Large event draws picture of the future

The future of prevention: Always moving beyond the horizon, together we are strong!

Do we really understand how work is changing? What will happen with the social security system given the profound changes happening worldwide? Can a conference contribute to a better understanding of these changes and provide answers and solutions?

Megatrends help to organise thoughts

Megatrends – a word coined by John Naisbitt in 1982 – help to "organise thoughts and distinguish massive, fundamental developments from normal trends or fads" (Naisbitt, 2015). The 4th International Strategy Conference on Safety and Health at Work, which took place in the DGUV Academy in Dresden at the end of March, presented its participants with the task of examining five top trends in terms of their importance for the future of prevention. The conference was kicked off by Matthias Horx, the leading trend researcher in the German-speaking world. Using impressive imagery, he managed to illustrate that a megatrend is always based on a logic of trend and counter-trend; it is a recursive process which always ends with us asking ourselves: where do we want to go? The megatrend of safety corresponds with a growing sense of insecurity in society and the megatrend of individualisation has a counter-trend of a new "we society". The megatrend of demographic change does not lead directly to an increase in risks at work and in everyday life but rather to a more vital society across all ages. The megatrend of digitalisation does not result directly in a reduction of what is technologically feasible but to the question of human reason.

In his closing speech at the end of the Strategy Conference, Joachim Breuer, Managing Director of the DGUV, once again made reference to the idea of the "tipping point". This is a point at which a trend that was initially running in a steady, straight line, suddenly turns into a counter-trend or rapidly accelerates a development. "The field of social security is also heading towards such a "tipping point" and it is still not entirely clear which way the pendulum will swing".

Megatrends as signposts for strategies

Megatrends draw a picture of future developments and can act as signposts for strategies (Naisbitt, 2015). The "dramaturgy" of the 4th International Strategy Conference reflected this non-linear, disruptive and recursive logic of megatrends: five top trends were analysed from four different perspectives in recursive loops. Across the entire range of topics, participants started at first with a VISION, that is, not with a classic strategy as a plan which only needs to be turned into reality, but rather with a "good idea of where to go" (Mintzberg, 1995). This was followed by a change of perspective to the MISSION as a structural framework, which leaves room for strategic decisions. The third perspective of OPERATIVE GOALS presented and analysed examples of implementing strategies with indicators and milestones. Finally, the perspective of TOOLS provided the opportunity to learn about real examples and tools for each topic or even the chance to try them out.

Involving participants through micro-settings

An important aspect of the 4th International Strategy Conference, as in previous events, was the principle of interaction, the consistent involvement of participants in as many areas of the conference as possible. Keynotes of maximum ten minutes ensured there was diversity and a great dynamic; controversial positions resulted in lively discussions; and, in the knowledge that a rigid focus on plenary sessions with speakers and listeners creates a passive climate, there was a constant change between plenaries and small groups. Supplemented by enough time-out spaces for the all-important "in-between communication", the constant dynamic of the event ensured that participants were involved in different roles: participants became speakers and presenters became participants. A variety of different methods were used for the actual work done in the break-out groups. Micro settings adjusted to fit the topic, situation and participants – from the well-known World Café through to collaborative, computerised networking groups – promoted a high level of interactivity which increased participant attention and involvement.

Formats find their form in space

This high level of participant involvement was also encouraged through a special room design which was conceived by the 3c Agency who were creative partner on the project team. The plenary was set up as a centre stage in the middle of the conference room with participants sitting around it in four blocks facing one another. This created a great sense of closeness to the speakers in the centre and, at the same time, the direct eye contact with people sitting in the opposite sections resulted in an atmosphere that was extremely conducive to exchange and interaction. The centre stage was separated from the rest of the conference room by four high, freestanding stage walls. The working spaces for the smaller break-out groups were behind these walls.

The sides of the walls facing the plenary served as projection surfaces, while the backs of the walls were used as work areas for documenting the results of the work done by the small groups. Reflecting the image of the topics and strategies as "mental frames", the edges of the walls and floor markings formed real frames which delineated each of the working areas. By repeatedly alternating between the plenary space and the working spaces, every participant could directly experience, both mentally and physically, the different topics and perspective changes.

Good planning and spontaneity are not contradictory

Expectations for an international conference of this type in terms of how it is run and its results are exceptionally high. Accordingly, the planning and preparation processes were extremely detailed and intensively discussed. None of the content and organisational elements were left to chance. Spontaneous and improvised aspects of the strategy conference were only to come from the participants themselves. However, the framework for this lively, active process was strictly planned, staged and rehearsed.

Work on megatrends

At the 4th International Strategy Conference, the megatrends of safety, individualisation, health, demographic change and digitalisation were worked on by the participants in parallel groups. The megatrend of safety, with Vision Zero as the guiding strategy for developing a culture of prevention,

was presented exclusively on the centre stage. For the second time, the Strategy Conference acted as a milestone event for the World Congress because Vision Zero, health and individualisation are the main topics at the XXI World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2017 in Singapore.

