A Strategy for the Prevention of Workplace Accidents, Injuries and Illnesses
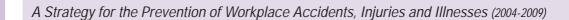
(2004 - 2009)

A Strategy for the Prevention of Workplace Accidents, Injuries and Illnesses (2004 - 2009)

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1 - Executive Summary

The prevention of workplace accidents, injuries and illnesses has been a prime focus for the Authority since it was established in 1989. Indeed, the majority of our staff resources are already engaged in some form of prevention activity through our inspectorate, through our public relations and Infotel units, and through our education and enterprise support arrangements.

However, a new *strategic* approach to the delivery of our prevention role is now being proposed. This will fulfil the dual function approach of enforcement and prevention, which is set out in our Corporate Plan. Our new approach is underpinned by a conviction that if we devise an effective Prevention Strategy, we will be uniquely placed to deliver fundamental and lasting behavioural changes in workplaces nation-wide.

The Strategy will enable us to:

▲   reach all our customers, (i.e. employers, employees, future employees and the self-employed) either directly or indirectly;

▲   create a desire for change at individual and collective levels, by showing that the adoption of healthy and safe work practices is of value to individuals, to businesses, and to the economy as a whole;

▲   meet the needs of our customers by understanding both the *potential* risks and the *actual* risks facing them; and then delivering innovative solutions which address their needs and impact positively on their behaviours.

The Strategy is aimed at customers who are currently in the workplace, or who are likely to be in the future.

The Strategy will receive significant support from others, particularly the Social Partners, who play a key role in leading the process of change.

We have devised what we believe to be an effective Prevention Strategy by defining a particular framework which identifies our core Prevention Mission as:

"Driving a national culture which fosters, values and rewards safe and healthy workplaces."

This Mission Statement supports our Corporate Vision and set out below is a list of our five strategic goals, the attainment of which will be instrumental in the achievement of our Prevention Mission.

Also set out below is a list of the key challenges that must be overcome, and the key actions that must be implemented, if we are to achieve our goals.

The five goals may be summarised as follows:

1. We will establish a pioneering approach to pre-empt, track and manage emerging health and safety challenges.

2. We will advance our capability to define and map customer profiles, track their behaviours and needs, and identify customers' key influencers, using a range of information sources, smart systems and processes to enable us to prioritise our actions.

3. We will engage in working relationships with key influencers so that we may be better placed to reach our priority customers;

4. We will develop a market-led approach, using two-way communications and innovative programmes that support our customers' needs, in order to deliver the requisite changes at workplace level.

5. We will put in place a process whereby we will obtain objective evaluations of the effectiveness of our Strategy – as measured against established baselines.

A brief description of the various implementation steps is provided: this outlines the various initiatives that will be introduced during the coming months.

This Strategy focuses on reaching the widest possible number of audiences with a prevention message that is not only accessible and compelling but also creates a desire for change. It follows therefore that we must be able to meet our customers' specific needs effectively – so that engaging in healthy and safe practices becomes an integral part of their normal day-to-day operations.

The Strategy acknowledges that our customers' needs are changing, and that if we are to fully understand these needs, we must restate the consultative process. We must invest in information and intelligence-gathering systems, which will help us to create the most comprehensive customer profiles; determine how best to deliver our messages and services to our customers, and how best to prioritise actions based on our customers' greatest needs.

There are many implications for our organisation if we are to deliver this Strategy successfully. In short, we must mirror the key characteristics of the Strategy we have espoused.

Specifically, we must:

▲ be dynamic, innovative and agile in how we organise ourselves to deliver each of our goals, key messages and initiatives;

▲ make the most effective use of our intelligence, knowledge, skills and expertise in order to ensure that we deploy the appropriate resources to deliver the right solutions at the right time;

▲ become exceptionally effective at influencing others, reaching our customers and encouraging them to change their behaviours;

▲ use every opportunity to communicate our messages and deliver our services by every practical means;

▲ be resourceful in the way we leverage our own limited resources, and those of our strategic allies, in order to ensure maximum return;

▲ be priority-driven and results-oriented.

The Strategy applies to the organisation as a whole rather than to any one Division in particular. Indeed, the development of a team and matrix approach to the achievement of our goals is one of the major challenges devolving from this Strategy.

The continuing role of enforcement will also be essential to the success of any prevention initiatives.

By developing a dynamic organisational model, as described, we will be well placed to meet the challenges of the Strategy. In addition, the Authority will become recognised as the primary agent of change, leading the move towards achieving major shifts in attitudes and the prioritisation of good health and safety behaviours – both at national and at European levels.

2 - Introduction

The aim of this document is to articulate our need for a Prevention Strategy and to explain our Strategy by describing the mission, goals, key actions and challenges that we will face while trying to achieve our objectives.

The Prevention Strategy described here will reach workplaces through a number of different channels, using diverse programmes and projects to meet the needs of those who will make a real difference in the fostering of a health and safety culture in Irish workplaces.

The Strategy's primary focus therefore is to reach employers, employees, future employees and the self-employed. These are our key customers. It is these customers who will drive change.

The Strategy makes the case for the Authority to realise the power of a wide-ranging prevention approach: it offers the Authority a unique opportunity to help create a brighter future for safety and health at work.

It will be the striking of this balance between enforcement (stick) and prevention (carrot) measures that will place the Authority in the best position to realise its Corporate Vision of *achieving a healthy and safe working life – together*.

The preparation of this document has necessitated the carrying out of extensive internal consultations involving focus group research and one-on-one interviews, in addition to more informal consultations, which were conducted externally.

