

Laugh a Little

Nothing beats a little humor to break up a humdrum training course. A funny video clip or picture at the beginning of a class is a great way to seize students' attention and roll into the presentation. Bear in mind that any humor must be appropriate, relevant and neutral. Be careful not to turn the class into a shameless advertisement for commercial products. Never say anything that may be remotely offensive to anybody. Never ever put down a student or the company for a laugh.

The Best Thing of All

One of the best results of training is having the opportunity to get to know your students and to develop long-term relationships. When instructors do not know their students by name, it is ideal for the students to post their names on folded name tents, ID badges, hardhats or other sign. Instructors should go into the work areas on a routine basis. Although the people with whom you work may come and go, the relationships can last forever.

Conclusion

Every safety instructor has his/her own gift of experiences, training and unique style upon which to draw. By merging confidence, passion and humility with your training programs, safety will be well advanced. Your ultimate teaching challenge is to present your best, unique training methods and to share them with the safety community by writing and submitting your own article. ■

David H. McLellan, CSP, MPH, is a safety and environmental health professional for the San Antonio (TX) Water System. McLellan has participated in comprehensive SH&E management and implementation for 27 years and is secretary of ASSE's South Texas Chapter. He may be reached at david.mclellan@saws.org.

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SH&E Reporting Relationships

A SSE's Business of Safety Committee (BoSC) recently surveyed a portion of the ASSE membership to better understand to whom SH&E professionals report. Members' comments are highlighted here.

▶ "It does not matter to whom you report. What matters are the following:

"1) The person must respect you and what you do and have a working knowledge of its importance.

"2) The person must be respected in the organization and have access and influence.

"3) The person must be willing to use their influence on your behalf."

▶ "I work in middle management for a large manufacturing company with operations in 10 countries. In 2005, we had interest in this issue because of the data published in ASSE's salary surveys. The specific survey is from 2003. We were going through an acquisition and had a management consultant look at all of the different departments. The consultant looked extensively at SH&E management since we produce materials and have chemical exposures and hazards.

"We conducted a benchmark with 125 Fortune 500 manufacturing companies. Our data tracked almost exactly with ASSE's published data (see Tables 1 and 2 on p. 14). I do not claim it to be a definitive study, but it appears to support the results ASSE released in the past. The ASSE data in my opinion is statistically valid and represents good information. I would continue to support this information—it is recent, statistically valid and was compiled with accepted statistical modeling. I would say it is the gold standard right now."

▶ "I receive about 100 position announcements per week that cover the entire SH&E arena. In my opinion, more progressive organizations have better programs. They have a safety professional who answers to a vice president (outside human resources) or a CEO (if the safety professional is on the CEO's board)."

▶ "It seems to me that it is almost an even mix between human resources and quality assurance (QA). In government, a safety and mission assurance area combines the old safety, QA and reliability/maintainability organizations into one that answers to the company president.

This is how NASA is organized. Almost all companies that support NASA or military contacts have moved to the safety and mission assurance system."

▶ "This was a recent topic of discussion on ASSE's safety management blog. The responses I read seemed to fall under corporate counsel (apparently anticipating litigation), vice president of operations and vice president of human resources."

▶ "At my previous employer, four or five people reported to the CEO. They have since downsized and now people report to a general manager of operations—sad!"

▶ "In Canada, SH&E professionals report to either a vice president of operations or to a vice president of human resources."

▶ "All departments want you to be part of them, until you get in their way, cost them money for another department or the department head needs to tell the COO or CEO about an accident—that you did not prevent. I have been in many organizations where the new department head was promoted to take oversight of the accident/illness prevention program, then lost interest and became a stumbling block.

"I recommend the following:

- Draw a matrix of your company departments and special staffs.
- Determine SH&E needs for each department.
- Determine the effects if that department head changes and decides to control your program for the worse.
- Decide which department head will give you the most support for all departments' issues.

