

Safety On The EDGE



SAFETY ON THE EDGE

EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026

The Anatomy of Excellence

Common Characteristics of the
2026 Award-Winning Companies:
A Benchmarking Reference for
Self-Improvement

PREPARED FROM THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS
OF THE FIVE 2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Sims Limited • Siemens AG • Siemens Monterrey • WSP Canada • WE Soda

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1. Purpose of This Report

The Safety On The Edge Award for Excellence recognizes companies for demonstrated excellence in safety, measured through a rigorous assessment of upstream organizational processes rather than downstream lagging performance indicators. In 2026, five organizations were recognized: Sims Limited, Siemens AG, Siemens Monterrey, WSP Canada, and WE Soda. Each completed a structured self-assessment across eighteen criteria spanning leadership and culture, risk management and innovation, operational excellence, and performance and continuous improvement, and each was then subject to independent expert evaluation against the same criteria.

This report distills what the winning companies have in common. Its purpose is practical: to give other organizations a reference document for benchmarking their own safety management systems and a roadmap for self-improvement. The patterns described here are not abstractions. Every characteristic is grounded in specific, evidenced practices drawn from the winners' submissions and verified through independent assessment. Where the winners themselves fell short of best in class – and all of them did, somewhere – those gaps are reported with equal candor, because the distance between “very good” and “excellent” is itself one of the most instructive findings of the 2026 awards cycle.

A note on what excellence does not mean. None of the five winners is incident-free. One disclosed ten fatalities in its most recent fiscal year, including eight from occupational disease linked to long-term historical exposures. Another disclosed a serious thermal burn incident that occurred within the evaluation window. A third reported nine high-potential incidents in 2025. What distinguished these companies was not a spotless record but the maturity of their systems, the honesty of their disclosures, and the demonstrable trajectory of improvement. Readers should benchmark against that standard – systemic maturity and transparency – rather than against an imagined perfection that no real operation achieves.

2. The 2026 Winning Cohort

The five winners span remarkably different operating contexts: a global recycler with heavy mobile plant and acquisition-driven growth; one of the world's largest engineering and technology companies operating across 78 countries; a single large manufacturing plant in northern Mexico; a professional services firm whose workforce is largely field-based and hybrid; and a multi-jurisdictional chemical producer spanning Turkish, British and American regulatory regimes. That diversity is precisely what makes their commonalities meaningful. The characteristics described in this report are not artefacts of one industry's regulatory environment – they recur across recycling yards, factory floors, engineering project sites and chemical plants.

Company	Sector	Workforce	Footprint	Assessed Score
Sims Limited	Metal and electronics recycling	Global, multi-site	Global (incl. Australia, NZ, North America)	128/144 (88.9%) – Best in Class
Siemens AG	Global technology and engineering	~300,000 employees	556 locations in 78 countries	113/144 (78%) – Best in Class
Siemens Monterrey	Electrical manufacturing	2,246 employees + 2,233 contractors	Single large plant, Santa Catarina, Mexico	108/144 (75%) – Well Above Average
WSP Canada	Engineering and professional services	12,600 employees	All Canadian provinces and territories	101/144 (70%) – Above Average
WE Soda	Natural soda ash / chemicals	2,341 employees + 750 contractors	US, Turkey and other locations	99/144 (69%) – Above Average

Assessed scores reflect the independent evaluation, which in every case moderated the company's self-assessment against the evidence provided. The maximum achievable score is 144 (eighteen criteria, each scored out of eight on the IADRII maturity model: Intent, Approach, Deployment, Results, Improvement, Integration). The band thresholds are 109–144 for best in class and 73–108 for above average.



3. The Common Characteristics at a Glance

Twelve characteristics recurred across the winning cohort. The remainder of this report examines each in depth, with the specific practices and evidence that earned recognition. Organizations using this document for benchmarking may find it useful to score themselves honestly against each row of this table before reading further.