3 . Why we need a Prevention Strategy

3.1 The Role of the Health and Safety Authority

The Authority is the national body charged with responsibility for providing information and advice to employers, employees, future employees and the self-employed on all aspects of workplace health and safety.

We play a critical role by carrying out programmes which are designed to save lives, prevent injuries and illnesses, and protect the health and safety of workers in Ireland.

Our primary functions are to:

▲   monitor and enforce compliance with occupational health and safety law;

▲   provide information and expert advice to employers, employees and the self-employed;

▲   promote workplace safety, health, welfare, education and training;

▲   publish research on workplace hazards and risks;

▲   propose new regulations and codes of practice to the Minister.

Up to now, our main focus has been on the carrying out of one-to-one workplace inspections. These inspections – and the wealth of expertise, intellectual ability and competence as demonstrated by our inspectorate – have placed our organisation at the forefront of public sector services, and they reflect well on the Health and Safety Authority brand.

However as the diagram below illustrates, only a certain number of workplaces can be inspected in any given year. The Authority therefore, must devise ways of effectively communicating with the majority of workplaces who do not receive the benefit of one-on-one inspections.

Percentage of Irish Workplaces Inspected in 2003

■ Percentage of Workplaces Inspection-Free* 93%

■ Percentage of Workplaces Inspected 7%

*　the total % of workplaces which were inspection-free does not include self-employed or most farmers. Inclusion of these workplaces would further increase the overall percentage of workplaces that are inspection-free.

In order to achieve our aims therefore, we must develop a Prevention Strategy that allows us to:

▲　reach a national audience and stimulate increased health and safety awareness and associated behavioural changes;

▲　contribute to enhancing the nation's overall 'quality of life' ethos by engendering individual and collective responsibility for healthy and safe workplaces;

▲　reach a wider audience by leveraging a preventive approach rather than depending solely on the more labour-intensive approach of carrying out workplace inspections;

▲　pre-empt and manage emerging issues, and prioritise actions based on future risks – thereby preparing workplaces to avoid or manage these risks;

▲　develop innovative action-based programmes to support our customers' needs;

▲　create a positive impact on the human and economic costs associated with workplace injuries, fatalities and illnesses by helping our customers to reduce the frequency of these events;

▲　achieve more lasting behavioural change outcomes by helping customers to acknowledge the link between personal value and the adoption of safe and healthy behaviours.

3.2 What we mean by Prevention

In the context of health and safety, prevention is about taking action now that will stop something negative happening in the future – ensuring that what might happen does not happen.

We recognise that promoting a prevention ethos in the workplace, and motivating people in relation to prevention, presents unique challenges. The term 'prevention' implies an activity that is aimed at avoidance, and this makes the task of developing a profile based on the *absence of* events a difficult one. We acknowledge that all too often the role of health and safety specialists in the workplace has a very low profile: it is often associated with a negative event such as managing an accident, rather than being valued as a key contributor to the creation and maintenance of a safe and healthy workplace.

Our aim is to raise the profile of the Prevention approach within the workplace, so that the value of adopting healthy and safe work practices and procedures will be perceived as strategic in nature. We must get to a point where it is acknowledged as having a positive impact on the 'bottom line' both directly and indirectly, and where it is also recognised as being an integral part of the workplace value system and culture.

3.3 Prevention Services Provided by the Authority

In the context of the services that we provide as an organisation, prevention may be defined as "all actions that support our customers in their endeavours to create and contribute to a healthy and safe workplace".

The diagram on page 12 highlights the services provided by the Authority, and groups them into one of three categories, namely Prevention, Enforcement and Internal services.

These services cross organisational lines and they also demonstrate, for example, how inspectors encourage effective health and safety management and help businesses to improve their management of such issues by giving advice and guidance on prevention. Within that context, inspections which do not result in an enforcement action, may be perceived as a prevention service: this is because they provide advice on how to achieve conformity with the law, in addition to providing guidance on how to achieve effective, healthy and safe work practices and procedures in workplace environments.

Similarly, Legal Services may be considered within a prevention context and within an enforcement context – depending on whether these services are driving prevention, or whether they are being used in an enforcement capacity.

The diagram below illustrates how we work cross-functionally at present. From this, we can conclude that the implementation of a Prevention Strategy based on customers' needs will require us to work even more closely with our customers; it will require even greater emphasis on teamwork, and it will necessitate a move towards the adoption of a more delivery/process-driven approach.

Prevention Services We Provide

3.4 Enforcement and Prevention in Partnership

The realisation of the aims of our Prevention strategy will be possible only in the context of operating in an effective enforcement culture. Without the latter, any actions taken as a result of adopting a prevention approach would have a limited and transient effect.

The diagram below depicts broad categories of attitudes to health and safety management

The achievement of a 'spectrum shift' only becomes a reality if we can reach more workplaces and deliver the right messages and the right services to them. In this way, they will both understand and appreciate the benefits that accrue from the adoption of an appropriate health and safety strategy, and they will be in a position to develop, with our support, their own capabilities to implement healthy and safe work practices and procedures.

4 - Strategic Overview

4.1 Introduction to Strategic Overview

The structure of the Prevention Strategy model may be described thus:

▲ The **Prevention Mission Statement** will be a continuous focus for the Authority over the next three to five years and, if successful, will result in the creation of a workforce that is both informed and proactive on all health and safety matters.

▲ Our **Strategic Goals** comprise five main aims. Collectively, these aims will help us to achieve our Prevention Mission.

