



Two machine safety inspectors relate their experiences...

In the first few minutes of a professional inspection, Marc Bellerive, Eng., and Pierre Lachance, Eng., sometimes sense that the members with whom they are meeting are a bit nervous. But by explaining the goal of the meeting to these members, they put them at ease and set the tone for a constructive and pleasant conversation.

INSPECTIONS FOCUSED MORE ON COMPETENCIES

Marc Bellerive and Pierre Lachance are part of the new team of practice supervision inspectors created by the OIQ in recent years. Previously, inspectors would specifically check for compliance even though they did not necessarily have professional experience in the field of the engineer who was being inspected. But this approach has changed quite a bit!

As a result, these two inspectors carry out machine safety inspections. Their objectives: guide engineers in developing their competencies and, when shortcomings are observed, determine which improvements need to be made.

And they are perfectly placed to fulfill their responsibilities, because between them they have nearly 50 years of engineering experience in various industries, where the safety of machines is a priority issue. Even now, they still make efforts to deepen their knowledge.

THE SAME LANGUAGE

Inspected members appreciate this considerable knowledge and even benefit from it. "We speak the same language," explains Pierre Lachance. "Since I introduce myself at the beginning, members know that I understand their field of practice. They are very cooperative."

"Most are proud to talk to me about their projects," adds Marc Bellerive. "Of course, one of my duties is to check if something isn't being done according to the standards; but most often, engineers see my visit as an opportunity to improve themselves, and not as a way for us to point out their faults."

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Each inspector does more than a hundred inspections per year. "The meetings go well," reckons Pierre Lachance. "The engineers understand the importance of being questioned about their practices."

"Inspected members show me the files they are working on and explain their projects," says Marc Bellerive. "I ask them questions to get to the heart of the matter and see if they are acting professionally."

FOR A PRACTICE AIMED AT EXCELLENCE

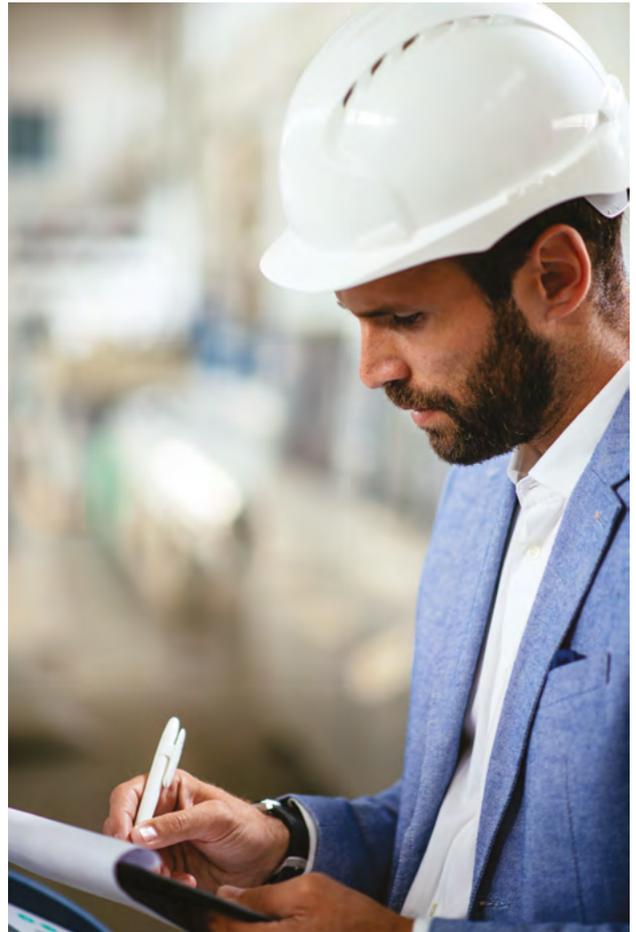
"In the last twenty years, engineering practice has changed a great deal in the field of machine safety, and these engineers are increasingly aware of the importance of industrial safety," notes Marc Bellerive. "But some still act intuitively, when rigor is extremely important. You have to complete risk analyses, record and properly authenticate documents, keep your calculations..."

Pierre Lachance agrees wholeheartedly: "Risk analyses are not always well structured or documented. Specific evidence is sometimes lacking in the documentation. For example, I don't always find proof that the actions were actually carried out or verified."

Thanks to their professional experience, the inspectors can propose potential solutions for correcting these deficiencies. This is how the OIQ makes sure that engineers who practice in the field of machine safety are acting in compliance with the laws, regulations and standards that govern this field.

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

The inspectors rely on their know-how and the best practices they have observed in the past to make



suggestions, while making very sure that they do not interfere with a project.

"Our role is not to provide technical advice, but rather to evaluate an engineer's professional practice," stresses Pierre Lachance. "We try to help and suggest user-friendly tools to improve their practice."

AN EFFECTIVE AND REWARDING JOB

At the end of the meetings, the inspectors inform the members of what they will write in their report. "Depending on the case, we explain what their deficiencies are and why we consider them deficiencies; we summarize the recommendations we will make and the inspected engineers are generally very accepting of our evaluation," continues Pierre Lachance.

And the members, what do they think of professional inspection? In a voluntary online survey completed after their inspections, 95% of respondents claim to be satisfied with the process and state that it helped them improve their practice. That is why it is comes as no surprise that inspectors Bellerive and Lachance feel rewarded by their work! ◀