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Introduction of behavioural based safety

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Introduction of behavioural based safety

Abstract

Behavioural Based Safety in the workplace is the application of industrial or organisational psychology to promote health and safety (1). Our own complexities makes us all fallible, whether it be from the fact we love to push the boundaries, challenge authority, cognitive failures, memory lapse, processing errors or personal health related problems, we make mistakes (2). Generally thought as a species we do try to do the right thing, co-operate with one another, and don't go out of our way to be disobedient or want to cause physical harm or damage. Behavioural Based Safety can be said to be a scientific attempt to both understand the relationship between human nature and work, and a mechanism to improve this relationship where necessary...

Keywords

safety, behavioural, introduction

Disciplines

Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Annual Conference

21 November 2003

Venue: Rydges Canberra

Introduction of Behavioural Based Safety

by Ian Price

Abstract

Behavioural Based Safety in the workplace is the application of industrial or organisational psychology to promote health and safety (1).

Our own complexities makes us all fallible, whether it be from the fact we love to push the boundaries, challenge authority, cognitive failures, memory lapse, processing errors or personal health related problems, we make mistakes (2). Generally thought as a species we do try to do the right thing, co-operate with one another, and don't go out of our way to be disobedient or want to cause physical harm or damage.

Behavioural Based Safety can be said to be a scientific attempt to both understand the relationship between human nature and work, and a mechanism to improve this relationship where necessary.

Rather than being a fad that has come along and been embraced by leading organisations or those seeking a trendy catch phrase to apply, it is more a scientific approach to understanding why people do the things they do. The methodology is simply once an organisation has clearly identified their aims and objectives, core business activities, and any targets to be achieved, a BBS program calls for the following;

- Measure and understand current OHS performance levels
- Compare current performance levels against predetermined targets
- Gain Executive support for need to improve performance
- Introduce KPI's for Executives and Managers
- Gain workforce support for improved OHS performance (incentive scheme, KPI's, personal liability)
- Identify Critical/Desirable and Non-Desirable Behaviours through a workforce consultative process
- Development of an observation tool to note observed behaviours
- Training of in-house observers in the use of tool
- Conduct field based observation of behaviours
- Analysis of field data
- Debrief on findings to shareholders
- Gain agreement through consultation for enhancement and behaviour modification programs
- Develop mentoring scheme to promote critical/desirable behaviours and eliminate non-desirable behaviours
- Measurement changes and applied continuous improvement

Footnotes:

- (1) Matthews. G.A, Behavioural Based Safety, Coaching and Observation, Occupational Health and Safety News, 9/1999
- (2) Geller. E.S, The Psychology of Safety, How to improve behaviours and attitudes on the job (1998) CRC Press, USA.

This approach is a considerable move away from the past where we attempted to deliver OHS by way of engineering, education and enforcement. It is a move towards “ergonomics, empowerment and evaluation” (3).

The benefits and negatives associated with the introduction of Behavioural Based Safety is very much dependant upon your intended application of the field based data. A “no blame approach” will most certainly assist an organisation with the introduction of a behaviour modification scheme.

No doubt we are all familiar with situations where the worker and witnesses close up when asked for details surrounding an incident because they are fearful of the repercussion. A “witch-hunt” is an expression that comes to mind when one thinks what might be going through the mind of worker when being interviewed by the employer or statutory authority. How many of us what to voluntarily tell a police officer they had just been speeding?