They may be described as encompassing five core continuous states:

- Anticipating and managing emerging issues and trends;

- Understanding our customers' needs, their behaviours, and their key influencers;

- Developing and maintaining meaningful alliances with our customers' influencers, using the most effective methods possible;

- Developing market-led, two-way communications and innovative solutions for our customers in the form of dynamic actions and programmes, which influence their behaviours positively;

- Assessing the effectiveness of each of our strategic endeavours objectively and credibly.

The goals are interdependent, insofar as the deliverables from the preceding goal contribute to the success of the following goal. For example, our first goal – the identification of emerging issues and their implications for our customers – will lead to the creation of more comprehensive customer profiles and the identification of their needs: this is our second goal. Our second goal – the identification of our customers' key influencers – will lead to the development of relationships with those influencers: this is our third goal.

▲ The **Key Actions** are the major programmes that have been identified as critical for the successful achievement of our Strategic Goals.

▲ The **Key Challenges** are the major areas of activity that we must get right if we are to achieve our Strategic Goals. Each goal has its own unique mix of Key Challenges. The diagram below highlights each of the Key Challenges and shows how they are applicable to the successful achievement of each goal.

Prevention Strategy

PREVENTION MISSION STATEMENT

We will drive a national culture which fosters, values and rewards safe and healthy workplaces

STRATEGIC GOALS   [WHAT we must do to deliver our Prevention Mission]

MANAGE THE FUTURE	SMART INTELLIGENCE	LEVERAGE RESOURCES THROUGH ALLIANCES	DELIVER THE SOLUTIONS	EVALUATE THE STRATEGY
We will establish a pioneering approach to pre-empt, track and manage emergent health and safety challenges	We will advance our capability to define and map our customers' profiles, track their behaviour and needs, and identify their key influencers by using many information sources, smart systems and processes to enable us to prioritise our actions	Engage in working relationships with key influencers to enable us to reach our priority customers	Develop a market-led approach of two-way communications and innovative programmes which support our customers needs and delivers change at workplace level	Put in place a process to credibly assess the effectiveness of our strategy as measured against established baselines

KEY ACTIONS   [Activities that must happen to achieve goals]

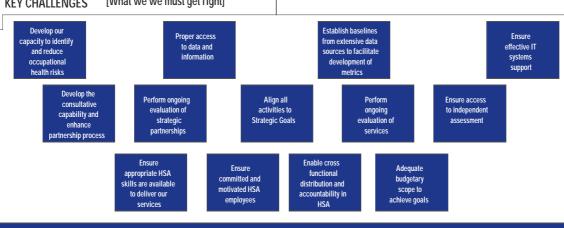|				
Establish a function to: •Identify and track potential future risks by accessing a range of national and international sources •Assess the implications •Manage the threats/risks with the optimum preventive solution •Add intelligence to our customer profiling •Review operation of system to ensure effectiveness	Establish a function dedicated to research; data analysis and intelligence gathering : •Identify the data needs of operational units •Agree sources of data and current baseline measurements •Develop comprehensive customer profiles based on multiple criteria •Interrogate data continuously to ascertain greatest risk and thereby determine prevention priorities •Review periodically to ensure effectiveness	Enter formal alliances with our customers' key influencers prioritised by need : •Agree finite number of key influencers •Agree mutual benefits from alliance •Establish objectives and work programme for period of alliance •Review outcomes for the targeted customer group	Structure a marketing / customer services unit to implement programmes : •Implement proactive media relations programme •Define priority work programmes for customer groups; •Deliver: (for example) Support programme for micro business; Education action programme •Voluntary Protection Programme; National Health and Safety recognition programme; Workplace contact centre	Devise and agree review procedures to assess effectiveness of strategic initiatives and their impact in the workplace – using quantitative and qualitative measures Seek external review to validate assessment and to recommend changes to strategic goal or strategic initiatives

KEY CHALLENGES   [What we we must get right]

- Develop our capacity to identify and reduce occupational health risks
- Proper access to data and information
- Establish baselines from extensive data sources to facilitate development of metrics
- Ensure effective IT systems support
- Develop the consultative capability and enhance partnership process
- Perform ongoing evaluation of strategic partnerships
- Align all activities to Strategic Goals
- Perform ongoing evaluation of services
- Ensure access to independent assessment
- Ensure appropriate HSA skills are available to deliver our services
- Ensure committed and motivated HSA employees
- Enable cross functional distribution and accountability in HSA
- Adequate budgetary scope to achieve goals

Sample of current major priorities for action :(based on current data)   •Occupational Health Strategy   •Education actions at all levels   •Micro business support

4.2 Prevention Mission

"We will drive a national culture which fosters, values and rewards safe and healthy workplaces."

In order to achieve this Mission we must:

▲ Reach the widest possible audience;

▲ Convince our audience of the benefits of maintaining safe and healthy workplace behaviours

▲ Influence Government through the implementation of our prevention approach;

▲ Create a greater sense of ownership of the value of Prevention behaviours at workplace level;

▲ Influence our customers' attitudes and behaviours by using every possible method, including the development of strategic alliances with our customers' main influencers, to deliver our message;

▲ Inform and support our customers, as dictated by their different needs;

▲ Become central to leading, driving and managing the workplace health and safety prevention agenda at both local and national levels.

▲ Be recognised nationally as a modern, well-informed and effective agent of workplace change;

▲ Maintain our innovative approach by reviewing our Prevention Strategy against multiple agreed performance measures in order to ensure that we are creating a significant momentum of change.

Section 5 outlines our five Strategic Goals and describes the key actions and challenges associated with delivering each goal.