Common Characteristic	Illustrative Practices Across the Cohort
Visible, sustained leadership commitment	CEO-level field engagement; Commit to Care (1,000+ leaders); Visible Leadership Engagement site visits; Safety Excellence Journey; Health & Safety Strategy 2030
Upstream, leading-indicator measurement	Retirement of lagging KPIs for control-based leading indicators; Work Well-being Score; "High Consequence Accident = 0" commitment KPI; cross-jurisdiction benchmarking (RIDDOR/OSHA/SGK)
Critical control and risk-based systems	Critical Control Verification cycles; mandatory pre-task JSA; permit-to-work governance; LMRA digital pre-task tools; OurWay lifecycle integration
Structured learning from incidents and near-misses	Consequence-based risk matrices; Investigating Differently; two-tier root cause analysis with effectiveness-verified closure; cross-facility lessons networks
Psychosocial risk integrated with physical safety	On-site industrial psychologists (3,000+ interventions/yr); psychological hazards in the corporate risk register; AI well-being assessment; 24/7 assistance platforms
Data, analytics and AI investment	Dedicated safety data analysts; AI camera-based detection; ML hazard categorization; telematics and fatigue monitoring; EHS AI Labs and innovation sprints
Inclusive, competency-based training	Video-led training featuring employees; AI translation; visual standards across literacy levels; disability inclusion; competency verification for high-risk roles
Contractor and supply chain governance	Six-stage contractor evaluation tied to selection decisions; digital prequalification platforms; contractor safety committees; subcontractor requirements manuals
ESG and governance integration	Safety embedded in sustainability frameworks and externally assured reporting; ISO 45001/14001/9001 and COR certification; safety governed alongside financial performance
Strategy cascaded into daily action	Multi-year strategies broken into monthly lead-indicator deliverables; workstream governance; annual plans with target dates and tracked tactics
External openness and transparency	Founding role in the Vision Zero Fund; industry conference leadership; open-door knowledge sharing; transparent disclosure of fatalities, incidents and HiPos
Calibrated, honest self-assessment	Self-scores deliberately below maximum; explicit acknowledgement of gaps; completed improvement planning tied to strategy

4. Leadership Commitment That Is Visible, Personal and Sustained

The single most consistent feature of the winning companies is that safety leadership is enacted rather than declared.

In every submission, senior leaders are physically present in operations, personally engaged in safety conversations, and accountable through mechanisms that measure their behavior rather than merely their intentions.

Sims Limited put more than 1,000 leaders through its Commit to Care program, pairing CEO-level involvement with a Critical Control Verification system in which leaders personally verify that the controls preventing fatal outcomes are present and functioning. WSP Canada runs a formal Visible Leadership Engagement program of site visits structured around meaningful safety discussions, and its CEO and senior leadership include health and safety in all communications, reinforced by a bi-annual all-staff survey that asks directly about psychological safety. WE Soda's Safety Excellence Journey, launched in 2022, is built around senior management field visits and safety observations, supported by eleven dedicated cross-functional teams. Siemens AG governs safety through the same structures that govern financial performance, with company-wide targets monitored through externally reported sustainability disclosures and a quantified Work Well-being Score (84 against a target of 80+) functioning as a leadership accountability metric – something rarely seen at a scale of 300,000 employees.

Two lessons emerge for benchmarking organizations. First, the winners measure leadership engagement: surveys, well-being scores, verification counts and program completion rates convert "commitment" from a slogan into a managed variable. Second, the credibility of leadership commitment was assessed by evaluators through what leaders visibly do – walks, verifications, field conversations – not what their organizations fund. Submissions describing budgets and programs without visible leadership behavior consistently scored lower on this criterion than those describing leaders in the field.



5. Measuring Upstream: Leading Indicators Over Injury Rates

All five winners have moved – some decisively, some progressively – away from managing safety through lagging injury statistics and toward measuring the presence and effectiveness of controls, the volume and quality of reporting, and the health of the organizational processes that precede outcomes. This mirrors the philosophy of the award itself, which deliberately assesses upstream organizational processes.

The most advanced example is Sims Limited, which formally retired lagging indicators as its primary management metrics in favor of seven control-measure-based leading KPIs, embedded in transparent digital dashboards and benchmarked across regions. The evaluators described this framing – measuring control adoption and effectiveness rather than injuries – as best-in-class thinking, and it earned one of the few uncontested maximum scores in the entire 2026 cycle. The shift produced measurable behavior change: reporting volumes improved more than 30% year-on-year in Australia and New Zealand, a sign of growing trust and engagement rather than deteriorating conditions.

