

## Standard Operating Procedures and Normalization of Deviance

I try to read a broad spectrum of magazines and always find something useful. First, there was a comment by Mark Hoske in *Control Engineering* (July, 2013) entitled "Lessons, opportunities from NASA" describing a presentation by Mike Mullane on the "normalization of deviance." and the catastrophic failure of O-rings on the Shuttle Challenger. Normalization of deviance is a social science term describing changes where abnormal behavior becomes normal. One could look at the United States Congress as a current example. The second article is by Joel Hans is entitled "Barriers to Re-Shoring: A detailed Look" and appeared in *IMPO* (Industrial Maintenance and Plant Operation)(July, 2013). Hans makes the point the existence and preservation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is a critical factor in bringing a manufacturing process back from other countries (a process referred to as reshoring). This article also contains useful comment regarding failure of the American educational system. It seems to me I hear about another recall almost on a weekly basis from companies that have had a long tradition of excellence. Part of the problem is "normalization of deviance" which is fostered by lack of internal training and failure to recognize the importance of SOPs in the training process. My own personal feeling is that companies have lost much experience by the exit, voluntary or involuntary, of experience combined with increased use of internet training. Future success will not be built by maximizing profit but rather by maximizing quality.