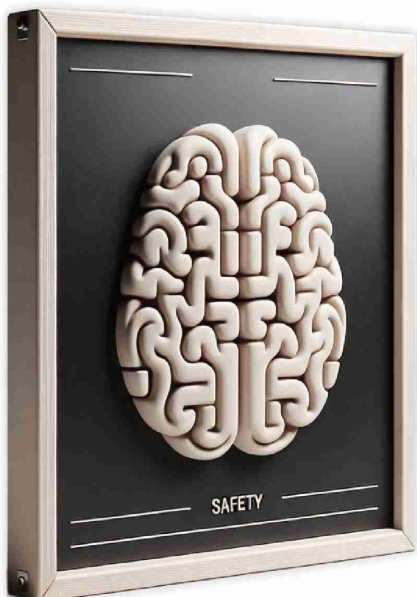
methods that engage fast and slow brain functions. By simulating realistic workplace scenarios and providing opportunities for reflection and feedback, organisations can better prepare employees to navigate complex safety challenges.

At the same time, by promoting a heightened awareness of hazards and risks, neurocentricity equips employees with the cognitive tools to identify and address potential safety issues more effectively. It is all about behavioural change, which enhances both the process and the desired outcome.

Everyone strives for zero harm, whether to employees, the environment, or the business. Neurocentricity entails training the brain to adopt a specific approach to success. This approach is applicable across all industries and businesses and is certainly not limited to safety alone.

### Making safe decisions

Addressing common workplace issues such as fatigue, distraction, and habituation, I want to underscore the importance of understanding human cognition and delving



into a deeper understanding of hazards and processes. This entails scrutinising shift patterns, industry norms, and, importantly, human behaviour. Staff and management need to grow their understanding of hazards and risk management and the tendency towards complacency in the workplace.

Routine and repetition breed a dangerous form of tunnel vision, which blinds people to potential hazards lurking just beyond their immediate focus. Be careful of falling into this trap. Repeating creates tunnel vision and complacency, which becomes a habit. Neurocentricity asks us to look around and acknowledge that there is more to life!

Neurocentricity, at its core, is about breaking free from autopilot mode and proactively engaging with our surroundings. Neurocentricity is about training one's brain to be more aware. Making safe decisions, or what our global parent company terms 'MSD', is often the last line of defence when it comes to safety in a company.

Furthermore, it is crucial to take immediate action when hazards are identified, whether as an employee or employer. It is critical to respond promptly and effectively to mitigate risks. If you have identified a hazard, immediately think about ways to correct it, thereby creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Central to the principles of neurocentricity is the concept of slowing down and observing. In the fast-paced modern workplace, pausing and reflecting can seem counterintuitive. However, this deliberate approach is vital for harnessing the full potential of slow and fast brain functions. So, understand the person first before you can expect anything to be successful. To succeed, accommodate fast and slow, left and right brains.

By embracing a culture of awareness, adaptability and proactive hazard management, organisations can mitigate risks, enhance safety outcomes and - ultimately - unlock their full potential, allowing their people to thrive. ■