WE Soda contributes a complementary innovation: a “High Consequence Accident = 0” commitment indicator that elevates the prevention of serious and fatal outcomes above the management of minor injury rates, alongside an internal benchmarking framework that normalizes performance data across three regulatory systems – the UK’s RIDDOR, the US OSHA regime, and Turkey’s SGK – so that facilities in different jurisdictions can be compared like-for-like. The evaluators singled this out as a sophisticated and rare approach for a multi-jurisdictional operation. Siemens AG demonstrates the long-horizon payoff of disciplined measurement, documenting a 30% LTIFR reduction (0.31 to 0.22) over five years against a stable baseline, while treating that lagging trend as an output to be explained by upstream metrics rather than a target to be managed directly. WSP Canada consolidates its KPIs in Power BI dashboards reviewed in management meetings that drive corrective actions, and Siemens Monterrey operates a global incident reporting platform with automatic stakeholder notification and real-time KPI visibility, externally audited annually for sustainability reporting.

The benchmarking implication is direct: organizations still steering primarily by recordable injury rates are measuring the past. The winners measure the present state of their controls and the leading behaviors – reporting, verification, engagement – that determine the future.

6. Risk-Based Systems Built Around Critical Controls

Beneath the measurement philosophy sits a shared operating architecture: every winner organizes daily work around the identification of the hazards that can kill or seriously harm, and the verification that the controls against those hazards are actually in place at the point of work.

Sims Limited’s Critical Control Verification system is the cohort’s flagship example – a monthly mandatory cycle in which leaders verify critical controls in the field, connected through a closed loop to EHS Standards and training so that what is defined is trained, what is trained is verified, and what is found wanting is corrected through a digital workflow. WE Soda mandates a Job Safety Analysis before any task, decomposing work into individual steps with hazard identification and control determination at each step, supported by Ten Life-Saving Rules, permit-to-work governance, lockout-tagout procedures, and pre-planned rescue arrangements for confined space, work at height and excavation. Siemens AG deploys an LMRA (Last Minute Risk Assessment) Bot – a digital tool supporting structured hazard identification before tasks begin across office, manufacturing, field and remote environments. WSP Canada embeds safety into all six phases of its OurWay project delivery model, from HSE budgeting at project initiation through risk assessment and safety planning, contract review, daily tailgate meetings and field-level risk assessments, to subcontractor monitoring – an approach the evaluators described as one of the most structurally embedded safety-in-design models reviewed.

A philosophical thread is worth highlighting. Sims explicitly describes its journey away from behavior-based safety toward systems-based, human-centered design – illustrated by its decision to pursue 100% physical separation of pedestrians from mobile plant rather than relying on behavioral compliance. Siemens Monterrey articulates a “resilient design mindset” that treats human error as inevitable and designs processes to absorb it without harm, language consistent with contemporary human and organizational performance thinking. The winners, in short, do not primarily ask workers to be more careful; they design and verify systems that remain safe when people are fallible.

7. Disciplined Learning from Incidents and Near-Misses

Every winner operates a structured, organization-wide learning system, and the strongest of them treat near-misses with high potential severity as seriously as actual injuries. Sims Limited's consequence-based risk matrix does exactly this, and its "Investigating Differently" methodology - which replaced conventional ICAM and TapRoot approaches - involves site personnel and contractors directly in identifying process gaps, then closes the loop by feeding findings into EHS Standards, training materials and the verification cycle, with Global Incident Learning communications embedding lessons across the company. The evaluators judged this learning system to merit a full score.

WSP Canada operates a two-tier root cause analysis framework, applying full or simplified investigation rigor according to event severity, with a quality gate that is worth copying verbatim: an investigation cannot be closed until corrective actions are confirmed both completed and effective. WE Soda trains employees in investigation methods to raise root cause quality and disseminates investigation reports across all facilities so that one site's event becomes every site's lesson. Siemens AG runs a structured global lessons-learned process translating incidents, high-potential events and near-misses into toolbox talks, risk assessments, safety walks and pre-task planning across 78 countries. Siemens Monterrey describes an explicit cultural evolution from a reactive, incident-based mindset to a preventive model incorporating near-miss and "far miss" precursor analysis.

