HARDWIRED INHIBITIONS

Hidden forces that keep us from speaking up in the face of disaster
How often do employees speak up when they see something that they think is unsafe?
Employees speak up only 39% of the time.

(2010 Study of Safety Intervention)
Read the Study in The Drilling Contractor
January/February, 2011
Stop Work Authority

Does it fix the problem?
Stop Work Authority

97% of respondents said that they were given the authority to stop work at their company.

(2010 Study of Safety Intervention)
Stop Work Authority

It only addresses one of the factors that inhibit people from speaking up:

*Fear of formal punishment for insubordination or slowing productivity*
Most employees take this responsibility seriously and believe that they *would* speak up,
Safety Intervention

Most employees take this responsibility seriously and believe that they *would* speak up,

...but *in the moment* they often say nothing.
The “Context Effect”

What we think about, care about and remember is determined by the immediate context we are in.
The “Context Effect”

The *production* context is different from the *safety meeting* context.
Hardwired Inhibitions

There are very real forces in employees’ production contexts, ...and employees are wired to respond to these forces in certain ways.
Hardwired Inhibitions

*Production Pressure*
It literally changes the way we see the world.
Hardwired Inhibitions

Unit Bias
We are wired to finish a given unit/task before changing what we are doing.
Hardwired Inhibitions

Deferece to Authority
We don’t speak up to authorities, and we don’t speak up around authorities.
Hardwired Inhibitions

Bystander Effect
The more people there are around, the less likely we are to speak up.
Even when there is no production pressure, authority figure or group inhibiting us, there is something else to keep us silent in the face of disaster.
Hardwired Inhibitions

The perfect storm of inhibiting forces:

Reactance
+
Social Incongruence
+
Confirmation Bias
Hardwired Inhibitions

The perfect storm of inhibiting forces:

Reactance

+ 

Social Incongruence

+ 

Confirmation Bias
Hardwired Inhibitions

Reactance
The urge to do the opposite of what someone else wants you to do
Hardwired Inhibitions

The perfect storm of inhibiting forces:

Reactance

+ 

Social Incongruence

+ 

Confirmation Bias
Hardwired Inhibitions

Social Incongruence
The bad feeling we get when we are “on the outs” or in tension with others
Hardwired Inhibitions

The perfect storm of inhibiting forces:

Reactance +

Social Incongruence +

Confirmation Bias
Hardwired Inhibitions

Confirmation Bias

We are extremely good at justifying what we have already concluded.
Confirmation Bias

“No one else has said anything, so it must not be that big of an issue.”
Hardwired Inhibitions

Confirmation Bias
“He’s an experienced employee, so he knows the risk he’s taking.”
Hardwired Inhibitions

Confirmation Bias

“It won’t make a difference if I do speak up.”
Employees are rarely “cowardly” or “heartless.”

Employees are human with hardwired inhibitions.
Can We Be Rewired?

Just being aware of these biases in *specific situations* goes a long way.
Can We Be Rewired?

*Nip It in the Bud*

When employees are confident that they can intervene in a way that does not produce defensiveness or anger, they stop “reasoning backwards.”