"You may find that your best opportunities will not be in a functional department and you may need to look for a special staff or report to the company executive vice president or CEO.

"One of the most interesting opportunities is in the budget/financial department. After all, the budget officer will not want to meddle in your prevention program and accidents cost money, which the budget officer understands.

"Look for a program oversight office, not a legal office and do your best to stay

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out of operations, maintenance, facilities/public works/construction, environmental, research, sales, personnel, etc.”

►“My 1994 doctoral dissertation, ‘The Effect of Corporate Culture on Injury and Illness Rates within the Organization,’ addressed the question: ‘To what organizational entity does the safety and health function report?’ The choices with responses are as follows:

- top management: 55.5%
- personnel/human relations: 23.9%
- plant/facilities management: 11.0%
- finance: 1.3%
- other: 8.4%

“A post-hoc analysis of the relationship between the organizational entity to which SH&E professionals report indicated no statistically significant association ($p > .10$). More than 70% of those reporting to either top management or to personnel/human resources, 52.9% of those reporting to plant management/facilities and approximately 69.2% of those who report to other organizational entities experienced incidence rates at or below the national average.

“These results suggest that it is the philosophy of management, or the corporate culture, that is paramount in determining the safety program’s success. If management truly cares about employee safety and well-being, this message is conveyed throughout the organization. Therefore, to what organizational entity SH&E reports might not be a genuine issue.

“As a graduate student, I was fortunate to have Ted Ferry and John Grimaldi as professors and mentors. At the time, they were both considered leaders in the field of safety and both stressed the importance of management support as necessary for a successful safety program. This makes sense anecdotally, intuitively and in some cases, personally.

“However, while conducting a literature search of more than 300 books and articles, I could find no evidence that this accepted truism among SH&E professionals had ever been scientifically studied. My two main questions were:

“1) Do SH&E professionals need management support to have a successful safety program?

“2) If we need management support, what are the required characteristics of management?

“The research findings validated the first question and provided a wealth of information on the second.

“We must underscore the necessity of scientific research in the field of safety. We do not seem to have enough of it. What often is anecdotal, intuitive and/or personal and works for given individuals may well be true. However, until such suppositions or experiences undergo the rigors of scientific study, we have no way of knowing what is true or supportable.

“Most decision making is based on not having all of the facts because none of us will ever be privy to the full universe of knowledge. In addition, organizations often do not consider all their problems or weigh all possible solutions. This type of decision-making is known as ‘satisficing.’

“Scientific research will result in quantifiable benefits for the field of safety. Research, by definition, builds on itself and adds to the database of knowledge. If research can be replicated by other independent studies, it adds to its credibility.

“I am pleased that this has occurred with my original research. Research from other disciplines used the same or similar cultural elements as I used but looked at different end points. Whereas I looked at injury rates, human resources studied absenteeism and turnover, work psychology investigated job satisfaction and occupational stress and business explored profitability and productivity.

“All of these studies have resulted in essentially the same findings to achieve optimal results. Therefore, the performance measures we track after our interventions include all areas of organizational functioning, not solely safety performance. We need intelligent decision makers in our profession and organizations. Only then can we affect positive and lasting results.”

►“I believe SH&E professionals should be positioned in the command structure much like they are in the incident command system (ICS). In ICS, the SH&E professional reports directly to the incident commander and has the authority to shut down the entire operation if necessary, a weight and burden that should never be misused. This system is proven to work and is used at local and national levels but is often left out of the big picture. If organizations could capture the heart and soul of ICS and employ some of the core principles, they would surely ben-

TABLE 1 To Whom Respondent Reports Within Organization

Department Head	333	22%
Director	264	18
President/CEO/Owner	160	11
Vice President	134	9
Plant Manager/Superintendent	116	8
Regional VP/Dept Head/Mgmt	111	7
VP Human Resources	81	5
Sr. Vice President	79	5
VP Operations	45	3
VP Risk Management	32	2
VP Engineering or Production	13	1
Other	119	8
Total	1490	100%
Left Blank	134	

TABLE 2 Role With Regard to SH&E Budget

Have no input	257	17%
Have some input for my location only	320	21
Have significant input for my location	225	15
Have control for my location	215	14
Have some input companywide	216	14
Have significant input companywide	116	8
Have complete control companywide	157	10
Total	1506	100%
Left Blank	118	

efit in employee safety, morale, work ethics and profit.

