How ISO 22 301 certification can improve the safety performance of a company

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I – Abstract

The ISO 22 301 standard is used by companies who wish to organize the continuity of their business after a disaster or a major disruptive event. Its main objective is primarily economic. EPC has been involved in this process since 2015. She now realizes that this normative structure has also allowed her to see safety from a different angle.

Companies are now structured according to an identical safety performance scheme based on probabilistic risk occurrence studies and intensity of effects. The methods all converge in this direction and aim to reduce the occurrence of an accidental event and, if necessary, its impact.
Grids are used to assess risks. They define levels that are acceptable to people, equipment and the environment.

On the other hand, companies organise the fight against major events, mainly fires, explosions and toxic gas emissions. The objective is to implement human and material resources to contain and stop a disaster.

It is very rare to find in our technical studies a link between preventive risk reduction measures, the occurrence of disasters, crisis intervention and business recovery. And yet, through all the sequences we distinguish, there is a strong link that reflects the very foundation of the company: “Without business, there is no company!”.

ISO 22 301 aims to fill this gap if it is well understood. It should not only prepare for business continuity in the event of a disaster, but also act as a link between all risk studies carried out and fill gaps at the interfaces. EPC uses this standard to work between the lines usually followed in our business.
We have found that from a business perspective, safety takes on a different meaning, perhaps even better understood by employees, because the absence of business will directly affect their own safety and that of their families. Safety is no longer seen as a constraint but as a necessity to maintain our jobs, because it also serves the business.

II – Introduction

As everyone knows, to reduce the effects of a potential crisis it is important to be prepared for it when the situation is anticipated. These exercises, which often seem extremely complex, expensive and useless for the average person, appear to be essential and particularly indispensable when you have experienced a disaster. The ISO 22 301 standard is a complementary way of addressing crisis management and therefore safety. It seemed important to us to share our experience through simple observations made during our certification process, but also by taking as an example a fire that we experienced on our industrial site in France.

Our vulnerability does not necessarily come from our core business. Through this experience, we will try to convince you of the significance of an ISO 22 301 certification process, the advantages it offers, far beyond crisis management and the continuity of a company's activity. The process of this approach allows us to see safety from another angle, an angle that complements the other ways of analysing risk situations specific to our business.

It is therefore a question of showing you as a matter of course, the profound link between safety and business.

III - The foundations of compagnies

To start we will look at some general observations we are making and that most of us have been thinking about.

We all know that a company in good economic health achieves very good safety results. Some questions arise:

- Do good safety results make good economic results?
- Is it the other way around?
- Is it related to the company's culture, which would be formed of employees involved in the overall result?
- Is it due to chance?
- Is it a question of investment?
- ...

There is certainly no single answer to these types of questions, but what is obvious is that the link between business and safety exists.

-We also know that a transversal operation is more efficient than a silo operation. In the case of the latter, interfaces are lacking and limit coherence and efficiency. Cross-functionality brings fluidity to systems. However, safety is often still treated in isolation from trade, accounting, productivity... As proof, companies are organized into services and safety is a so-called functional service and therefore outside all the company's productive flows.

-We also note that safety is not an end in itself, unlike trade or production, which animates management committees more energetically. The requirements sometimes even seem contradictory. We are far from a global view of the company while we recognize that each entity taken separately cannot be efficient.

-We also know that everyone's involvement and motivation depend on the value they bring to the company and the way it is recognised. Thus, a production operator will instinctively make it a point of honour to exceed his level of productivity to the detriment of everything else. He is conditioned to respond to his understanding of his role within the company. Let's imagine a quality controller as a producer. He will be conditioned to make the best products in the first place. Let's imagine a manager as a producer. He will aim

to ensure the sustainability of his company. His vision is business oriented and therefore customer oriented. His motivation is largely to succeed in all areas (productivity, quality, safety...) without distinction.

The link between these 4 examples is that there can be no involvement in the overall efficiency of the company if our vision is limited to what we understand about our function and our role in the company. Even if it requires experts in each field, motivation can only be optimal if the vision is global, if the challenges and objectives are common and shared.

In short, safety is the means to achieve a more global goal, and to be followed, this goal must make sense for all in the same way. Contrary to what we may think, it must not be summed up at the first level of Maslow's pyramid, "the instinct of survival". In the company, we are in a particular environment and the goal we pursue must depend on it.

IV - The structuring side of ISO 22 301

Let us now make the link with ISO 22 301 and its interest.