5 - Strategic Goals

The following five Strategic Goals form the basis of our Prevention Strategy:

▲   We will establish a pioneering approach in order to pre-empt, track and manage emerging health and safety challenges;

▲   We will advance our capability to define and map customer profiles, track their behaviours and needs, and identify their key influencers, using a range of information sources, smart systems and processes to enable us to prioritise our actions;

▲   We will engage in working relationships with key influencers to enable us to reach our priority customers;

▲   We will develop a market-led approach, using two-way communications and innovative programmes, which support our customers' needs and deliver change at workplace level;

▲   We will put in place a process to assess accurately the effectiveness of our strategy as measured against established baselines.
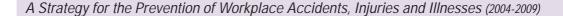
5.1 Managing the Future

"We will establish a pioneering approach to pre-empt, track and manage emerging health and safety challenges."

5.1.1 Rationale

The changing nature of manufacturing processes and products, and the hazardous exposures that certain processes and products cause, may create health and safety challenges for our customers in the future. The Authority will need to be in a position to anticipate relevant emerging threats and have access to the appropriate data so that it may advise its customers accordingly. Examples of the types of issues that could create widespread impacts are the long-term health effects of using wireless communications technologies; the effects of exposure to noise during construction work and/or in places of entertainment, and exposure to new combinations of chemicals, or to ultra-fine particulates.

We need to consider all health and safety challenges in a demographic context, because workplace demographics are changing in a number of ways.

For example:

▲ The workforce is becoming more diverse in terms of age, gender and nationality;

▲ The number of mobile and atypical workers is growing;

▲ The nature of industry is shifting from traditional product manufacturing to service delivery;

▲ A smaller percentage of the workforce nationally is employed in large fixed industries, and a higher proportion is employed in small firms, in temporary jobs, or in the home;

▲ More work is being contracted or outsourced, and is part-time in nature;

▲ Significant issues are emerging around gender in the health and safety area. Men and women have different tolerances to hazardous exposures, and they have different health outcomes.
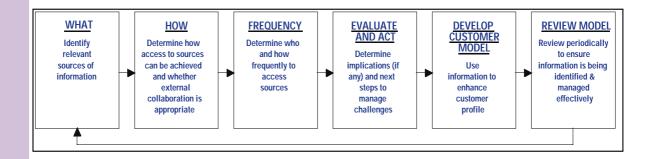
The ability to identify and forecast relevant emerging threats provides us with an opportunity to address threats and take preventive action before our customers are exposed to these risks to any great extent.

5.1.2 Key Actions

In order to achieve this goal:

▲ An identification and tracking function must be **defined and implemented**;

▲ This function must be **adequately resourced** if it is to operate effectively;

▲ Both the function and its outputs must be **reviewed** periodically in order to determine how efficiently they are working and how effective the model is in terms of meeting its targets.

The various operation and review procedures that will be involved in the delivery of this goal are described briefly in the diagram below:

WHAT	**HOW**	**FREQUENCY**	**EVALUATE AND ACT**	**DEVELOP CUSTOMER MODEL**	**REVIEW MODEL**
Identify relevant sources of information	Determine how access to sources can be achieved and whether external collaboration is appropriate	Determine who and how frequently to access sources	Determine implications (if any) and next steps to manage challenges	Use information to enhance customer profile	Review periodically to ensure information is being identified & managed effectively

As the national authority for workplace health and safety we will ensure that:

▲ Emerging threats are identified as early as possible;

▲ Options for collaboration are investigated;

▲ Threats are assessed to determine their likely impact on the workforce;

▲ The most appropriate solutions are implemented to meet the identified challenges;

▲ Baseline data is established. This data will then become the reference point against which all future measurements and trend developments are assessed.

5.1.3 Key Challenges

The following key challenges must be addressed successfully if we are to achieve our goals.

▲ **We must have ready access to relevant data**, so that emerging threats may be identified as early as possible;

▲ **We must establish baseline data from extensive data sources in order to facilitate the development of metrics**, so that the status of a new trend may be accessed, and a determination made as to whether that trend is emerging or receding.

▲ **We must perform ongoing evaluations of our services** in order to ensure that our action programmes support emerging trends or issues;

▲ **We must ensure that appropriate Authority resources are available to deliver the requisite services.** This will be achieved by making the most effective use of our wide range of skills and domain knowledge; by diagnosing/identifying risks, and by recommending and implementing the most appropriate actions;

▲ **We must enable cross-functional distribution and accountability across the organisation**, so that the right skills are deployed at the right time, and we must deliver an accurate assessment of risk, followed by implementation of the most appropriate actions;

▲ **We must deliver effective IT systems support** so that we receive the type of information required in a timely and relevant manner;

▲ **We must make sure that Authority employees are both committed and motivated** so that we may continue to identify and manage emerging risks and trends through the use of innovative approaches;

▲ **We must develop the Authority's capacity to identify and contain occupational health risks** so that we have the requisite competencies to manage these types of risk;

▲ **We must have adequate budgetary scope to achieve our goals** so that we are able to fund access to the variety of sources required and provide the relevant supporting resources.

5.1.4 Measuring success

Success will be determined as the capability to identify challenges, issues and risks as early as practicable, coupled with the ability to assess accurately their likely impact and then implement the appropriate solutions.

This capability will drive the organisation to foster and promote an *anticipatory*, as opposed to a *responsive*, approach in every aspect of its operations.