The independent evaluations also reveal where learning systems are tested hardest: by outcomes. Where serious events occurred within the evaluation window, evaluators asked whether the learning loop should have anticipated them - and moderated scores where the answer was yes. The benchmark standard is therefore not the existence of an investigation procedure but demonstrated prevention of recurrence and the anticipation of foreseeable scenarios.

8. Psychosocial Risk Managed as Seriously as Physical Risk

Perhaps the clearest generational shift visible in the 2026 cohort is the treatment of mental health and psychosocial hazards as integral to the safety management system rather than as a welfare program appended to it.

Siemens Monterrey is the standout: an Industrial Psychology function embedded within the EHS organization, established to meet Mexico's NOM-035 psychosocial risk regulation (which Siemens itself helped develop) and now delivering more than 3,000 interventions annually, with population-level data from the on-site psychologist shaping tailored annual programs, psychological first aid and family consultation services, and an AI-based psychosocial assistance tool in development. WE Soda employs occupational physicians and psychologists inside its facilities - embedded professionals rather than an externally contracted helpline - and conducts dedicated risk assessments for vulnerable groups including employees with special needs. WSP Canada has placed psychological hazards into the same Corporate Risk Register used for physical safety risks, a structural integration the evaluators highlighted as genuinely systemic, surrounded by a six-element prevention program spanning awareness campaigns, learning modules, a violence and harassment prevention program, a free 24/7 employee and family assistance program and a virtual psychological health platform. Sims Limited integrated psychosocial factors into its Critical Control Verification system and measured psychological safety directly through an AI chatbot assessment of 505 employees, scoring 4.1 out of 5. Siemens AG manages psychosocial risk through a global framework that equips country organizations to identify workplace stressors, with its Work Well-being Score giving leaders quantified visibility into how workload, working conditions and leadership behavior affect employees.

Three benchmarking markers distinguish mature practice here: psychosocial hazards live in the same risk framework as physical hazards; professional capability is embedded rather than outsourced; and the organization measures outcomes, not merely provision. The winners meet the first two convincingly; the evaluators noted that even this cohort is still developing the third.

9. Investment in Data, Analytics and Artificial Intelligence

All five winners are investing in data infrastructure and AI capability for safety, and - importantly for benchmarkers - all five were assessed with sharp scrutiny on the difference between deployed capability and aspiration.

The deployed practices are substantive. WE Soda maintains dedicated data analyst positions within its safety function and operates AI-supported camera systems in vehicles and high-risk areas that detect unsafe behavior in real time and issue immediate voice warnings. Sims Limited has built a decade-long incident data taxonomy, operates an EHS Leading Indicators platform, and is partnering with its software vendor to develop machine-learning hazard categorization; it also uses AI translation to make training accessible across languages. WSP Canada is installing telematics in fleet vehicles for real-time driver behavior and fatigue alerts, operates a wildfire and air quality map for project site monitoring, and has formed an AI committee within its HSE team supported by a dedicated IT resource for digital transformation. Siemens AG institutionalizes safety innovation through an EHS AI Lab, a Head of Health & Safety Innovation, and structured HS Innovation Sprint and Tech Space programs experimenting with smart glasses, computer vision and AI-enabled analytics. Siemens Monterrey is developing a two-layer AI risk model combining last-minute risk assessment with deep pattern analysis across consolidated plant risk databases, alongside deployed forklift pedestrian-detection systems.

The cautionary lesson is equally valuable. Across the cohort, evaluators consistently moderated scores where AI claims described systems "being deployed" or "in development," and where deployed technology had not demonstrably prevented the events it was designed to catch. The benchmark standard for technology claims is operational evidence: coverage, uptake, and measured effect on risk - not procurement or pilots. Organizations should also note the cohort's sequencing: every winner built disciplined data foundations (taxonomies, standardized metrics, reporting platforms) before layering predictive ambition on top.

