



## Addressing Significance



by Ir. Shum Keng Yan

Ir. Shum Keng Yan is a chemical engineer and a certified accident prevention and safety practitioner.

In the previous article (February, 2018), we discussed how Unsafe Behaviour is inherently rewarding. In many cases the Significance, Timing and Consistency are "+", thus reinforcing Unsafe Behaviours.

So how can we reverse the perception?

The adverse "Significance" outcome from Unsafe Behaviour needs to be experienced so that we will make the right choice to be safe. Can we experience "adverse outcome" during training without getting hurt?

### FELT ENVIRONMENT

Let us look at creating a "felt environment". The classroom training on the outcomes of cut, slip/trip/fall, chemical exposure and electrical shock will just create Awareness (refer to the "3As to Gaining Ownership – October 2015", which is part of the "Engagement Safety" series). This will not be sufficient to make us want to avoid the outcomes as it is rather remote and quite theoretical. We may, perhaps, feel some Acknowledgement though this depends on the experience.

It is important that we feel the outcomes in a "safe" way. Some training providers use Virtual Reality to create the "felt environment". In a simpler way, we can create the hazards in a technical training centre where we will experience the various outcomes as part of the training. A "felt environment" will allow us to understand the Significance of our behaviour at a higher level.

### FELT IMPACT

Another way to drive home the message of Significance of an outcome is to show how daily routines change after a serious event. Create simulations of, for example, performing daily actions with the loss of finger or limb. The reaction of the family towards these adverse outcomes will play a major role in engaging us to be safe. In many safety awareness campaigns, the family element is brought in to create the engagement with loved ones.

Next: Timing and how it affects our thinking when making a choice.

Share the Significance of your own examples at: [pub@iem.org.my](mailto:pub@iem.org.my).

*"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it."* Mahatma Gandhi. ■

**Professionalism goes beyond Qualification.  
Safety Professional does not equate to Professional Safety.**