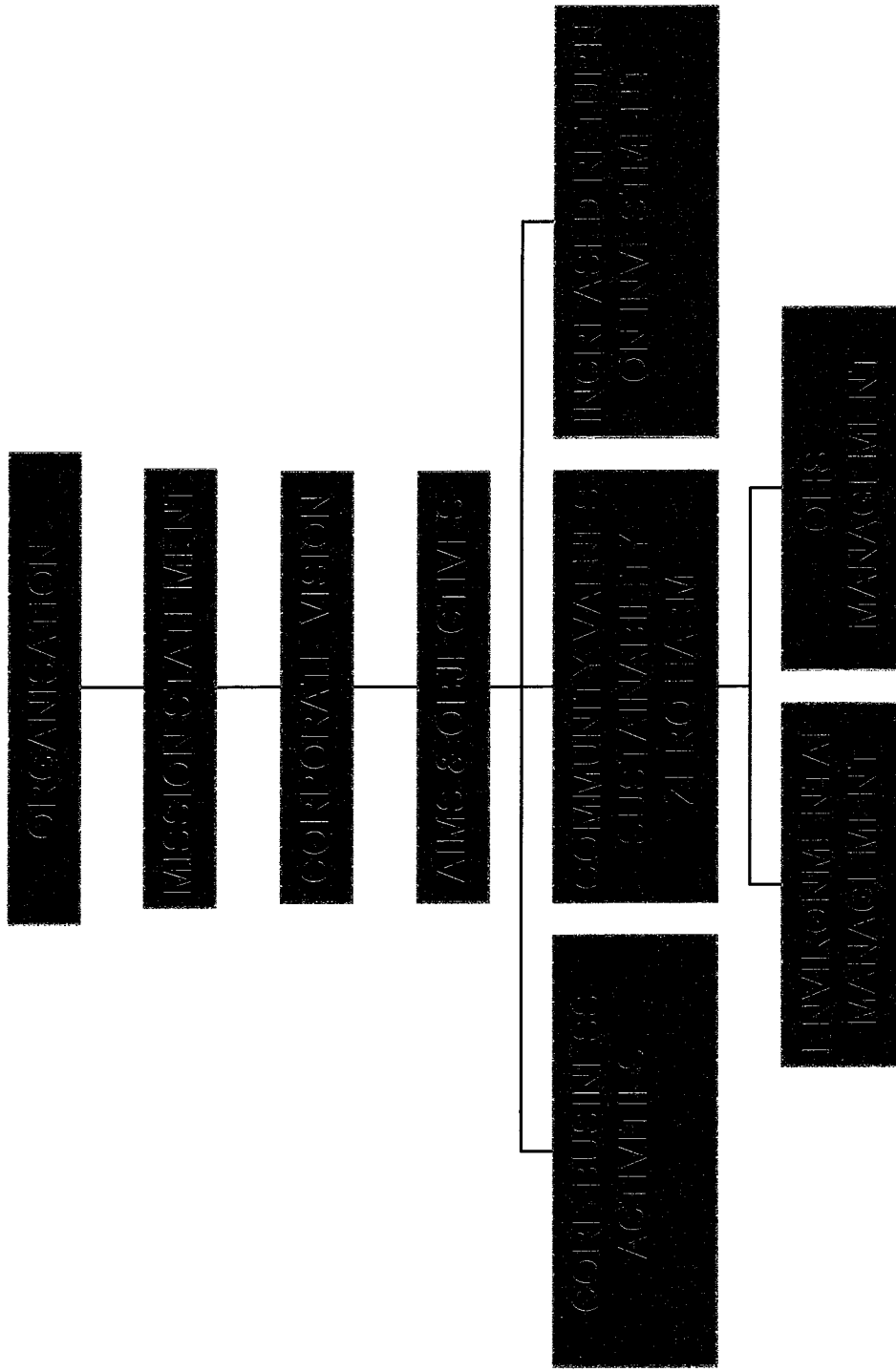
It takes somewhat of a leap in faith by an employer to commit to a “no blame culture” so they may get to the real cause of accidents, and it will take another leap of faith on the part of employees to trust that the employer has really introduced a “no blame culture”.