Success will be measured in a number of ways including:

▲ Auditing previous performance to assess whether any key challenges or opportunities were missed;

▲ Benchmarking performance against comparable organisations in other EU countries in order to determine whether we have been efficient in the identification of, and response to, emerging and growing challenges;

▲ Carrying out surveys on affected customers and strategic allies for feedback on our capabilities in order to pre-empt and manage emerging risks, and determine whether the right solutions were implemented at the right time.

5.2 'Smart intelligence'

"We will advance our capability to define and map customer profiles, track their behaviours and needs, and identify their key influencers, using a range of information sources, smart systems and processes to help us to prioritise our actions."

5.2.1 Rationale

The use of 'smart intelligence' will enable us to prioritise our prevention activities; identify the key alliances that must be established and nurtured if we are to reach our customers; determine the most appropriate communications methods to be used, and the action programmes that must be implemented.

In order to prioritise our actions effectively, we will need to develop comprehensive profiles of our customers, as well as detailed profiles of the environments in which they operate. Our profiles must be current: they must be based on new information and emerging trends covering a wide spectrum of causative factors.

We will use enabling systems to gather and analyse the data, which will make up the Authority's intelligence system and will act as its key driver. These systems will interface with external systems where appropriate. In addition, a dedicated team will be assigned to interrogate and interpret the data. The use of this approach will enable us develop thorough and constantly evolving profiles of our customers within the context of the wider workplace environment.

In order to identify and measure changes and trends accurately, all data will be extrapolated, using agreed criteria, and will be measured against baseline data.

The following methods may be used to gather data that would help generate comprehensive customer profiles.

▲ Collation and analysis of international and national statistics;

▲ Statistical profiling of customers. This may involve the examination of a wide variety of factors including issues such as work sector, size of employer, geographical location, age, gender and nationality. Associated risk levels would be identified. This data would then be correlated with customer profiles, and relevant trends would be analysed;

▲ Data on customers' health and safety histories, fatalities and illnesses from all Authority sources would be assembled and collated with records of visits to these customers by the Authority's inspectorate. Details of any complaints recorded would also be noted and included;

▲ Surveys would be carried out periodically to research behaviours among different customer profile categories.

▲ Consultations would be carried out with customers to identify their general needs and attitudes. This data would then be used to further enhance and expand customer profiling.

5.2.2 Key actions

The core project will address the establishment and day-to-day operation of a discrete function by:

▲ identifying and implementing the relevant Authority Division's information requirements, including when the information would be required and in what format;

▲ performing a 'gap analysis' between currently available data, and data that needs to be sourced elsewhere; determining how best to bridge any gaps and identifying what the likely implications would be, both from an IT perspective and a cost perspective;

▲ agreeing sources of data and baseline measurements across the organisation;

▲ developing comprehensive customer profiles, based on multiple criteria;

▲ interrogating data constantly to ascertain the highest areas of risk, and thus determine the requisite prevention priorities, including the tracking of exceptional items;

▲ conducting research programmes in conjunction with relevant Authority Divisions in order to identify customer behaviours;

▲ reviewing processes and methods periodically in order to measure their effectiveness and adapt them as necessary.

5.2.3 Key challenges

▲ **Use an extensive range of sources to establish baseline data and facilitate the development of metrics.** This will in turn help to identify comparative trends, track behaviours and assess progress;

▲ **Ensure that appropriate Authority skills are available to deliver the requisite services.** This will involve the establishment of a central data repository, from which the most relevant information may be gleaned and then communicated effectively;

▲ **Deliver effective IT systems support.** This type of support will be essential if data is to be gathered efficiently, analysed, and then presented to the relevant Divisions in a timely and accurate manner.

▲ **Develop the Authority's capacity to identify and contain occupational health risks.**

▲ **Ensure that Authority employees are both committed and motivated**, and make informed choices about how to interrogate and present information and act as effective custodians of one of the organisation's most powerful assets – information.

▲ **Adequate budgetary scope to achieve goals.** In order to fund access to the variety of data sources necessary, and in order to develop the requisite technology to support our goals, we must have the flexibility to allocate our budgets on a needs basis.

5.2.4 Measuring Success

Success will be determined by our ability to obtain and use the relevant supporting data to drive our Prevention agenda, and prioritise our actions, based on the correct identification of customers' needs.

Success will be measured in a number of ways including:

▲ Assessing whether the profiling of our customers and their workplace environments is accurate, by surveying them to determine their perceptions of the programmes' effectiveness.

▲ Assessing whether quantifiable improvements have resulted which are directly attributable to specific Authority interventions.
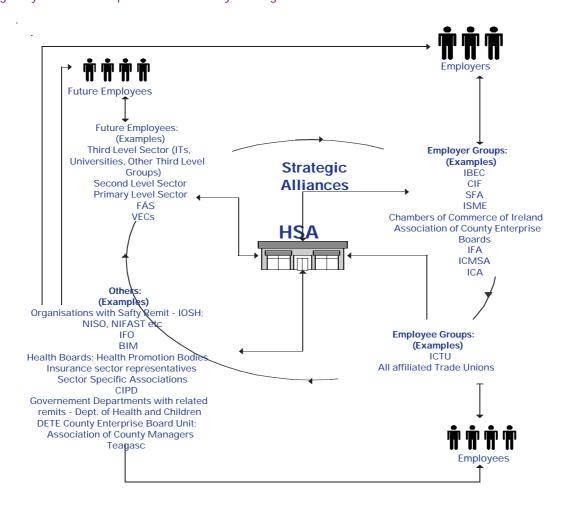
5.3 Leveraging Resources through Alliances

"We will engage in working relationships with key influencers to enable us to reach our priority customers."

