Baker Hughes is challenging the way the industry has historically looked at the cause of incidents—pushing beyond the typical root cause to identify the factors that allow the cause to exist.

Finding and fixing these underlying organizational and human factors not only prevents repeat incidents, but also creates an organizational foundation that finds and closes gaps that have not yet materialized into an incident.

New Thinking
Analysis of HSE incidents goes deeper than people, equipment, and what happened, to gaps in processes and communication, and to the culture and thinking of the organization that lie beneath an incident. At Baker Hughes, we believe that understanding how an incident occurs is less important than understanding why it occurs. When we understand why something happens, we can take action to prevent it. This requires going beyond the industry view of “why” so often seen as outputs of traditional root cause tools.

Traditionally when we ask the question, why, we focus on who is responsible, what went wrong, what people failed to do. This perspective assumes that human actions are the cause of incidents and focuses on “fixing” the person rather than digging deeper.

Developing This Innovation
We developed “What Lies Beneath?,” in 2016 as a thought-provoking, interactive learning session that challenges traditional thinking and allows participants to explore a different perspective on why something happened or could happen. It illustrates how human and organizational factors influence employee decisions and actions. While the exercise uses a dropped object incident, the underlying learning outcomes can apply to prevention of any type of incident.

Sharing our Learnings
Our “What Lies Beneath?” is not just a forensic tool to analyze why things happened; it also can help us proactively evaluate our processes, workflow and culture, not only around HSE, but also around every other aspect of the business. We make our “What Lies Beneath?” materials freely available to the industry, at www.bakerhughes.com/WhatLiesBeneath. This link has been shared more than 2700 times across the industry in learning sessions and downloads.