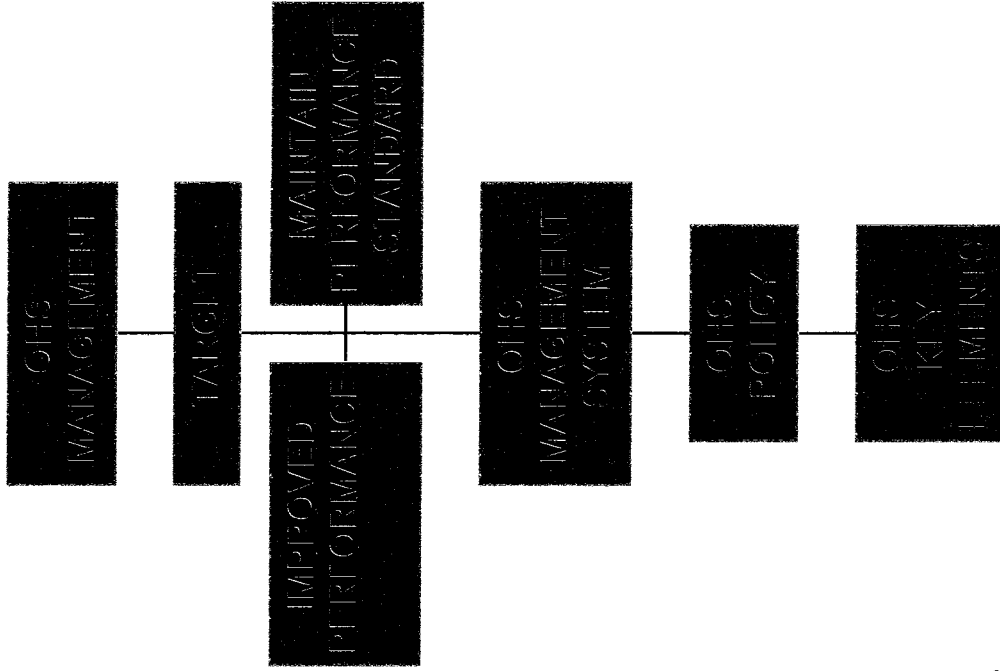
The recent introduction of risk management and consultative legislation in Australia (4&5) provides an opportunity to move towards a no blame culture, at least in the instance of a first offence. This type of legislation gives credence to the principles that workplace health and safety can only ever work where there is recognition of shared ownership of responsibility and accountability.

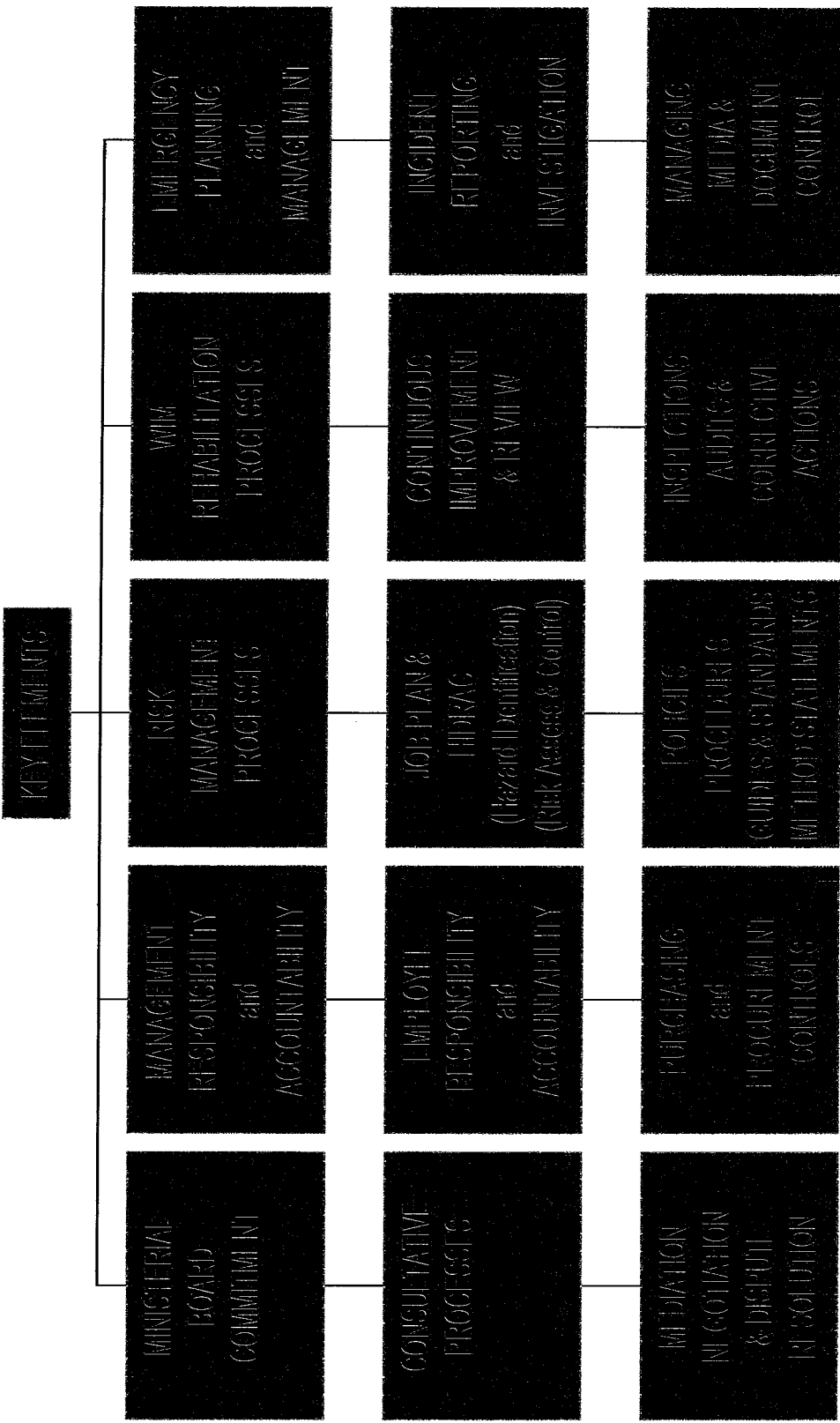
Footnote:

- (3) Geller. E.S, *The Psychology of Safety, How to improve behaviours and attitudes on the job* (1998) CRC Press, USA
- (4) NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, NSW Government Publishing Service, Sydney NSW
- (5) NSW Occupational health and Safety Regulation 2001, NSW Government Publishing Service, Sydney NSW.

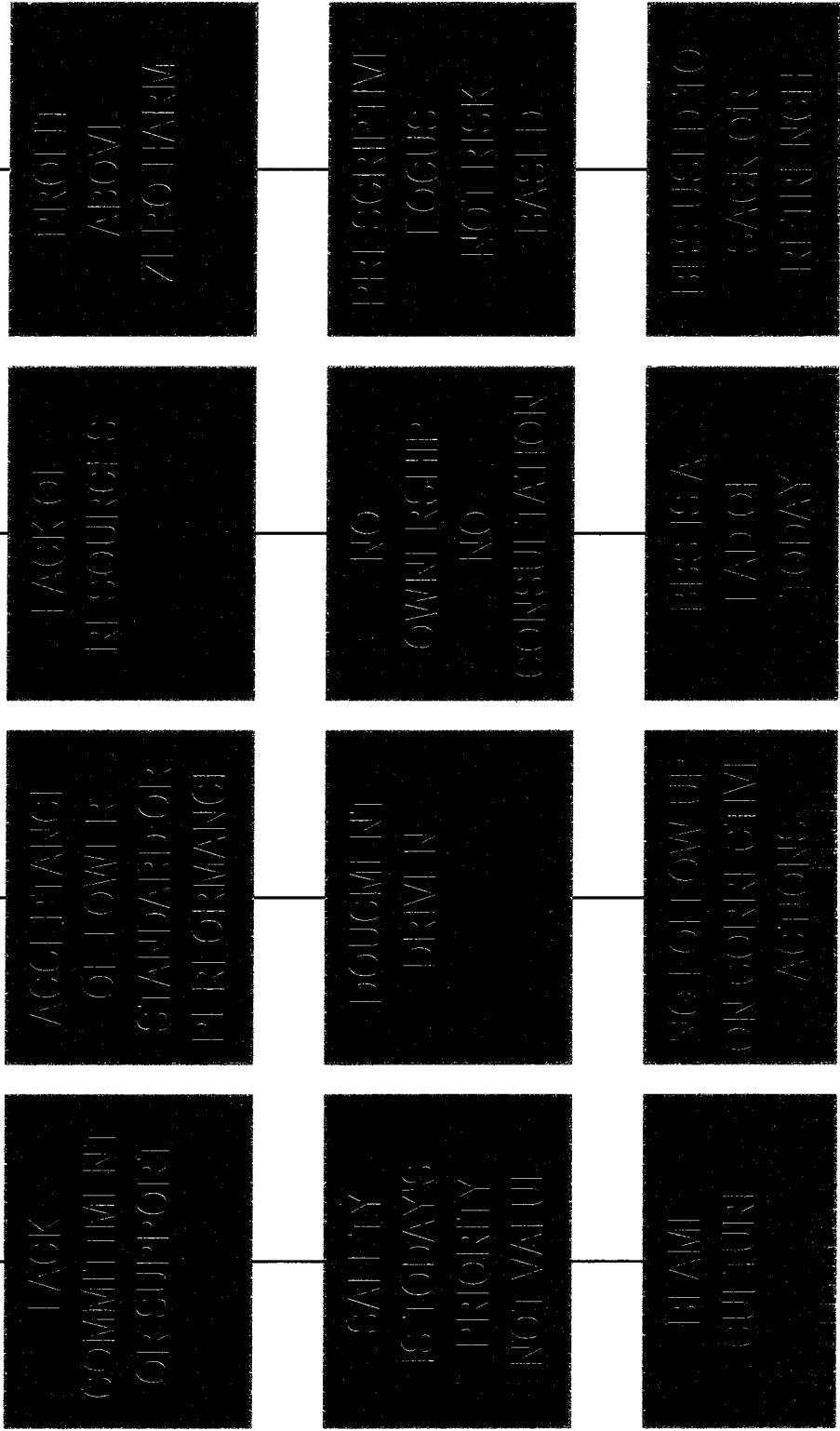
Behavioural Based Safety

