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Mulling over what I should write about for this column I thought I might take the time and space to discuss the merger of the Petroleum Safety Council (PSC) and the Petroleum Industry Training Services (PITS) into Enform.

A number of the Oil and Gas Associations worked with CAPP last year to create a Public Relations Course as part of their Stewardship Program. The course ended up being created through PITS and is an excellent 2-Day training protocol for VP's, Management and Front Line people that have to deal with the public and other stakeholders.

The interesting thing that came out of this was the understanding of a very strong bias that PITS was strictly a field staff training institute and white collar types were more likely to look to universities or colleges for further training requirements. This is in fact may be the case of many of the readership so I hope you will take a few minutes to read about what Enform is and is not.

PITS has been around since the late 1940's – shortly after the original Leduc No. 1 Well in 1947. PITS over the years certainly started as a smaller version of what it is today and evolved and developed over the years.

PITS, in its final days before the merger into Enform, was a vibrant training arm of the Oil and Gas Industry. It was an entity controlled by the six (6) Oil and Gas Trade Associations, CAPP, CAGC, CAODC, CEPA, PSAC, an SEPAC. A large number of its courses were directed at the field level positions however we are seeing a transition into the Executive training and certainly the CAPP led Public Relations Course was a step in this new direction.

The PSC was originally created in the mid 1990's out of the recommendations of UPITFOS (Upstream Petroleum Industry Task Force On Safety). It gave the Petroleum Industry a more centralized view on safety. It became the housing mechanisms for IRP's (Industry Recognized Practices) and as well a centralized discussion forum for all the Western Provinces' OHS and WCB components along with the Oil Industry.

It was natural therefore that last year the six Associations felt it was beneficial to roll the two organizations together and create the new entity of Enform. Enform looks to build on the synergies that go hand and hand with Health Issues and Training Issues. Other industries looked upon the models of PITS and PSC with envy – natural clearing houses for issues that fell under their purview. Today we have the greater advantage of having one organization that will be greater than the sum of its parts – Driven by Industry, Respected by Governments – it is truly a model that leads the likes of its kind in this country and around the world.

Enform is not without its challenges. As the Oil and Gas Industry is driven more and more into the public limelight, we need to find positive role models for advocacy. Oil and Gas becomes seen as Big Oil and in the view of the media and the public starts to have a very negative persona. In some fashion the Associations look to Enform to be somewhat

more politically driven – not in the manner of issues specific to our individual mandates but rather on cross Industry issues such as Driving Safety, Drug and Alcohol Testing as it relates to the Worksite and some measure of harmonization of First Aid Training Standards across the jurisdictions to mention a few. These are all long term issues and much like the Seatbelt issue or the Smoking issue will take years to resolve however a gentle push over time generally causes even the largest barriers to dislodge.

Enform is in the process of finding itself. Two separate organizations coming together always struggle with the merge of cultures. There is a natural tendency to have the entities operate in silos however I suspect this will fall away with time.

Enform has challenges with marketing itself in terms of determining who it is itself and who its clients are. It needs to branch out from thinking its students are its only clients. And finally it has future roles that may be beneficial. Our industry lacks a clear spokesperson on the Environment – perhaps that is a role an Enform could grow into. Clearly the Associations face the same challenges with the media and the public when it is perceived that Big Oil is talking only through the Trade Associations.

We, as Trade Associations, never get too hung up on the final goal as it is important to keep the concept in mind and recognize the path to the end is likely very windy with many detours.

From the Thursday Files:

Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much.

- Robert Greeleaf