5.3.1 Rationale

A number of strategic alliances have already been established between the Authority and its customers' key influencers. In recognition of the contribution that these alliances have made, we propose to further develop our initial investment by developing a finite number of strategic partnerships with key influencers.

These strategic alliances will allow us to reach as wide an audience as possible, through partners who are best placed to influence our customers. Key influencers will be determined as those parties who are perceived by our customers as a credible and trusted source of information.

By securing the support of key influencers, and by channelling our programmes and communications through those groups best placed to influence our customers' behaviours and attitudes, we will greatly maximise our potential to have key messages and actions delivered to our customers.

Future Employees

Future Employees:
(Examples)
Third Level Sector (ITs,
Universities, Other Third Level
Groups)
Second Level Sector
Primary Level Sector
FÁS
VECs

**Strategic
Alliances**

HSA

Employers

Employer Groups:
(Examples)
IBEC
CIF
SFA
ISME
Chambers of Commerce of Ireland
Association of County Enterprise
Boards
IFA
ICMSA
ICA

Others:
(Examples)
Organisations with Safty Remit - IOSH;
NISO, NIFAST etc
IFO
BIM
Health Boards; Health Promotion Bodies
Insurance sector representatives
Sector Specific Associations
CIPD
Governement Departments with related
remits - Dept. of Health and Children
DETE County Enterprise Board Unit;
Association of County Managers
Teagasc

Employee Groups:
(Examples)
ICTU
All affiliated Trade Unions

Employees

In this way, we can reach a much wider audience than we could hope to have reached if we were merely operating independently. More importantly, our customers are likely to be responsive to any messages or actions that are endorsed by these groups.

It will be necessary to enter into formal alliances with these support organisations and bodies.   The diagram opposite gives examples of the types of such support organisations and bodies. In order to achieve our goal, each strategic alliance will contain an amalgam of these bodies who will deliver our prevention messages and approaches.

5.3.2 Key actions

We will establish as well as manage formal alliances with our customers' key influencers.

The selection of potential alliance members will result from a process of identifying areas of greatest need, and actions will be prioritised accordingly.

We will:

- ▲ identify a finite number of strategic alliances;
- ▲ establish an initial 'template' alliance, which will be tested before any subsequent alliances are developed;
- ▲ meet with members of the alliance and agree mutual benefits;
- ▲ establish a formal alliance, and agree goals and timeframes with members of that alliance;
- ▲ establish an implementation team to operate the alliance and deliver agreed results within an agreed timeframe;
- ▲ review and adapt the process internally on an annual basis, and carry out external assessments periodically.

These actions would not preclude the establishment of a number of one-to-one relationships with specific organisations in order to achieve specific goals: the Authority's existing partnership with the Department of Education is one such example.

The diagram below shows how alliances with key influencers relate to customers' needs, and interact with Authority programmes.

Priority Customer Grouping	Key Influencer	Key Risk Areas	Priority Level 1 = Low, 5 = High	Projects
Retail/small businesses	• RGDATA • Chambers of Commerce of Ireland • Mandate • Insurance sector	• Manual handling • Psychosocial – stress and violence • Safety management systems	4	Formal alliance between these groups with the Authority. Backed up by a three-year implementation plan

5.3.3 Key challenges

▲ **Ensure that appropriate Authority skills are available to deliver our services.** Access to these skills will be essential if we are to develop and build successful relations with key influencers;

▲ **Enable cross-functional distribution and accountability within the Authority.** This is designed to ensure that the relevant personnel have the facility to interact with our strategic allies while simultaneously carrying out their other roles and meeting their responsibilities;

▲ **Perform ongoing evaluations of strategic partnerships.** This measure is aimed at ensuring that the partnership relationships are effective, goal-oriented, and achieve their objectives.

▲ **Ensure that Authority employees are both committed and motivated** and maintain complex relationships with our strategic partners while simultaneously influencing and motivating customers on an ongoing basis.

▲ **Ensure access to independent assessments** in order to maintain objectivity and credibility when determining the value of strategic alliances, thus facilitating the recommendation of necessary changes to an alliance;

▲ **Adequate budgetary scope to achieve goals** will be required if we are to resource the requisite actions.

5.3.4.Measures of success

Success will be measured in terms of achieving the establishment of, as well as the management of, a meaningful goal-based, results-oriented relationship, where mutual benefits are delivered through our alliances.

Methods used to measure success will include:

▲   the use of external professional assessors to determine whether our alliances are effective in terms of helping us to reach our customers.

▲   the carrying out of impact assessments by our customers to determine the perceived value of their particular alliance.

5.4 Delivering the solutions

"We will develop a market-led approach, using two-way communications and innovative programmes which support our customers' needs, to deliver change at workplace level."

5.4.1 Rationale

This goal addresses the *delivery* of our message through our communications strategy and through action programmes, which will be driven by our customers' priorities.

We will target those areas where our Prevention Strategy is likely to deliver the best results, using the most effective forms of prevention action programmes and the most effective communications methods. Areas to be targeted may include those where:

▲   accidents or work-related incidents are high;

▲   the greatest opportunities to foster proactive health and safety attitudes already exist;

▲   flagship models of excellence in health and safety could be established and promoted e.g. in the Public Sector. (The State's role in leading the prevention of work-related incidents, accidents, death, and illnesses should be expanded and exploited. It should provide the private sector with leading examples of how the successful implementation of effective health and safety systems yields major benefits for organisations and individuals).