“I have not seen any hard data and I more often see and hear of the SH&E professional positioned farther down the command and often rendered ineffective.”

▶“I have not seen any peer-reviewed studies that have examined the typical reporting structure of the SH&E function at the worksite. While there are many ‘S,’ ‘H’ and ‘E’ programs within the same organization, few ‘true’ SH&E programs exist that have a single administrative home. Conventional wisdom suggests that ‘S’ reports to human resources and I have certainly seen that with ‘H’ programs and ‘E’ programs.

“There are often ‘S,’ ‘H’ and ‘E’ programs but not departments. The safety function is usually tied to security and this combination reports to operations, not human resources.”

▶“SH&E professionals must do three things well: 1) Sell safety. 2) Educate why a particular safety solution is important. 3) Be technically proficient in our profession.

“If we do not think we are educators or salespeople, then we end up being cops and people will only respond if they see us coming. If we have sold employees and educated them, then they will do the right thing when we are not there.

“If we are not technically proficient and correct in the recommendations we give management, it does not matter to whom we report. In the safety community we discuss whether we should report directly to the CEO or to the site manager. If that individual does not care about safety and is not supportive, it makes no difference to whom you report.

“Another point is access to key personnel. If you report directly to the CEO but do not have authority to address and solve problems with any level of the organization, you might as well not be there. I would rather report a level or two down in an organization to a person who gives me free reign than directly to a micro-managing CEO who wants to discuss everything in detail before I have the resources and authority to fix a problem.

“The same can be said for title. If you do not have the three items above along with the authority to give advice and to fix problems on the spot, it does not matter. If you approach safety as a problem-solver, not as an enforcement agent, you will be

successful regardless of title, position or reporting level.”

▶“In the last 6 years, I reported to a regional operations manager, a director, a vice president of operations, the executive director of business security, the senior vice president of human resources and now the director of business services. I sometimes wonder if they are not sure what to do with me. I am also not sure whether it has really affected my effectiveness. We have a steadily declining x-mod on workers’ compensation over 6 years, which is now .65. Currently, we have a 10% loss ratio on first-dollar coverage for auto liability/PD, including first-party property damage. I owe this to the organization support I receive from all internal sectors and of course, all the things I do.

“In my experience in the safety business, as long as they let you do what you were hired to do, it does not matter where you report. The safety professional must be a student of business organizations and must work the crowd, so to speak, when navigating the organization to network and establish alliances.

“It is the same regardless of reporting relationship, personalities and personal agendas. Granted, it is most desirable from a governance point of view to house SH&E in a staff department like human resources, legal or risk management rather than in a line department like operations. Further, it is generally most effective with a top management forum and some say the higher up in the organization that safety reports, the more effective it can be.”

▶“I have worked for many companies. Below is a list of where I reported and my titles:

- 1) site EHS manager, plant manager, chemical/polymer company;
- 2) EHS corporate director, operations vice president, chemical/polymer company;
- 3) site EHS manager, plant manager, plastics company;
- 4) corporate director, operations vice president, plastics company;
- 5) site EHS manager, plant manager, lubricant company;
- 6) site H&S manager, site manager, chemical company;
- 7) associate director, EHS director of engineering, pharmaceutical company.

“One and two were the same company with promotions. I had a budget of about \$1MM (1986 dollars) because I had some environmental cleanup projects.

