

# Chevron Phillips Chemical Company Significantly Changed Their Mega Project Safety Culture Resulting in the Fastest Start Up

## Ron Corn

Senior Vice President of Petrochemicals

**Client:** Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP

**Industry:** Petrochemicals

**Location:** Texas, USA

**Solution:** Transform the projects safety culture by mobilizing leadership at all organizational levels.

**Results:** In a short period of time we saw a significant change in our safety culture at our project site. Going from a project Recordable Incident Rate that was nearly reaching 1 to 0.1. During Start-up we had no recordable incidents or process incidents and achieved the fastest start up to full rate in the technology contractor's history.



**“We needed to address a very serious safety problem.”**

## Client Background

Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP constructs a \$6 billion ethane cracker and ethylene derivatives facilities in the United States Gulf Coast region as part of a Joint Venture. The facility has an annual capacity of 1.5 million tons per year and is the largest and most energy efficient ethane cracker in the world. Ron Corn, Senior Vice President of petrochemicals for Chevron Phillips Chemical (CPChem) tells us how JMJ helped the company improve its performance on the JGC/Construction Contractor Joint Venture ethane cracker project.

“JMJ was already working on the U.S. Gulf Coast petrochemicals project in partnership with the project team in two areas - **High Performance Team Building and Incident and Injury-Free™ (IIF™)**. However, we recognized we still needed to do more with *IIF* and on basic leadership principles. “We needed a lot of help, particularly at the first line supervisor level and we could see the various train-the-trainer and four-hour orientation sessions needed follow up. We recognised you can't just throw some PowerPoint slides at workers on their first day on the job and then not reinforce it, or use the same concepts in the field.

“ It became a more positive site with a positive morale when you had the basic tenets of leadership fully in place being role-modelled by the vast majority of supervisors. ”

## Transforming our Safety Culture

“The *IIF* process on the cracker project was not as effective as my colleagues had experienced previously with JMJ and we needed to address a very serious safety problem we had at the site. We had a very high rise in recordable incidents starting in 2015 and our organization had its first ever fatality which hit us hard. It certainly galvanized the site to change its approach and create a shift in the safety culture.

“Chevron Phillips Chemical, as the owner, and the JCG/construction contractor/JCG joint venture (EPC and construction contractor), decided to ask JMJ to help us both really transform the site into a fully embedded *IIF* culture. “The program was led by the construction management and was always reinforced by the first line and second line supervisors in the field. That was critical.

“We focused on getting everybody to align around a common language and direction – creating a drum beat. No one was passive, we all owned it and we led by example – walking the talk.”

“At the higher levels, we were held accountable for actually doing what we needed to do, and we were allocating the time to make sure the priorities were there when it came to safety as a value. But the real power came in helping the first line supervisors create the work environment that led to safe and productive work in the field. That was the ultimate transformative piece of the puzzle.

## Engaging the Workforce

“It’s all about basic leadership and respecting others. We had to understand how to develop relationships to get worker engagement and ultimately accountability. It was important to demonstrate visible leadership and listening as these are two key elements. We gained a lot of respect for each other.

“The simple act of communicating each day was a lot more powerful than I had anticipated. One example is just eye contact between the workers and the managers. A ‘Good morning’, is one of the things JMJ encouraged us to do at the gate each day. It’s a very simple way to show respect and really harnesses the power of the workforce and gets them to embrace the message of how we want them to go about work.

When I would observe a supervisor leading a safety meeting in the morning they were very clearly following the guidance in the *IIF* training. It showed in how they greeted the workforce; how they got engagement; how they went around their crew for input and how they got people to recite or commit to various things they needed to think about to have a safe day.

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It became very clear they embraced the training, they understood it and truly made their relationships with their teams much better. “It became a more positive site with a positive morale when you had the basic tenets of leadership fully in place being role-modelled by the vast majority of supervisors.”

## Creating a Positive Culture

“When the project was 97% complete, we had to stop work due to hurricane Harvey. We closed the site for 17 days. We were concerned our workers wouldn’t return to the site, having found alternative work. To our delight 99% of our workforce returned, we attributed this to the culture we created onsite, workers wanted to come back. Another sign of our improved culture, we saw a change in how our workers were communicating about our site on blogs and with fellow peers, encouraging them to work on our project.

## Remarkable Results

“While it is difficult to measure every area of success, I think the impact JMJ helped create on a site with around 5,000 project workers plus many additional contractors is pretty remarkable.

“Our OSHA Recordable Incident Rate was approaching 1.0 and during the last 18 months of the project we had far fewer injuries and our recordable incident rate decreased to 0.1. “We also believe there was a positive impact on productivity. We saw improved worker retention; lower absenteeism and the significant improvements in safety.

“JMJ brought us the ability to drive the safety process by helping us positively influence and create a one team approach. Safety coaches in the field understood how they were portraying themselves inside the organization, as well as what was actually required. The general foremen had the ability to convince their crews to own each other, to speak up and genuinely care about their co-workers. Everybody became focused on the right goal and ultimately that was the power of it.

Ron Corn says working with JMJ has been one of the more powerful learnings in his 40-year career, especially seeing a transformation under such challenging circumstances. “16,000 different people worked on the project, with 5,000 workers onsite at one time. You start with very limited experience in first and second line supervisors as well as all the way up the chain. In addition, there was a constant turnover of 100 people a week.

“It was quite remarkable to achieve the change in such a short time (4-6 months). It certainly reinforced the notion I already had about the importance of leadership, especially at the first line supervisor level, as well as making sure senior managers were also focused on safety. That focus was effective. It represents a continuous journey.



Contact us today to learn how we can collaborate together to help transform the way your organization approaches safety, creating a thriving culture and business.

For more information on JMJ visit us at [JMJ.com](http://JMJ.com) or [Contact us](#)

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## JMJ Enabled Us to be Safety Conscious

“JMJ’s role made us more safety conscious. It is just so effective in interacting with workers and building relationships and trust and that certainly helped us get a sense of where the culture was. “We absolutely stuck to walking the talk and were committed to the things that helped us succeed. We simply recognized that doing anything else, other than a consistent approach, would create backsliding or a return to chaos.”

“The JMJ approach provided us daily principles built on a proven leadership approach. This formula gives you a common language to get everybody working in the same direction. In our case, the very remarkable safety improvement won us an award for the most improved safety record.” “Since the project’s start-up it has experienced no Recordable Incidents or Process Incidents. In fact, it was the fastest new cracker in the technical contractor’s history to achieve full rate certification.”

“**Performance** by Design. **Caring** by Choice.<sup>TM</sup> reflects our learning and is our company’s tagline. It speaks to our belief that caring about each other and our work will result in enhanced performance, and this project is a great example of that.”

## Who We Are

JMJ is a global management consulting firm, specializing in business transformation, for the world’s largest energy, manufacturing, construction, logistics and aerospace companies.

For more than 33 years, JMJ has helped clients create breakthroughs in complex business and organizational challenges – including safety, quality and performance.