10. Inclusive, Competency-Based Training

The winners have moved beyond compliance-hours training toward verified competency, and they design for the workforce they actually have - multilingual, of varied literacy, and of varied ability.

Sims Limited replaced generic regulatory compliance training with internally produced, video-led, competency-based training featuring its own employees at all levels, made multilingual through AI translation. Siemens AG's Safety Essentials program transforms written rules into visual standards and animated materials accessible across languages and literacy levels, extends learning packs to contractors, and recorded 36.6 average learning hours per employee in FY2025 against a 40-hour target, within a strategy that treats risk, data and digital literacy as core safety competencies. WSP Canada offers multi-language online courses with subtitling and reading-technology accommodation, 3D interactive scenario modules, formal competency verification sessions for higher-risk roles and a Short Service Worker competency assessment for those new to the job. WE Soda mandates a minimum of sixteen hours of annual occupational health and safety training per employee within a structured plan built from departmental and individual needs analysis. Siemens Monterrey - whose workforce includes more than forty deaf employees within an award-winning disability inclusion program - frames training explicitly as building real capability that workers can apply confidently in daily tasks across roles, seniority levels and abilities.

The benchmark markers: training content derived from the organization's own risks and people rather than bought off the shelf; accessibility engineered in, not retrofitted; and competency verified, especially for high-risk and short-service workers, rather than attendance recorded.

11. Contractor and Supply Chain Safety Governance

Every winner treats contractors as part of the protected workforce and has built structured governance to manage the elevated risk that contracted work carries. WE Soda's six-stage contractor assessment process - incorporating accident statistics, frequency and severity rates, behavioral observation data and documentation audits - feeds directly into selection and continuation decisions, overseen by a dedicated Contractor Safety Management Committee. WSP Canada launched a Subcontractor HSEQ Requirements Manual in 2025, runs a standardized prequalification process jointly owned by HSE, procurement and operations, gives subcontractors access to its own incident and hazard reporting tools, and invited subcontractors into its HSEQ Summit. Sims Limited proved its digital contractor management system under live conditions, completing a major construction project at its Chicago Metal site with no contractor injuries. Siemens AG operates a dedicated global Safety Standard for Contractor Occupational Health and Safety Management cascaded through country organizations, and Siemens Monterrey is

migrating contractor management from paper to a digital credentialing ecosystem with automated validations – a deliberate response to the absence of a national contractor safety standard in Mexico.

It is instructive that this criterion produced some of the most honest self-scores in the entire cohort: Sims and WSP both explicitly acknowledged that contractor safety remains a developing area, and the evaluators rewarded that honesty. For benchmarking purposes, the cohort's collective position is clear – structured prequalification, shared reporting systems, and safety-weighted selection decisions are now the baseline, while fully integrated real-time contractor ecosystems remain the frontier that even award winners have not yet reached.

12. Safety Integrated with ESG

In all five companies, safety is governed as a corporate performance domain rather than administered as a compliance department. Siemens AG embeds safety within its DEGREE sustainability framework, reports LTIFR, well-being and assistance-program metrics as ESG indicators in externally assured disclosures, and operationalizes the link through a Health & Safety Strategy 2030. Siemens Monterrey cascades the same framework to plant level, linking safety metrics to the equity and employability dimension of ESG and extending governance to a 100% Zero Trust cybersecurity posture. Sims Limited extends its Critical Control Verification discipline into environmental audits and holds ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001 certification, articulating a philosophy the evaluators found notable: compliance as an output of a mature risk-based system rather than its purpose. WSP Canada – a UN Global Compact signatory with approved science-based targets – holds Certificate of Recognition certification in eight provinces and territories with an ISO-aligned management system, and WE Soda integrates health, safety and environmental risk management within common governance and uses its sustainability report as a transparency mechanism.

Certification, it should be stressed, functioned in the evaluations as a floor rather than a differentiator: nearly the whole cohort is ISO 45001-aligned, and evaluators looked past certificates to ask whether compliance activity drives improvement. The differentiator was integration – safety metrics governed, reported and assured through the same machinery as financial and sustainability performance.

