Call for Abstracts: Primary Experience
Fourth International HRO Workshop
Washington, D.C., USA
April 20-21, 2011

The Scientific Committee for the Third International HRO Workshop welcomes the submission of abstracts of original contributions from Primary Experience. Primary Experience refers to the experiences of practitioners who have learned from experience high reliability or have personally applied HRO principles to their work or organization. In primary experience failure situations are as significant as success in teaching others who follow. Please share these failures as well to open the discussion of what works, what doesn’t, and what are the circumstances that surround success or failure.

The committee solicits innovative papers describing personal, first-hand failures and successes experienced toward the practical application of high reliability principles. The Scientific Committee takes a broad view of high reliability and high performance to include solutions from technology, social interactions, and human performance to reduce the consequences of error in systems as they develop or occur in complex situations or environments. We invite submissions covering a broad range of experiences. A facilitator will review papers and attend discussions to help “translate” the author’s experience into the terminology of HRO. The conference brings together academic, industry, and government professionals who work at the operational, management, and executive level of organizations in numerous fields.

In the field of high reliability and uncommon events, sufficient experience to create a statistically significant body of knowledge will not happen as each crisis is unique with its own confounding variables that prevent us from comparing them too closely. We learn, instead, from shared experiences. However, without a common frame to present these stories they become lost in slang, jargon, and anecdote. We then find it difficult to learn from each other within an industry and impossible to use lessons learned from other, quite different, industries.

Case histories, anecdotes, war stories … primary experience, that is, first-person experience, can range from illustrative, edifying, and educational in their best form to self-aggrandizement in their worst. What differentiates the educational case history or case report from an interesting anecdote is how it fits into the context of our knowledge and how it advances learning.

For this “Call for Abstract” we solicit primary experience from knowledgeable and experienced leaders in the field of high risk ventures. We will use a structured format to facilitate translation between industries and discussion at an academic level.

The ability to functionally describe one’s experience to others in disparate industries is uncommon, possibly because we lack shared meaning, vocabulary, or principles. It has been our experience that the functional principles of high reliability, beyond the published principles, allow professionals to converse with others in different industries.
The intent for the abstracts is for them to be stand-alone, self-contained discussions since a wide audience will read them. We are searching for things people can do immediately and would like you to bring that out in your paper.

We would like you to associate a principle supporting high reliability you have used with a descriptive experience. The goal is to present a principle then explain it with your experience rather than describing your experience and justify it by a principle.

Focus on quantitative measures or numerical scores in the presentation is not as useful for the conference as qualitative descriptions of what you did. This facilitates transfer of your experience to others. A useful focus would be examples (or mini-case studies) of specific initiatives that have resulted in real world positive outcomes. Frame these examples and outcomes so that the lessons learned apply beyond the individual facility and beyond the specific industry. Another example is to contrast, with specifics, the old way of doing things vs. new way of doing things.

Detail of what you did and the mechanics, especially how the HRO principles were involved, will help others learn from you and improve their performance.

If you have used or identified a principle that advances the use of high reliability we solicit your experience to be shared at the Fourth International HRO Conference to be held in Washington, D.C.. Information for submission is on the website www.High-Reliability.Org

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Sense making during uncertainty or the unexpected;
- Decision making, error identification, and error management;
- How the individual responds to hazards or time dependent situations;
- Structure of the organization that facilitates human performance and social interactions;
- Technological advances that increase safety through social systems.

A good paper will:
- Describe an interesting, compelling situation in the use of High Reliability;
- Demonstrate the practicality and benefits of the solution;
- Draw appropriate conclusions;
- Clearly describe the author’s experience; and
- Clearly articulate the advances this paper contributes to the field of High Reliability Organizing.

Submissions are limited to 600 words max for the purpose of review. Multiple submissions to describe several different presentations are encouraged. Presentations will be limited to 10 minutes with five minutes reserved for discussion. Authors of accepted papers will be given the opportunity to prepare a written paper with maximum of 2,000 words for publication in the compendium on the website www.High-Reliability.Org
Deadline for submission of abstracts:
March 28, 2011

Abstracts may only be submitted via email to: administrator@high-reliability.org

Guidelines for preparation and submission of abstracts:
All abstracts must be submitted and presented in English. Please use American or UK English spelling and have your abstract proofread for grammar and understanding.

