

SAFE TIME

Key Messaging



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THIS month, we look at Key Messaging. Key Messaging involves getting your key points to remain in the minds of your audience.

In management meetings, I have seen two opposing types of managers. On one end of the spectrum is the presenter with over 100 slides, and on the other end is the savvy type with no more than 10 slides. We all know we should be somewhere in between. The number of slides also depends on the situation.

Lengthy messages will throw off anyone. Lengthy safety messages tend to sound preachy. With that in mind, let us have a look at the diagram below.

At the base of the pyramid is a whole training course for a Subject Matter Expert. It is most likely a certification course. This is probably the most lengthy of any messaging. Think of it as our Safety and Health Officer's course!

Moving up the pyramid is communication to the safety team (e.g. safety engineers, safety committee and people who need to deliver safety messages). The message comes in the form of a toolkit. There might be presentation decks, videos, posters, statistics, safety alerts, activities, etc., inside the toolkit. The message is shorter and other "tools" come into play. Guide them on how to use the toolkit.

Now, we start to move to messages for the employees. We need to segment employees into those who need to do the work and those who just need the awareness. Those who just require awareness will need a very short message. Those who need to perform the task will need specific information on what to do and how to do it. We can include some background information; yet it should not be too lengthy.

Just below the apex is the middle management team. They can range from Supervisors to Line/Departmental Managers. This group is interested in actions on how they can "Walk the Talk". The messaging here will be shorter than for the employees group.

At the apex is the senior management key messaging. Usually, this group does not have the luxury of time. A quick brief on key points comes across more strongly for them. On some occasions, there will be longer trainings for them.

I think you might have noticed that as you move up the pyramid, the luxury of time decreases and the depth of knowledge required is less. This is the rule of thumb. Keep the above in mind when you structure your next communication. Think key messaging – how much does the audience really need to know and remember. The point is to get to the point. ■