The execution of a strategic public relations plan, focused on prevention activity, will allow the Authority to establish itself as the primary persuader and influencer on positive behavioural change in the workplace.

In becoming the catalyst for dynamic change, we will adopt a marketing approach to the delivery of our products and services.

Our approach will be guided by:

▲ A clear understanding of our key customers' behaviours, and their attitudes towards health and safety in the workplace;

▲ A strategic approach to stimulating behavioural changes among those key customers through the delivery of timely and targeted products, programmes and services;

▲ A customer-focused approach to current needs, targeted at demand stimulation.

The Authority needs to move to a position where one of its defining roles is **persuasion**. Specifically it needs to persuade its various audiences that changes in behaviour can and will yield direct and indirect benefits for all enterprises.

5.4.2 Key actions

We will set up and operate complementary innovative action programmes that target customers on a prioritised basis and promote customer commitment to achieving healthy and safe workplaces.

We will also be innovative in the approaches that we use to deliver our programmes and key messages, leveraging as broad a range of channels as possible including the web, e-technology and other forms of media.

Some key programmes, which have already been identified for priority implementation are as follows:

▲ **A support programme for micro-businesses**. This will comprise a wide range of actions and approaches such as:

    i. a formal alliance with key players and an associated action programme;

    ii. the development of a training module aimed at this sector, using interactive CD-ROM technology;

    iii. a dedicated Web section;

    iv. a sustained support initiative at community level (e.g. the Safe Community project which targets all micro-businesses in a designated town in conjunction with all local players);

    v. the development of specialist advisers for micro-businesses among members of our inspectorate;

    vi. a redesigned programme of mentoring at local level;

    vii. the development of special incentives for micro-businesses (e.g. the allocation of

> PIN numbers to enable free access to relevant publications and other support tools), and the provision of training;
>
> viii. the development of a health and safety module for inclusion in all training courses for micro-businesses, and the dissemination of that message through national and local providers;
>
> ix. a dedicated response unit for micro-business within the Workplace Contact Centre.

▲ **Management of education as a tool for influencing change**. Here, we will prioritise actions to achieve progress by:

    i. promoting occupational safety and health issues at all levels of the National Framework for Qualifications

    ii. raising awareness of occupational safety and health issues among audiences such as the new Awards Councils;

    iii. forming working relationships with relevant educational bodies at national and regional level;

    iv. linking occupational safety and health to the concept of Lifelong Learning.

▲ **The National Recognition Award.** This will be operated at two levels: the Voluntary Protection Programme Star Award, and a second-tier award, which will specifically recognise a commitment by management and employees that goes far beyond normal workplace compliance.

▲ **Model our workplace contact services** in line with our overall Prevention Strategy Goals, thus becoming a professional, responsive, centralised and easily accessed source of information and advice for our customers.

▲ **Develop and market key messages** in order to shape behaviours and attitudes towards workplace health and safety.

▲ Execute a pro-active **media relations programme** comprising

    1. media messaging

    2. a sectoral media strategy

    3. profile-building around function and personality

    4. increased awareness-building

    5. thought-leadership positioning

    6. a stakeholders' influencer programme

    7. a crisis communications strategy

▲ Maintain the Authority's **website** as the leading-edge 'shop front' for the promulgation of key messages, and use the website as a tool for mapping customers' behaviours, needs and requirements.

▲ Secure **sponsorship** and enter into financial partnerships with like-minded organisations and businesses, in order to facilitate large-budget advertising and other programmes.

▲ Adopt a consistent approach to the utilisation of the Authority's **corporate identity** across publications, the Internet, intranet, multi-media, advertising, publicity and stationery, in order to ensure the distinctiveness of the Authority's identity and the effectiveness and weight of its associated messages.

▲ Exploit the most **appropriate communications tools for each target market** – published guidelines, leaflets, events, CDs, direct mail and e-messaging – based on the most effective way of reaching each target market.

5.4.3 Key challenges

▲ **Align our activities to our strategic goals** by ensuring that all initiatives are driven by the central tenets of this strategy;

▲ **Perform ongoing evaluations of services** in order to ensure that we are delivering actions and messages that are meeting customers' needs and are leading them to change their behaviours;

▲ **Ensure that the appropriate Authority skills are available in order to deliver our services.**

▲ **Facilitate cross-functional distribution and accountability within the Authority** so as to ensure that the people with the most appropriate skills are deployed on the most effective change-delivery programmes, and ensure that they continue to uphold their other responsibilities and functions within the Authority;

▲ **Ensure effective IT systems support** – both as a channel for interaction with our customers and as a means of interacting internally to deliver our programmes and message;

▲ **Ensure that Authority employees are both committed and motivated** so that they remain pro-active in their delivery of our programmes and messages, thus deepening the organisation's credibility and influence with its customers;

▲ **Develop the Authority's consultative capability and enhance its partnership process** so that we recruit others to our cause and avoid duplication of effort;

▲ **Adequate budgetary scope to achieve goals:** All communications and action programmes will need to be properly resourced and funded.