VISION ZERO: Let's speak with one voice!

"We have to speak with one voice in order to achieve Vision Zero", said Helmut Ehnes, Prevention Director of the Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Raw Materials and Chemical Industry (BG RCI) and Secretary General of the ISSA Mining Section. However, the number "0" does not stand for a statistical target but rather for a strategic approach and process to succeed in preventing all accidents and occupational diseases, explained Pete Kines from the Danish National Research Centre for the Working Environment.

Vision Zero can only succeed if prevention is practised by everyone from top management to each individual employee in a company. The focus of Vision Zero is not on technical abilities but on leading and engaging people, stressed Steve Hails from the UK's Crossrail Ltd. Furthermore, the establishment of a culture of prevention must start early on, that is, starting with day-care centres, added Shelley Frost from the internationally-active Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

An important step on the road to Vision Zero is the development of common headline indicators, announced Walter Eichendorf, Deputy Director General of the DGUV and host of the Strategy Conference. These will be developed with the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) prior to the next World Congress in Singapore.

INDIVIDUALISATION: We need humanised prevention

"We must shift our focus in prevention from technology to people and look more at their needs", concluded ISSA Secretary General Hans-Horst Konkolewsky from the results of this breakout group and he called for the "humanisation of prevention". In the future, prevention must not only be designed from the perspective of experts but also from the perspective of the people that are intended to be reached.

Right from the very start, "trust" was the guiding category for this breakout group: "We have to look at the basic needs of people such as trust, participation, dignity, safety and respect in order to empower them", said Natalie Lotzmann from SAP. The megatrend of individualisation is linked from the beginning with its counter-trend, namely, the basic need of belonging.

The breakout group then went on to formulate two key requirements for prevention of the future. Firstly, prevention structures and services must be adapted to the needs of the people and not the other way around, stated Ivan Ivanov from WHO. Secondly, people must be protected from being overwhelmed by individualisation and self-determination, which became abundantly clear during the controversial discussion following the presentation by Heiko Fischer from Resourceful Humans.

The message from this breakout group was also clear – start with the CEO and top management in your own organisation. In addition, support structures need to be set up which reduce mental

stressors and help to improve reintegration into work. The StartSAFE programme from Singapore received special attention. StartSAFE is aimed directly at the medium-sized business owner as a person. It forms a relationship with this person, helps raise their awareness of hazards and empowers them to find their own solutions to OSH problems in their company. This also involves recognising the strengths and weaknesses of the owner and managers and establishing a culture of dialogue between management and employees. (Wilbur Oh & Jo-Ann Chen, Ministry of Manpower, Singapore).

HEALTH: Healthy work and a healthy life belong together

"Put health and well-being in the centre and look for measures" – this is how Maria Neira, Director of Public Health and Environment, succinctly captured the debate over the megatrend of health at the Strategy Conference. OSH and health promotion need to be more closely connected in order to better promote the health and well-being of workers, as well as to create more humane and decent working conditions worldwide. At the core of promoting health and well-being is "the individual in his or her professional, cultural and personal life context", explained Casey Chosewood from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the USA. In a future where stress and strain increase due to the blurring between job and private life, and the maintenance and promotion of an older workforce increases in importance due to demographic change, investing in health and well-being pays off in the long term.

However, without leadership that exemplifies and encourages a culture of health prevention, this will not happen, said Sylvie Vincent-Höper from the University of Hamburg. Health as a value to be protected should be reflected in the company's strategy; it must be promoted by management; and it must be demanded and practised by the employees. This was the overall feeling in the breakout group. The basis for this is dialogue between the various hierarchical levels, encouraging employee participation and appreciating employees as the most important resource in the company.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE: The potential of the ageing society

The smell of coffee enticed the participants of this group. The megatrend of demographic change was discussed in the World Café. The working atmosphere was characterised by the equal participation of all.

"We all get older, it's about us", noted Colin Millner from the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) at the start of the breakout group. A paradigm shift in perception is needed: older workers are not a burden to a company but rather a valuable resource both economically and for society as a whole. "The ageing workforce represents a potential of previously unrecognised skills and competences. We need to see, recognise and make use of this potential", said Siong Hin Ho from the Singaporean Ministry of Manpower.

According to Winfried Hacker from the Dresden University of Technology, knowledge transfer between and also within generations is of particular importance. The focus must be shifted from purely transferring knowledge (one-sided) to exchanging knowledge (two-sided) in order to generate new knowledge by taking advantage of synergies. Good job design, a change of physical and

cognitive needs, and an open intergenerational and intragenerational dialogue ensure that capacity to work in old age can be maintained at a high level for a longer period of time, as well as ensuring that important company resources such as know-how and experience can be constantly circulated and expanded.

