Writing for The Compass

It seems when one is asked to write, it is an overwhelming and taxing chore—or is it? I have had the privilege to help assemble the issues of The Compass and look forward to continuing to help it provide thoughtful and thought-provoking articles. I invite all those reading this publication to write an article to help your peers, share a best practice and continue to elevate our profession.

I also offer here a simple outline for writing an article. As newsletter editor for The Compass, I often have asked others to write and the most frequent response is, “What do you want it to cover?” Another frequent response to my requests has been “I really want to but just do not understand how.” So let’s dive in and catch the vision on how to write an article and where to connect to help others write. Now is the time to get that article done and submitted.

VISION: WHAT SHOULD IT BE ABOUT & WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

The vision is to connect to readers of The Compass, the technical publication for ASSE’s Management Practice Specialty (MPS). MPS serves those with management, supervisory or oversight responsibility for SH&E programs.

The vision is simple. The Compass serves those who lead and want to lead SH&E programs and initiatives for their organizations. The topics are broad since the goal of management is a collection of skills. Here is the answer I feel really fits. It should be the topic that is keeping you up at night. It can address the issue that is first on your plate. You can share how you solved that problem that those at the top wanted taken care of ASAP. Tell others how you help a client. Share what your safety committee did. If you are dealing with it, another most surely is also. This is what The Compass is all about—having a place to go where you can find relevant and useful information as you solve your issues of the day.

A BASIC OUTLINE

Sometimes all we need is a reminder of what we know. Back to basics is the best place to start. I encourage you to remember the basic format: introduction, paragraph 1, paragraph 2, paragraph 3 and conclusion.

Keep it simple. This basic idea will force you to limit your conversation to 3 items. Remember, this is an article, not a novel. It can simply be your question or idea to propose followed up with 3 points. Each point gets a paragraph, and if you want to add more thought, add another paragraph. If you add paragraphs, add headers to keep your readers where you are. Then wrap it up and there you go—the article is written.

Support at the Society level will help make your article look great. Do not forget that when you write an article, you get credit with your professional label organization, such as the Board of Certified Safety Professionals.

A FEW DON’TS

I hope this inspires many of you to overwhelm the incoming newsletter editor with articles. With this, I also want to give a few don’ts.

1) Do not make a sales article. This is not a marketing publication but a problem-solving one.
2) Do not copy another’s works. If you use someone else’s material, please give that credit to that person(s). If you are not sure, just include the information at the end and our help will make sure it is cited properly.

CONCLUSION

Writing an article is not as time-consuming or as difficult as it may seem. Your ideas are vital for our profession to succeed. The vision is simple: The Compass serves those who lead and want to lead. This is what The Compass is all about—having a place to go where you can find relevant and useful information as you solve your issues of the day. Reach out to your local chapter, business associates and friends. Management is a collection of skills so pairing up with someone outside of SH&E can be a great story to share.

The format can be that simple: introduction, your idea or proposal, the 3 points and the conclusion. You are not writing a novel; you are sharing ideas that can help another solve the problem that may save that person’s job and better our profession.

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