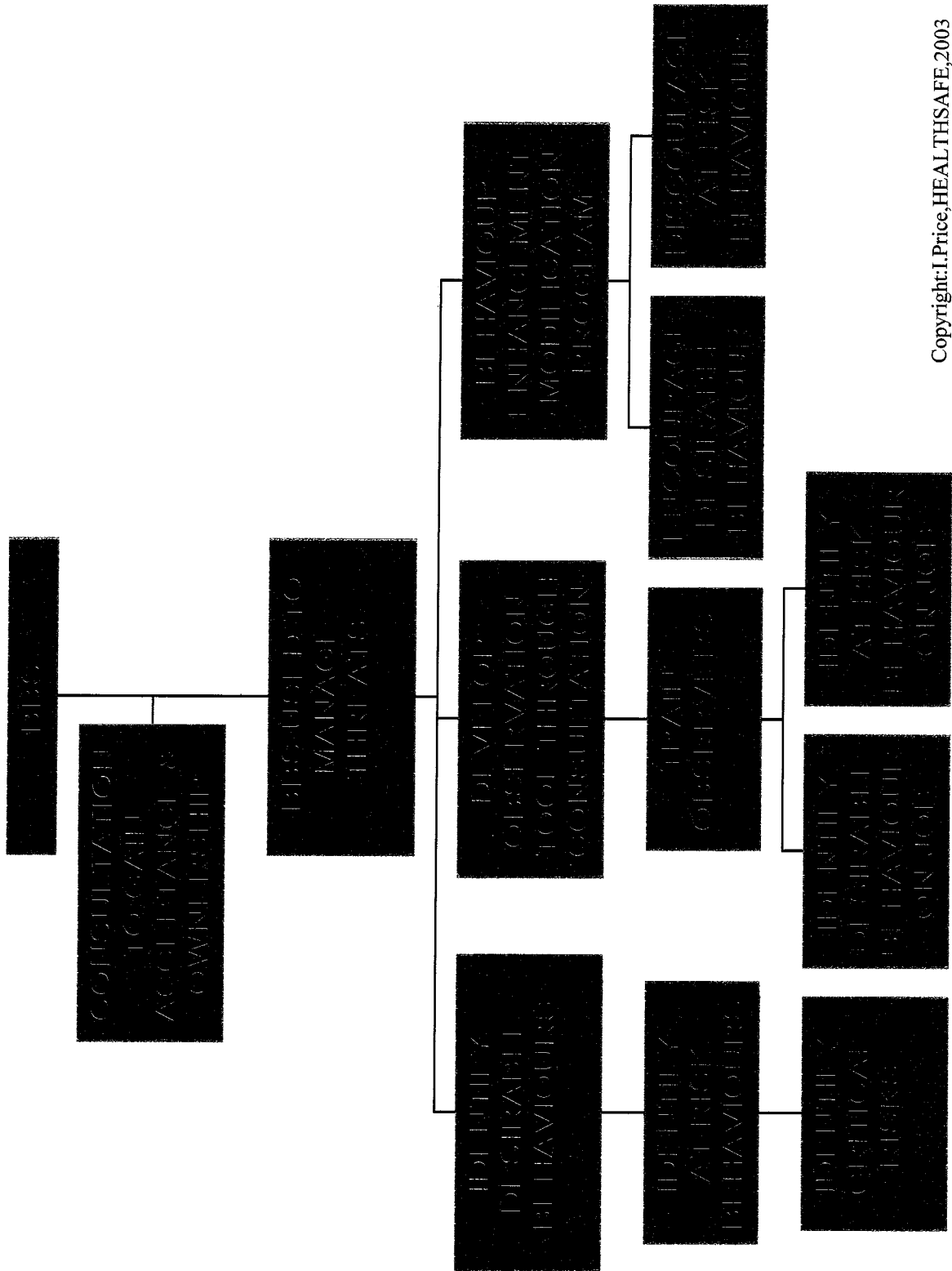


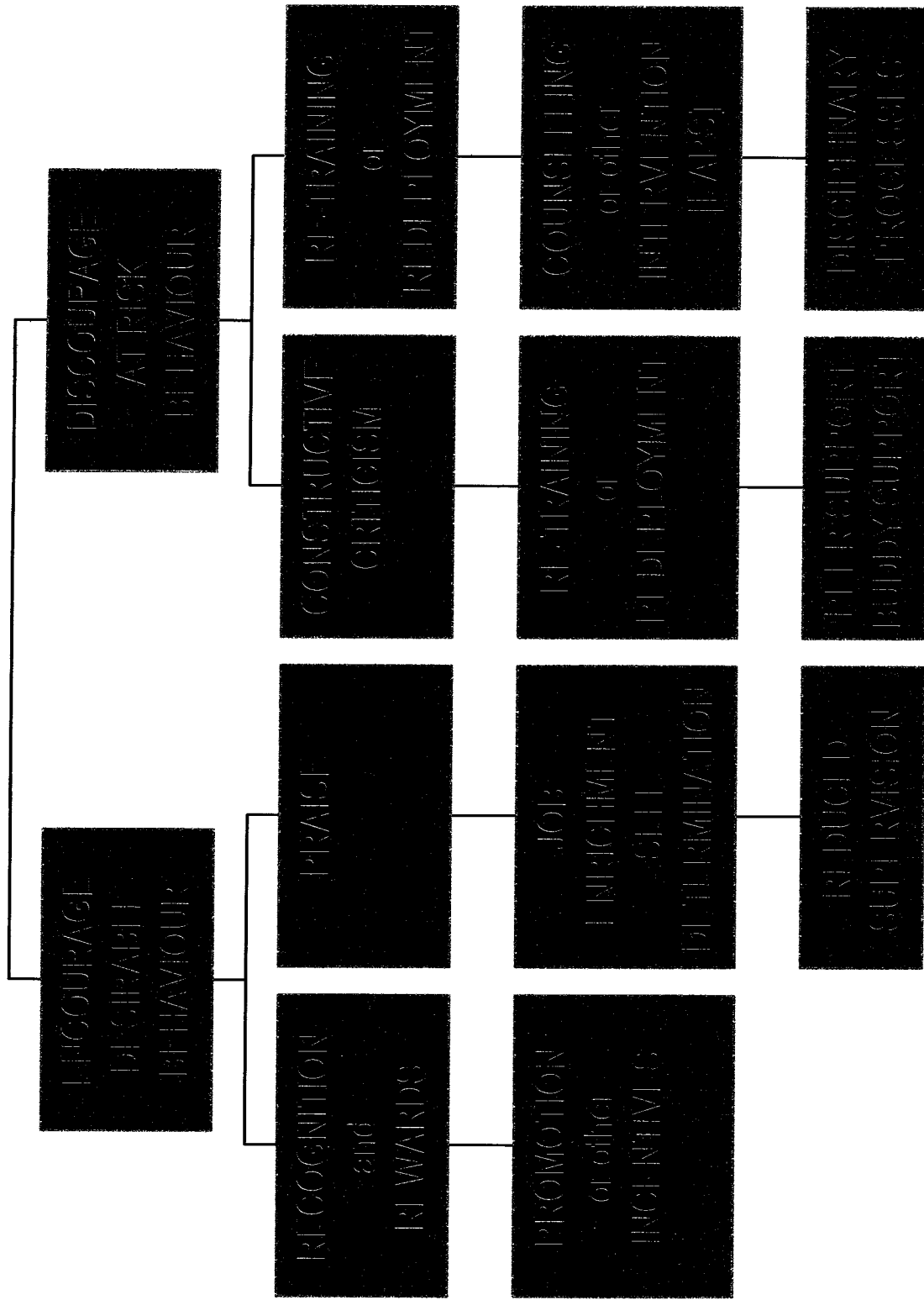


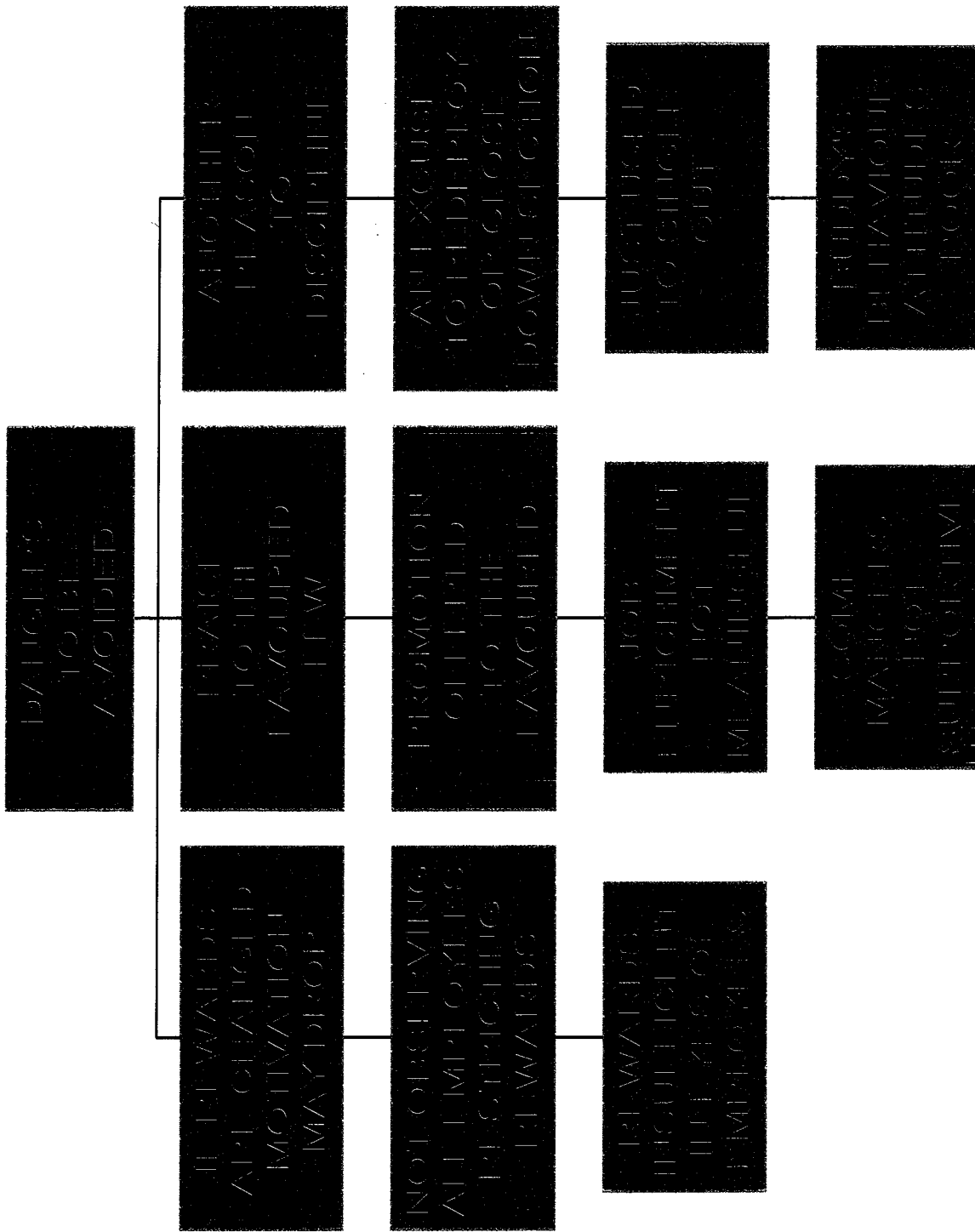


THREATS









BBS OBSERVATION TOOL

Date:	Time:	Job Task and Location	Observed Desirable Behaviour	Observed Non-Desirable Behaviour	Duration	Consequence or Impact	Management Response (praise/discipline)	Comments

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