13. Long-Term Strategy Translated into Short-Term, Verifiable Action

The winners plan in years and manage in months. Sims Limited's 2019 five-year strategy was operationalized through monthly lead-indicator deliverables, achieved its original injury reduction targets by year four, and was then deliberately adapted in year seven to attack lower-severity but high-frequency risks – producing a 30% reduction in hand injuries in the most recent year – while absorbing the Baltimore Scrap acquisition under the same system. The evaluators awarded this strategy translation a full score, calling it exceptionally well managed. Siemens AG cascades from its sustainability framework through Strategy 2030 into yearly objectives, programs and campaigns governed by annual reporting, KPI monitoring and audit. WSP Canada decomposes its 2025–2027 strategy into five key initiatives, broken into annual tactics with target dates, tracked in a monitoring tool and adapted by business line. WE Soda governs through Safety Excellence Journey workstreams, each owning action plans and feeding progress back through committees and management review. Siemens Monterrey turns global framework ambitions into local roadmaps monitored through monthly KPI analysis and cross-functional steering.

The common mechanics are worth listing in prose because they are so transferable: a multi-year destination; a named governance owner for each priority; monthly (not annual) review of leading deliverables; and the discipline to adapt the strategy when the data says the original targets have been met or the risk profile has shifted.

14. External Openness: Sharing Knowledge and Telling the Truth

The winners look outward. Siemens AG was the first corporate contributor to the ILO-led Vision Zero Fund and has sustained that founding partnership for over a decade – the single most highly assessed community safety contribution in the 2026 cycle, judged a textbook example of creating societal safety benefit beyond a company's own gates. Sims Limited practices a deliberate open-door philosophy, presenting at industry conferences, sharing across sectors with companies as varied as PepsiCo and the Royal Canadian Mint, and having its Commit to Care framework recognized externally as best in class. WSP Canada participates in industry forums meeting four to six times a year, multiple professional societies and research alliances, and cross-global collaboration across six continents. WE Soda maintains a structured improvement partnership with an external safety consultancy and shares through its sustainability reporting, and its annual Safety Week brings local school students – including

from special education institutions – into interactive safety education, the most substantive community safety programming evaluators saw in the cohort.

Openness also means transparency about failure. Siemens AG disclosed its fatalities prominently and voluntarily; the evaluators called the disclosure itself a mark of mature safety culture. WSP Canada opened its submission by disclosing nine high-potential incidents. WE Soda disclosed a serious injury that occurred during the evaluation window. In each case the disclosure cost points on individual criteria and earned credibility for the submission as a whole. Companies benchmarking against this cohort should understand that concealment, had it been attempted and detected, would have been disqualifying; honesty about adverse outcomes is part of what excellence now means.

15. The Meta-Characteristic: Calibrated Self-Assessment

One finding from the 2026 evaluations deserves its own section, because it is both a characteristic of the strongest companies and the most common failure mode of the rest: the accuracy of self-assessment.

The correlation across the cohort was unmistakable. WSP Canada's self-score was within seven points of the independent assessment – the smallest gap in the cohort – and its willingness to award itself a 3 on community engagement, to describe its ESG integration as "still evolving," and to use language like "we are in the process of" was explicitly described by evaluators as epistemic humility that is itself a hallmark of safety culture maturity. Siemens AG's measured self-scoring, claiming only a single maximum score across eighteen criteria, was called the most calibrated and intellectually honest of the submissions reviewed and earned credibility from the outset. By contrast, submissions claiming perfect or near-perfect scores were moderated most heavily – in one case by 36 points, in another by 37 – not because the underlying programs were weak, but because maximum scores demand demonstrated, measurable, independently validated outcomes that self-description alone cannot establish.

The evaluators' moderation logic is itself a benchmarking tool. A claim of the highest maturity was tested against four questions: Is the practice deployed everywhere, or described at framework level with a single-site example? Is it operating, or "being implemented"? Are outcomes measured, or asserted? Has external validation – audit, certification, recognition, or simply the absence of contradicting events – confirmed the claim? Organizations conducting internal maturity assessments should apply the same four tests to their own scoring. The reliable rule from the 2026 cycle: describing intent and approach without evidence of deployment and results supports a middle score, never a top one.