ISO 22 301 is a standard applicable to any type of organization, large or small, and regardless of its sector of activity. It is of particular interest to organizations operating in high-risk environments, such as services, finance, industry, transport, telecommunications and agri-food production, or in areas where business continuity is essential, such as public services.

It is a transversal approach that involves all the trades of a company without distinction. All joined together around the continuity of the company in the event of a disaster. It is a question of joining forces to establish how to restore nominal operation after a failure of the value-added creation system in all circumstances.

Like all ISO approaches, it is intended to be structuring, prior to any event in order to prepare for the worst.

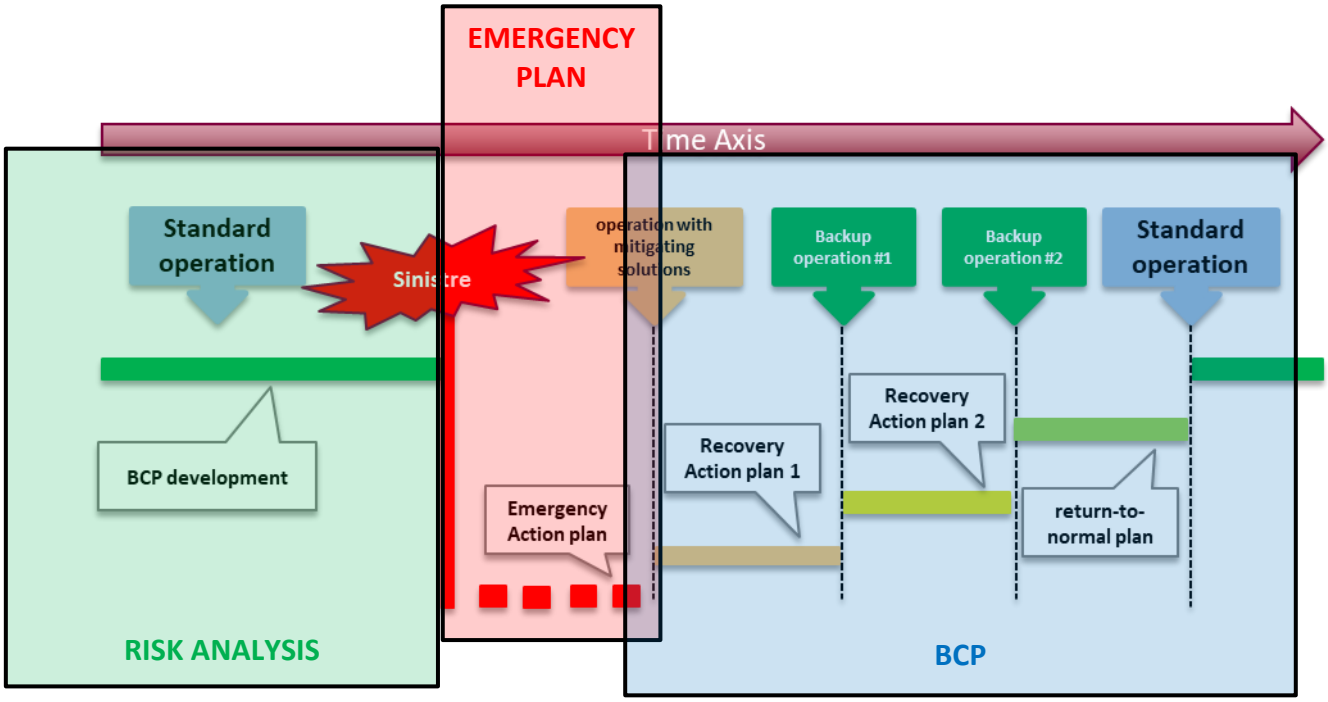
To maintain their activities, organizations take all necessary precautions to reduce the risk of major accidents, which are extremely disruptive to their activities. All around the same questions:

- What about the post-disaster situation from an operational point of view?
- How quickly can we return to a nominal service rhythm for our customers?
- What potential loss for the company?
- How can we limit these losses?
- But as a result, what are our vulnerabilities?

These questions lead to addressing vulnerabilities from a different perspective than the traditional safety angle.

Have you done the exercise of measuring the impact of a strike, the failure of a strategic supplier due to an accident, for example, a suspension of authorization of production, a major power outage, etc.? What would be the impact on your company's business? What would be the impact on the level of safety? We can quite imagine for each of these cases, a loss of confidence, a concern of employees that could lead to loss of vigilance, demotivation, accidents... The construction of a continuity plan leads you to think in this direction.