“Three and four were the same company with promotions. The budget was \$4MM (1992 dollars) again due to large multistate PRP Superfund cleanup projects.

“Five was a family-owned company. There was no real budget, but the company spent money on outside consulting and legal help.

“Six did not have environmental, so only a minimal budget was available for training, PPE and similar supplies, about \$40,000 (1990 dollars).

“Seven did not have any environmental projects. The \$125,000 budget covered training, PPE, consultants and supplies (2005 dollars).”

▶“My safety experience is in the U.S. Air Force and the safety director almost always reports to the commander of the installation or organization directly.

“Most of my students tell me that they report at a fairly low level and that frustrates them. However, that is an informal survey of about 40 students over the past few years since full-time students are not working.

“I believe the data are pretty good from what I have seen and heard from other ASSE members at national conferences and from my survey of working students. Safety reporting relationships depend on the risks involved. The greater the safety risks, I suspect the higher safety reports. More data are needed to understand this issue. The type of industry and the ratio of SH&E professionals to the number of workers are data that must be correlated with where safety reports.”

▶“I report to the manager of administration (human resources and EHS), who reports to the president. That said, I am thankful I report to her. Our profession tends to not allow us to be ‘the bearers of good news.’ We often raise controversial topics, unknown/recognized or respected regulations with very little citation history, precedent or interpretation from regulators. Do you really think it matters to whom you report relative to the support you and your program are provided?

“I personally do not care about my boss’s title, compared to the coverage, influence and total support of the program I am trying to implement. In my experience, I have raised some difficult and controversial issues to a person who has always been receptive to hearing me

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out and who has always supported my program and me in the end.

“Sometimes we must be as much salespeople as SH&E professionals, when what we pursue is not specifically outlined in regulations but supported by the overall goal of anticipation, recognition, evaluation, eliminating or controlling those potential hazards to which personnel may be exposed. This response is not a study but the type of hard data that is learned from education and experience.

“In 20+ years of successful practice as an SH&E professional, I believe this is where the rubber meets the road. Support is not to the title to whom you report; it is to the respect earned in what you accomplish with your program.”

▶“With respect to SH&E reporting relationships, I go down two tracks. One is the research track and the other is to consult my long-time font of knowledge Dan Petersen. I miss him, but his books remain on my shelf and are tabbed, underlined, highlighted, noted and flagged.

“In *Safety Management: A Human Approach* (1975), Petersen discusses where to install safety. He says to:

- 1) report to a boss with influence;
- 2) report to a boss who wants safety;
- 3) have a channel to the top;
- 4) install safety under the executive in charge of the major activity.

“This covers it in my mind. Petersen was a friend and mentor and it is amazing how much of what he wrote and said over the years rings true today. The safety person who is positioned as an advisor to the leaders has a great job. I have long called myself a management consultant who uses safety as the example. If we could get the ASSE membership to realize that using the management system is the key to success, we would have happier members.”

▶“We must go with conventional wisdom and what seems to make sense. Management is defined by some as making decisions with incomplete information. That does not mean we should seek to have incomplete information. It only means that paralysis by analysis will not produce winning results.

“In my work on culture measurement and management, we are in the process of collecting data to illustrate the correlation

between culture profiles and performance. We have a long road ahead of us, but long trips start with the first step and in safety, we often seem to be unable to get started.

“We definitely need more application of scientific principles and more research. That does not ensure that we will come up with the right answers all the time, but it increases the likelihood that we will. It will also give us credibility with communities of intelligent decision makers—what we so often seem to lack.”

▶“Everything I have experienced in my career certainly supports the truism of safety requiring management support. I have read many articles espousing the need for management support, but I have yet to see any empirical research to support this truism.”

ASSE’s Council on Practices and Standards (CoPS) spoke to four ASSE members to discuss what they believe leads to successful SH&E reporting relationships. CoPS also asked these members what recommendations they have for those SH&E professionals who wish to improve or more clearly define their reporting relationships.

