

CPI BIENNIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE PROVIDES INNOVATION, INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION

A plethora of professionals from many different disciplines left delegates at the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) Biennial Health and Safety Conference better informed and ready to challenge the status quo.

On 20 June, the two-day event kicked off with a series of seminars under the title 'Bringing Industry Together'. Topics included opportunities and challenges for Paper Packaging, Secondary Material Markets, Water Resilience and Reducing Fire Risks.



“The fear for the unknown makes you blind for new opportunities” warned Annita Westenbroek, Director Innovations, Royal Association of Dutch Paper and Board Industries as she delivered the Keynote Address on 20 June ‘Overcoming Barriers to Innovation’. Annita explained the importance of removing implementation hurdles, which could include the culture of a business where employees don’t feel empowered to move forward.

Andrew Large, CPI Director General, delivered the closing address on day one where he told delegates that “Today, the UK’s Paper-based Industries are issuing a challenge to the new Government. We are willing and able to contribute to economic and employment growth across all of the UK - BUT, we need to work with the Government to secure the right support to be able to play that role to our fullest extent.”

Putting HEALTH into Safety

‘Putting HEALTH into Safety’ was the title of day two of the conference, with delegates able to choose to attend a mixture of themed sessions. These sessions were led by senior representatives from organisations involved with, or dealing with similar issues to those faced by, the Paper-based Industries. Several sessions involved officers from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

“Managers need to understand the basics of mental health” said Dame Carol Black in her Health and Wellbeing keynote address on 21 June, as she explained the importance of going beyond existing health and safety legislation to embrace general physical and mental health, wellbeing and engagement, as factors essential to a healthy workforce.



Susan Gee, Employee Health & Wellbeing Manager at Yorkshire Water, addressed delegates on the subject of 'Employee Wellbeing and Managing Long Term Sickness – The Business Case'. Susan explained that employers need to adopt a holistic approach to managing health and wellbeing. This includes being proactive, with a renewed focus on health issues; and being effective at managing an employees' return to work after a period of absence.



In the Plenary Session, Dr Megan Reitz, Professor of Leadership and Dialogue at Ashridge Education, asked the audience a series of questions about their behaviour in work and home environments. In a thought provoking presentation, entitled 'Pay Attention. Mindful Leadership in a Complex World', delegates were introduced to Mindfulness Practice and the positive impact that it can have on capacities such as the ability to collaborate, thrive amidst complexity, and remain personally resilient.

Engagement and Participation was Key

Throughout the two days the emphasis was on engaging with delegates, enabling expert speakers to not only provide high level information, but also get a real sense of issues faced by CPI Member companies, and deliver hints, tips and guidance.

Richard Coward, CPI Vice President, gave the closing address on day two, 'Health and Safety – Implementing the PABIAC Strategy'.

Richard said: "As responsible employers, we have a moral duty to ensure the health and wellbeing of our employees, and that workers go home safely at the end of every day. The Government has acted to reinforce that duty by ensuring that the fines paid after an incident are designed to be greater than the upfront costs of good health and safety. Multi-million pound fines are not uncommon and becoming the norm."

"So, we must rise to the challenge and work together, with our employees, the trade unions, and with the HSE to ensure that our workplaces are as safe as they can be. As a key part of that strategy I would like to publicly restate CPI's commitment to PABIAC, and to the PABIAC strategy 2015 to 2019."

In summing up this year's event, Andrew Braund, CPI Director of Health and Safety said: "In a break from the traditional one day conference which focused specifically on health and safety, the additional series of seminars successfully brought industry together by showcasing the many issues that CPI deal with on behalf of its Members and the UK's Paper-based Industries. I was delighted with the support from industry and its commitment in working together to achieving the objectives set out in the PABIAC strategy, with a renewed focus on health and wellbeing."