DIGITALISATION: Safety and health as an integral component of "smart" products

"Everything and everyone is connected, digitalisation is happening faster than even the experts expected" is how Sabina Jenschke from the RWTH Aachen University described the megatrend of digitalisation.

This breakout group discussed how the way we live and work is changing due to digitalisation. The nextmoderator® tool was used for this. All laptops in the room were linked with one another and the programme made it possible for all participants to see all posts immediately and to make a comment or evaluate them.

The greatest influencing factors identified were changes which affect work in terms of type, time and place. In addition, people need a different set of skills to better deal with changes in work, particularly with regards to the increasing demand for flexibility in the world of work. Aïda Ponce from the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) stressed that an important framework condition for ensuring that work in a digital world remains human-friendly is to establish regulatory guidelines for new, flexible forms of work in order to avoid a legal no-man's land. Another aspect that the participants saw as a prerequisite for digital work was high security standards for data protection.

This breakout group also paid special attention to the aspect of leadership: "Managers need to make brave decisions instead of sticking too long with strategies that were previously successful. Digitalisation means that certain business models simply no longer work and companies must do entirely new things", said Michael Beilfuss from IDG Media Group.

Participants in this breakout group could experience first-hand what a "smart" product can do thanks to a smart firefighter jacket which uses sensors to monitor various physical functions and transmit this information wirelessly to an external person who can intervene in an emergency (Henk Vanhoutte, European Safety Federation). They could also use smart glasses which can instruct the user how to perform a specific task or display OSH tips. The highlight was the appearance of Nao, a humanoid robot, in dialogue with Britta Kirchhoff from the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA). The BAuA is using Nao to study the effects of robots on human behaviour and the associated ethical, social and legal issues. Michael Teigeler from the DKE, who presented the Standardisation 2020 project, also provided an insight into the future of smart products: a drill whose development incorporated safety aspects including those derived from standards. The drill can detect electricity cables behind plaster walls and will not drill a hole there.

Insight quality linked with experience quality

The results of an IAG evaluation study of the XX World Congress 2014 in Frankfurt showed that a highly interactive event such as the Strategy Conference is more fun for everyone involved (Klotz, 2016).

The 4th Strategy Conference also confirmed the link between participant satisfaction (overall rating 1.5)[1] and the opportunity to get involved (rating 1.3) as well as the chance to make new contacts (84.2 per cent). Satisfaction with the speakers was also high (rating 1.4). One of the reasons for this high level of satisfaction was that, in addition to the content-centric focus, it was possible to have an emotional connection with the various topics. For example, the individual breakout groups were actively promoted by the speakers in the plenary and because participants could freely choose their breakout group, everyone at the conference could participant in the event that interested them the most. The results from the individual breakout groups were also presented in a lively manner in front of the plenary which got the listeners on board in terms of content and emotion.

Another important goal, in addition to participant satisfaction, is the sustainability of the Conference. Did participants take away something from the 4th International Strategy Conference, for example, plans to change their prevention work in the future? The design of the conference, working in small groups from multiple perspectives and focusing on the workplace, allowed an intense and critical look at the content – one of the prerequisites for long-term stable changes in attitude and behaviour of participants at a conference (Klotz, 2016). This made it possible to better understand megatrends and their impact on changes to work, particularly in relation to the participants' own experiences. Counter-trends, for example, to the megatrends of demographic change and individualisation were also identified.

Always moving beyond the horizon: factors that can influence the swing of the pendulum

The following factors which could influence the swing of the "pendulum" were identified at the 4th International Strategy Conference:

1. Prevention is at the forefront of Vision Zero for changes both nationally and internationally: prevention proactively takes on the task of creating a culture of change.
2. Prevention is newly created by the human being: prevention means, first and foremost, understanding a person's needs, thoughts and actions before then developing with the person the appropriate prevention structures and services for their life and work circumstances.
3. Prevention lives through dialogue: managers with their employees, within teams, between hierarchical levels, between generations and within generations.
4. Prevention is an integral component of technological change: our intelligence ensures that safety and health are integrated from the very start into the development of every single product (Michael Teigeler).

The results from all breakout groups were visualised with the help of a professional graphic recording. For each megatrend, a picture was created that acts as a "memory anchor" for the sustainability of the 4th International Strategy Conference on Safety and Health at Work.

Documentation from the 4th International Strategy Conference can be found here:

http://www.dguv.de/isc/documentation/index.jsp

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[1] Rated on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is the best value.

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Dr Ulrike Bollmann
Head of International Cooperation
Institute for Work and Health of the DGUV (IAG)
E-Mail: ulrike.bollmann@dguv.de

Christopher Franke
Managing Director
3c Creative Communication Concepts GmbH
E-Mail: Christopher.Franke@3c3c.de

Translation: Peter Love, peter@englishplusmore.com

3c Creative
Communication Concepts

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