5.4.4 Measures of success

The Prevention Strategy will be deemed a success if:

▲ the Authority is positioned in the media, and is viewed by key stakeholders, as the primary national expert in occupational safety and health and a key influencer of government policy;

▲ it delivers services and products in a timely and responsive manner, and receives positive feedback from customers who come into contact with the Authority;

▲ there is a significant interest in, and take up by, businesses in the Voluntary Protection Programme, and if it can be shown that safety performance in these companies has improved – as confirmed by compliance inspections;

▲ a growth in traffic levels is recorded, and positive feedback by users of the Workplace Contact Centre is recorded;

▲ the negotiation of contracts with third parties is completed, where this enables the Authority to communicate its messages using an appropriate medium, such as television advertising, which it would otherwise be financially constrained from doing;

▲ clear, consistent and recognisable corporate branding features in all Authority communications with its internal and external audiences;

▲ there is a high take-up and response to messaging through the various communications tools and channels deployed by the Authority;

▲ positive changes in behaviours are recorded;

▲ programmes that do not deliver added value have been discontinued, while programmes that have been shown to deliver added value remain in place;

▲ the Authority's education programme attracts high levels of interest and participation, with raised levels of awareness recorded.

5.5 Evaluating the Strategy

"We will put in place a process whereby we will obtain objective evaluations of the effectiveness of our Strategy – as measured against established baselines."

5.5.1 Rationale

The capability to assess objectively the effectiveness of our Prevention Strategy, as well as each of our Strategic Goals, will be essential if we are to achieve our overall Mission. Given the pioneering approach that is advocated in this Prevention Strategy, regular reviews will be essential if we are to ensure that our goals remain both relevant and effective.

The assessment process will allow for:

▲ the development and evolution of our strategy so that it encapsulates emerging issues more effectively on a continuous basis, while successfully managing existing health and safety challenges;

▲ the introduction of new strategic goals, or the amendment of existing goals, as the prevention approach to health and safety becomes more prevalent in the workplace;

▲ raising the Authority's profile internationally, in recognition of the achievements that it has made at a national level in implementing effective prevention communications methodologies and services.

In order to ensure sustainable improvements, this strategy will be reviewed continuously. Reviews may be conducted by external consultants, so that greater objectivity may be achieved when assessing the relevance and effectiveness of the Strategy at national and local levels.
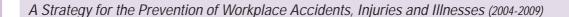
5.5.2 Key actions

Establish and operate review procedures in order to assess the effectiveness of strategic initiatives, and evaluate their impact in the workplace by using quantitative and qualitative measures.

Seek external validation for all assessments, and recommend changes to strategic goals or strategic initiatives.

5.5.3 Key challenges

▲ **Establish baselines from extensive data sources** in order to facilitate the development of metrics; to establish whether key targets are being met; to evaluate progress year on year, and to assess at a high level whether the Strategy is delivering acceptable levels of progress.

▲ **Align all activities – particularly our PR and marketing activities – to our strategic goals** so that we may increase national and international recognition of the Authority's leading-edge approaches in the Prevention area.

▲ **Encourage independent assessment of our programmes** in order to maintain objectivity and credibility and to facilitate the recommendation of changes to the Strategy, in this way delivering even further progress.

5.5.4 Measures of success

An organisation cannot manage what it cannot measure. Therefore, in order to be successful in the achievement of our goals, we must be able to measure:

▲ the success of each of our strategic goals, while assessing their impacts both individually and collectively;

▲ our results against established baseline data;

▲ our capability to develop targets on an ongoing basis;

▲ our ability to communicate our effectiveness to a national audience;

▲ the extent to which the review process results in adjustment to our overall Prevention Strategy.

6 - Next Steps: Implementation

While the Prevention Strategy can identify the key areas that must be addressed, the implications for budgets and resources can only be assessed as part of a detailed implementation exercise for each of the main areas identified. This should follow the existing Strategy Definition exercise.

Due to the wide-reaching nature of our initiatives, all project leaders will report regularly to the Executive Management team so as to ensure that the appropriate level of decision-making on key issues is being maintained. It will also allow the management team to assess the budgetary and resource implications for the organisation as a whole, while facilitating the prioritisation of tasks and the identification of a projects co-ordinator to oversee programme delivery.

The Prevention Services Division will take responsibility for implementing certain key tasks, which would include addressing the structures within that area, in particular the Marketing and Customer Services Unit, which has begun work on certain projects as part of the Authority's Programme of Work for 2004.

7 - Conclusions

In view of the Authority's desire to reduce substantially the human and economic costs of workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities, there are sound reasons for adopting and moving ahead with this Prevention Strategy.

The message to workplaces is clear – we will do all we can to support them. We will begin by ensuring that they are well-informed, and we will continue to support them by providing them with tools that will help them to sustain the commitment of their entire workforce. We will, of course, focus our attention on those sectors and workplaces that most need it, and we will also focus our attention on those customers who experience the greatest difficulty in achieving compliance.

Our prevention approach complements and operates in parallel with our enforcement role. We have absolute confidence in this dual strategy.
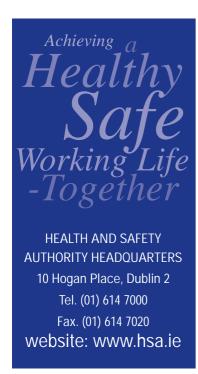
We realise that the translation of our Prevention Strategy into an operational plan, which both motivates Authority employees and harnesses their commitment, presents major implications for the organisation. We are realistic about the constraints that apply to our existing resources, and we are well aware that we must be both creative and smart in the manner in which we resource our programmes. Nonetheless, our strategy is by necessity, an ambitious one. We must secure the necessary additional resources to ensure that real and substantial outcomes accrue.

It is within our competence to manage the critical challenges facing us over the next five years, and so we must now begin to address some of the challenges that are fundamental to the Strategy's success, such as the development of a first-class intelligence-gathering system.

The major benefit of this Prevention Strategy is that we now have a framework, as well as a set of goals, which will deliver results – but only if they inform our decision-making processes.

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