Abstracts should contain only original material.

All abbreviations must be defined the first time they appear in your text before being used as an abbreviation only. Example: High Reliability Organization (HRO). Do not define or use abbreviations in the title.

Tables, charts or other graphics may not be included and will be deleted by the editors.

Abstracts, for the purpose of submission and review, may not be longer than 600 words excluding title and authors.

Please structure your abstract using the following headings:
- Title
- Authors
- Author Affiliations
- Principle
- Situation
- Methods of implementation
- Results
- Conclusion

After having submitted your abstract, you will receive a confirmation of receipt by e-mail.

If an abstract is accepted, one author must attend the workshop and present it in person. Acceptance of the abstract implies payment of the early registration fee ($450) by the presenting author.

All presentations will be oral presentations with 15 minutes allotted to include 10 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for panel and audience questions and comments.

If your research has been granted any commercial or institutional support, please disclose this during the submission process. Please prepare a one sentence statement for this purpose.

Notification: Authors will be notified of acceptance by April 4, 2011 by email.

Publication: Accepted abstracts will be published on the website www.High-Reliability.Org/

Author Guidelines and Assistance
We seek to identify *principles* that cross organizations such as trust, creativity, or methods of communication. A principle refers to a rule, law, or doctrine that represents a general, fundamental truth.

We also seek to identify the *basics* that are taught to the novice in organizations. Basics are the fundamental starting points that give the foundation for growth in the organization and the environment where the novice will work.

Come help us identify basics and principles by presenting your experience in the field of high reliability organizing.

How can we present our experience to those in similar fields or differing fields in a way that identifies the underlying principle or a basic concept that we all will benefit from teaching? For discussion at the conference we will present one principle or basic concept at a time. Each presentation should be articulate, objective, and succinct. Articulate descriptions logically relate all parts to other distinct parts for a coherent whole that fully expresses thought and context. Objective information has little or no influence from one’s interpretations, prejudices, or intuitions. Succinct descriptions use few words without changing the information. Succinct derives from girding one’s clothing for battle.

The first rule of success is to have a goal. Pick one main point. Make it simple, useful, purposeful. Aim that one point straight from your heart to the hearts and minds of your friends in the audience. Don’t lose sight of that goal. Know where you are going when you start and never deviate from that point. Don’t just wander through a story.

Pare the subject down to the core (your one purpose). Omit all unnecessary ideas, thoughts and wanderings. Use only the essential elements needed to get across the subject. Draw everything you are going to say toward one point, like iron filings to a magnet. *Make simplicity* your guide-word. Ask yourself concerning each point: Is this point necessary? Is it in the right order? Will everyone understand this? Is there a simpler way to say it? Is it plain?

**Principle:** Identify a single principle or basic concept used. Examples of principles include collaboration, trust, information flow, communication, relationships, threat response, hazard identification, or decision making. Select a profitable subject and explain it clearly with exactness.

**Situation:** This can be from the external environment or within the organization. Perhaps you had an experience that would help others. Establish the setting that you are working in and addressing. This is the “where” and “when” of your paper. Also tell us who is involved, whether executive level, managers, or operations personnel. Tell us the “what” of the desire state you wanted to reach; tell us what you wanted to see happen. Have three or four main points, but be sure they all refer to the one main purpose you want to share.

**Methods of implementation:** What did you do, how did you do it? Tell us “how” you were going from the “where” and “when” to the “what”. Be sure they can use the information you give them. Be practical.
Results: Include obstructions you experience if you overcame them, and how what actions you took. Be basic. Assume your audience knows nothing about your subject. Don’t just tell them the conclusion, but methodically and precisely explain each step that leads to your conclusion. What happened as a result of what you did? Why is this important?

Conclusion: This states the one thing you learned and that you want the audience to take away from your presentation. Did you do or say what you said you would?

The presentation should lead logically to the conclusion. At your presentation the conclusion can summarize the purpose and main points.

Submit through the conference website www.High-Reliability.Org/Contact using the email address: administrator@high-reliability.org. Thank you for your submission.