

## **Academia & Industry – Two Key Sustainability Issues – 1/ Training Specialists & 2/ Keeping Current**

ACADEMIA and INDUSTRY need to overcome major provision deficiencies for businesses which require multi-disciplined one-person specialists; who can then keep current across their multi-disciplines.

My example of a multi-disciplined (md) specialist is a Regulatory Specialist for Chemicals Management who needs to have a good background in: • Chemistry; • HS&E effects of chemicals & related HS&E areas; • Risk Management; • Chemical Engineering; • specialist Building / Facility design; • Quality Management; • Emergency Management; plus a • good working understanding of the 100+ Regulations, Standards, Codes, and also Information Sources, that apply in this regulatory area (State / Federal / International).

### **1/ Training Multi-Disciplined One-Person Specialists**

**How do we train multi-disciplined (md) specialists in areas our industry and community need? Especially in the case where there are not enough md specialists needed per year to sustain an ongoing degree course, or an ongoing masters course.** How could Masters Courses that do applied research projects (but not “pure” research projects), be better funded?

The Hazardous Chemicals Management field is a case study of once having a degree course until 2004 and a Masters course until 2010, but no longer having any Degree or Masters courses in Australia.

In normal scale industry (other than Major Hazard Facilities scale) this md specialist expertise is not being renewed and new practitioners must somehow become “apprentices” in the Hazardous Chemicals Management field in order to learn about what is needed and try out options to see what works best.

I convene a Dangerous Goods network and co-convene a Chemical Hazard Communication network to try and help this awareness to occur (at least in Melbourne). I am concerned we are waiting for the next major incident where the outcome is “we have not tertiary trained new specialists in this discipline since 2004/2010!!”.

e.g. The lost knowledge, that sprinklers had to be kept going at the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine to avoid the brown coal composting and spontaneously combusting, is a recent example that is a major cost to the community in health issues, a lost coal resource (for future industry), and emergency management.

*Q/ What other md specialist areas are there, where there is no tertiary training available?*

*Q/ How could such md training be brought together & managed? E.g. From subjects in other Degrees?*

### **2/ Keeping Current as Multi-Disciplined One-Person Specialists**

**Do you have time to read in detail, the articles and information available on the internet, and be aware of the key issues and what is relevant / may be relevant in your various md specialist areas?**

How can we improve specialist’s abilities to keep current with relevant key knowledge in this internet information overloaded world. As I understand it, courts now expect specialists to be current across all aspects of knowledge relevant to the md fields they need to cover.

My suggested solution in each md specialist area, is encourage individual specialists we trust (with good experience and detailed understandings in the md field they cover), to regularly review the relevant internet and other information they are aware of, and summarise it to include the key points into succinct notes style newsletters. This is needed as key points (which a specialist knows), don’t always show up in the summaries / abstracts, but can be highlighted by such specialist readers in a succinct note, to help each of us decide what is relevant.

The newsletter Hazmat & Environment Notes (that I prepare as a long term specialist in my field) is a case study of the “succinct note” approach, which I have followed for over 30 years. Old issues of this newsletter are on my website for viewing, if others would like to take up and mirror this approach.

*Q/ What other md specialist areas are there, where similar “succinct note” newsletters are needed?*

Regards

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