16. Where Even the Winners Fall Short: The Shared Frontier

The independent evaluations are as instructive about gaps as about strengths, because the same shortfalls recurred across otherwise very different companies. Four stand out.

The first is the integration of safety with community engagement. With the exception of Siemens AG's Vision Zero Fund partnership and WE Soda's Safety Week schools program, community activity across the cohort consisted largely of general philanthropy – genuine and creditable, but not connected to safety knowledge, community risk or measurable societal safety benefit. This was the lowest-scoring criterion in the cohort and represents an open opportunity for any organization seeking to differentiate itself.

The second is the gap between framework and deployment. Global and multi-site companies repeatedly described corporate systems convincingly while evidencing local deployment thinly – a single country example standing in for 78 countries, or acquisition sites acknowledged as not yet integrated. Evaluators treated consistent deployment, especially at newly acquired or remote operations, as a primary test of maturity. Sims Limited's application of its full safety system to the Baltimore Scrap acquisition under real integration pressure was singled out as the model response to this challenge.

The third is outcome measurement for newer domains. Across mental health, training, innovation investment and emerging-risk programs, the cohort was consistently stronger on provision than on measured effect. Few submissions could show intervention effectiveness rates, competency assessment outcomes, or the return on safety technology investment. The next generation of award-winning submissions will be distinguished by exactly this evidence.

The fourth is contractor ecosystem maturity. As noted earlier, structured contractor governance is now universal among winners, but no company in the cohort has yet achieved the fully integrated, real-time contractor safety ecosystem that the top maturity descriptor envisages. The frontier is open here too.

17. Using This Report for Self-Benchmarking

An organization wishing to measure itself against the 2026 winners can do so through a structured self-examination built on the twelve characteristics in Section 3. For each characteristic, the questions to answer are those the independent evaluators asked: what is the documented intent and approach; how widely is it actually deployed, including at the least convenient sites; what results can be shown with data; how has the practice been improved since inception; and how invisibly is it integrated into normal work rather than running alongside it. This is the IADRII logic of the award itself, and it works as well for internal diagnosis as for external evaluation.

The evidence threshold matters as much as the practice. Before claiming strength in any area, assemble what the winners assembled: named programs with completion and participation data; multi-year metric trajectories against stable baselines; verification records showing leaders in the field; investigation files demonstrating closed loops; external validation through certification, audit or independent recognition. Where the file is thin, the honest score is a middle one – and as Section 15 shows, the honest middle score is more credible, and ultimately more useful for improvement, than an aspirational maximum.

Finally, sequence the journey the way the cohort did. The winners' histories, visible in their submissions, follow a recognizable arc: first, leadership made personally and visibly accountable; second, the critical risks identified and controls defined; third, verification and learning loops built around those controls; fourth, measurement shifted upstream to leading indicators; and only then, fifth, the layer of analytics, AI and predictive ambition added on top of disciplined data foundations. Organizations attempting the fifth step before the first four consistently produced the weakest evaluated claims in the 2026 cycle.

18. Conclusion

The 2026 Safety On The Edge award winners are a recycler, two manufacturers, an engineering consultancy and a chemical producer – different industries, different geographies, different regulatory worlds. What unites them is not an absence of harm but a presence of system: visible leaders who verify rather than exhort; measurement of controls and culture rather than injury counts; psychosocial risk managed inside the safety system rather than beside it; disciplined learning that treats high-potential near-misses as gifts; training built for the real workforce; contractors inside the tent; safety governed with the seriousness of financial performance; strategy cascaded into monthly verifiable action; openness toward the outside world; and – underpinning all of it – the honesty to assess themselves as they are rather than as they wish to appear.

None of these characteristics requires the scale of a Siemens or the history of a Sims. Each is available to any organization willing to do the unglamorous work of building it, deploying it everywhere, measuring its effect, and telling the truth about the result. That, in the end, is what the 2026 winners have in common – and it is the standard against which the Safety On The Edge Forum invites every reader of this report to benchmark.



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