

# Beyond the bottom line

Recently, an important business-recognition award program was inaugurated in Chicago. The award honors companies that show exemplary leadership and operational excellence in the areas of workplace safety, occupational health and responsible environmental management. The winning company must also demonstrate strong productivity gains and leading financial and profit performance.

The award is international in scope and will be given annually by the National Safety Council (NSC) in partnership with Exxon-Mobil. The NSC is a non profit organization chartered by the U.S. Congress as an advocate for safety, health and the environment (SH&E).

Winners will be selected by a panel of 40 experts and leaders in business, education, safety, health and the environment. They will represent all regions of the world as well as the perspectives of management, labor, academia and government.

We believe that most people and the best companies place a high value on how well companies do in SH&E. Companies that lead in these dimensions of corporate performance deserve a strong measure of favorable public recognition.

At the same time, the award is designed to make the important point that business excellence in safety, health and environmental management establishes a strong foundation that is vital to achieving leadership returns for investors.

There are two major reasons that financial success and SH&E excellence are com-

plementary:

First, it can be costly to businesses if workers are injured or have serious health problems. It can also be expensive if a company's business operations harm the environment, since remediation and compensation costs can be high.

More subtle but also much more important are the links among SH&E best practices, strong management systems integrated with such practices and business performance overall. A company that approaches its business by setting high SH&E performance expectations and rigorously applying management systems to ensure that it meets those expectations is also likely to be a well-run company that is going to do well in the marketplace and for its shareholders.

That's why, in case after case, we see linkages among business processes, performance measurements, productivity improvements, product quality, industry leadership and financial success. All of these are interrelated and reflect a culture of excellence within a company that leads to superior results in most aspects of performance.

That's also why we believe this new safety, health, environment *and* business-performance award represents a truly comprehensive indicator of the quality of its recipients, as contributors to employees, society at large and shareholders. Those who are recognized as winners can be proud indeed.

Alan C. McMillan

*President, National Safety Council*

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## Linking safety, health and environment with business performance

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