Here is the logical course of a continuity plan after a disaster:



The traditional risk analysis makes it possible to consolidate the operation in nominal mode. Contingency plans are used to manage claims in the event of major accidents. The BCP is used to prepare the steps to return to nominal mode.

The construction of the BCP requires a comprehensive vulnerability analysis. They are of several kinds:

- Structure & Organisation
- Human Resources
- Information System
- Suppliers
- Subcontractors

- Environment
- Utilities
- Activities (industrial, logistics, storage...)
- ...

As the spectrum is wider than that covered by a Hazop analysis for example, other scenarios appear as critical: attacks, computer attacks, strikes, stock market prices, loss of skills... The construction of the BCP is deterministic. The first step is to reduce the risks, then to consider the recovery steps for each scenario, to evaluate the risks (economic, safety, image...) and to determine the best solution to go through each step until the nominal operation is reached with a high level of control.

The primary purpose of the continuity plan is therefore very economic, but it requires a global analysis that will inevitably integrate safety elements in the risk reduction phases beforehand but also in the stages of return to nominal mode in order to avoid amplifying the initial disaster.

It is also an agile, iterative process. Companies and their environment are constantly changing: retirement, hiring, new suppliers, new subcontracting contracts, equipment changes, to name a few. The BCP requires regular work to maintain its level of effectiveness. The fear of business loss is pushing in this direction. This is, among other things, the starting point for the resumption of safety analyses. It legitimizes the evolution of practices and even investments. It organizes and gives meaning to changes and makes change management more fluid.

V - ISO 22 301, a powerful cross-functional management tool

It is therefore a powerful cross-functional management tool. It is not limited to one sector of activity; it is therefore shared. It brings us together around what motivates us all: to continue the business! Safety is no longer a burden nor an impediment. It's a way to protect the business.

Finally, the Business Continuity Plan brings together the elements necessary to deal with disruptive situations. A regular update is necessary as the scenarios and the company's environment evolve.

Operational documents allow managers to deploy the plan if necessary. A BCP is effective if it is opened very regularly (several times a year) to be used or reviewed because all companies are very often confronted with potentially disruptive events.

This approach therefore makes it possible to safeguard the company's sustainability as a priority, but also:

- Obtain a better understanding of your organization
- Generate agility in the face of potentially disruptive situations

- Identify the impact of operational disruptions and determine critical improvements to be implemented
- Encourage collaboration between the different teams
- Improve the company's overall level of safety through risk reduction research
- Demonstrate the company's commitment to stakeholders (administration, customers, etc.)

Finally, we wanted to share a concrete, real life situation that led us to launch a BCP in our company.

On 1st October 2016, the EPC-France production plant experienced an electrical fire in a product packaging storage warehouse. This fire deprived the industrial site in a few hours of its utilities, the computer network necessary to monitor the traceability of the products manufactured (mandatory European standard), 95% of the packaging products necessary for the manufacture of emulsion cartridges and significantly damaged the main access road to the explosive storage area.

This scenario had been the subject of a prior study. This was used to trigger measures allowing a resumption of activity in less than 48 hours at 60% of its capacity and then 100% in 96 hours.

There was no impact on the company's business. The various stages of the recovery were carried out safely with the assistance of all the company's departments in accordance with the BCP.

We are aware that the absence of BCPs would likely have reduced control of the recovery phase.
2 major elements determine the success of a BCP approach:

- The commitment of the General Management, which must be perceptible on a daily basis.
- Support by a competent specialized company whose goal is not to achieve certification but to integrate with the teams the validity of the method and the issues at stake.

VI – Conclusions

This Paper entitled “How ISO 22 301 certification can improve the safety performance of a company” has explained what has been done to improve safety through a normative approach.

The EPC Groupe has understood the challenges of such an approach and is developing certification according to a 5-year program established with its subsidiaries. Understanding that this is a complementary method that allows us to see safety from a different perspective is essential. Certification procedures can sometimes seem cumbersome and energy consuming. This

brings together the company's organizations around the same objective of sustainability. We have had the opportunity to test this method in a disaster situation. It is well-founded and effective. There is no better school than experience to authenticate the expected results.

VII - Take Home Message

Safety analysis from continuity angle
This management tool brings us together around what motivates us all: to continue the business! Safety is no longer a burden nor an impediment.

VIII - References

Standard ISO 22 301