



## 2020: Clarity of vision

**V**ision, clarity, focus: Now is a great opportunity to leverage the new year and term “2020” as your opportunity to become focused and to keep *the most* important things the most important things.

In 1862, Dutch ophthalmologist Herman Snellen developed the visual acuity measurements called Snellen fractions. In the U.S., if you have normal vision, this is expressed as 20/20. At 20 feet, you can read letters on one of the smaller lines near the bottom of the eye chart. This is expressed as normal 20/20 visual acuity, which also means clarity of vision. How clearly are you focused? What is your vision?

Once, when assessing the strategy and culture of an organization, I was conducting focus group interviews across the population at one of its locations. One of the questions I asked all employees was, “What is safety currently focused on?” Having led hundreds of these types of projects, this was the only time 100 percent of the population I spoke with told me the same two items. While this is wonderful and shows the effectiveness of communication, they were

the wrong two things. Prior to visiting the location, our firm had conducted a deep analysis of their recent four-year injury and incident data.

We knew that a specific time of day, day of week, tenure of employee and type of work were more likely to get injured based on historical data. We also knew what would have prevented the vast majority of the events over the time period reviewed. Employees shared their current focus in safety was on steel-toed boots and house-keeping. If the site had been perfect in these two areas, it could have impacted only 8 percent of incidents. What they were focused on were not the most important things. Having worked with most of the best-performing organizations, we have often found it is not the need to do more in safety, but to be better focused. We often express this as, “More isn’t better; only better is better.”

2020 is your opportunity to craft a new vision of safety excellence and become better focused on the most important areas of need, both in the prevention of injuries and

the pursuit of a culture of safety excellence. With the involvement of key stakeholders from leadership and influential employees, craft your five-year vision by answering this question: If we left this company or location and returned five years later, and it is now the most benchmarked company in our industry so that even other industries are visiting to learn what it is doing so well and why, what would we see and hear when walking the work environment? If your vision of success is behaviorally defined, you can sample how often this is currently happening and what might make it difficult or impossible to deploy these desired behaviors, and then align the organization on this vision, measure progress toward it and coach for it. If you also define the vision in terms of what beliefs are common, you can establish a baseline for where you are today and know what areas of the culture you should also focus improvement efforts on.

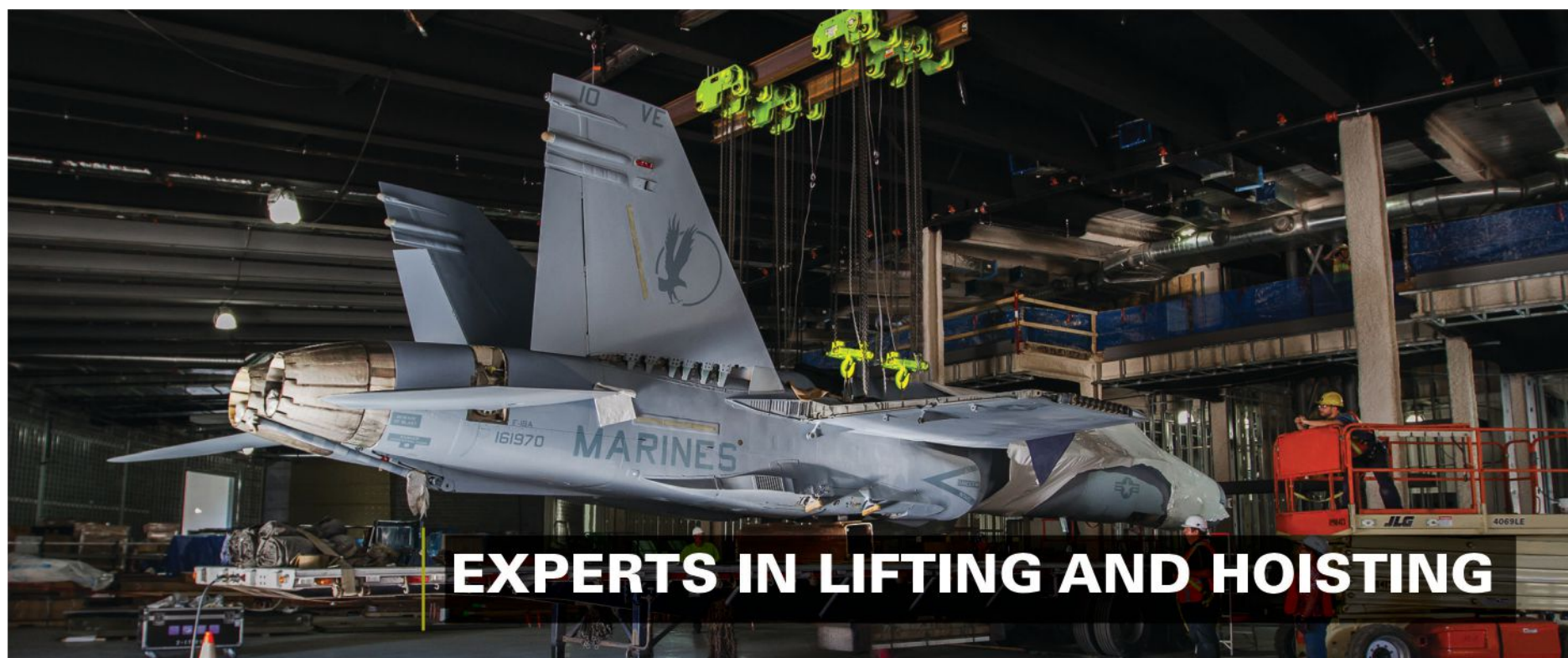
Review your data in a similar way described. What are your commonly tracked variables on your incident reports? Perform an analysis on this. What you find

might tell you where to improve your data collection efforts or where to focus your overall safety efforts. Further, look at the events to determine whether they are mostly preventable by conditions, equipment or precautions, and then identify which specific ones are at play.

With these steps, you will work to align the organization with a better definition of success in safety and leverage data to focus everyone on the most important areas or items. Let 2020 be your year of focus. As a bonus, this is a leap year, so you have an extra day to get the important things done.

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