Jeffery C. Camplin, CSP, a former administrator of ASSE’s Environmental Practice Specialty says, “As a consultant, I know that communicating effective safety management can be a tough ‘sell.’ Good salespeople work their way through an organization to get to the key decision makers to close the deal. This concept also drives successful safety reporting relationships.

“You may find that the key decision makers to whom you need to ‘sell’ safety vary depending on the safety concept you are selling. A good SH&E professional will enlist others to ‘advocate’ safety to those identified as key decision makers critical to the success of a given safety goal. This advocate might be your immediate supervisor or a member of the upper management team. Be prepared for an opportunity to ‘sell’ your value to the organization directly (or indirectly through your advocates),” Camplin continues.

“Once decision makers are listening, you must complement each reported safety ‘fact’ with benefit(s) that upper management can recognize and appreciate. SH&E professionals must be well-schooled and competent on safety management and likewise on how their organization operates. In many instances, SH&E professionals must educate their

organization, including upper management, on what safety management is and the value it provides. SH&E professionals must understand their organizational structure and goals so the value of safety is communicated in terms of benefits the key decision maker understands.

“Improving your reporting relationship to become more effective within an organization requires everyone with whom you communicate to be on the same page. Safety perception versus safety reality should be clarified for reporting to be effective. An understanding of the culture within the organization works hand in hand with SH&E professionals’ ability to properly communicate SH&E activities.

“Knowledge of how upper management, supervisors and workers perceive safety culture differently will alter how effective safety reporting is conducted. Of particular importance is recognizing the gaps each of these groups have with each other on the perceived value and effectiveness of the organization’s safety program. Good safety reporting will educate management on where safety management really is and where it should be to become more effective in supporting organizational goals,” he concludes.

Donald S. Jones Sr., P.E., CSP, a past ASSE president, believes that successful SH&E reporting relationships “depend on the mutual trust of the superior and the SH&E professional.” “It is important for SH&E professionals to be knowledgeable/credible and for the superior to have sufficient influence/power to bring about change. SH&E professionals must also justify their reporting relationships in terms of the value it brings to the safety and health program,” he adds.

Mark Hansen, P.E., CSP, CPE, CPEA, also a past ASSE president, says it is best to “report to a senior officer of the company who understands or appreciates SH&E, including the COO, CCO and CEO.” Hansen outlines criteria he feels are necessary in successful SH&E reporting relationships:

“•You need clearly defined expectations and achievable goals that are communicated regularly. This is the no-surprises premise for the person to whom you report.

•You must understand how unscheduled events are to be reported (e.g., incidents).

•You must know what needs to be reported immediately and what can wait.

•You must know when to approach the person to whom you report and when to hold your thoughts for a later time.

- You must know what battles to fight and when you need to fight to win.

- You must get to know the sensitivities and personal issues that allow you to effectively get things done through the person to whom you report.

- You must understand the management style of the person to whom you report.”

He also recommends that SH&E professionals who wish to improve their reporting relationships do the following:

- “Be quiet and listen more than you talk.

- Ask questions of the person, both professional and slightly personal.

- Make promises sparingly, but keep them faithfully.

- Build relationships by building credibility.

- Know what is happening in the field. This assumes you visit the field to get to know employees and the work being done.

- Write down expectations and communicate them regularly.

- Advice from your dog: Wag more, bark less. Be content with where you are.

- Understand where the organization wants to go and craft your plan to complement that goal.”

James Smith, ASSE’s Vice President of

Finance and a former vice president of CoPS, asserts that successful reporting relationships are “created by providing a value to the organization both from a technical perspective and business strategist perspective.” He adds, “It is great when the organizational culture supports the SH&E position. However, if the culture does not exist, then you must influence relationships by providing value, assisting the company in being profitable and resolving managing problems or concerns.”

Smith continues, “The higher in the organization you report, the more likely you will be able to meet with senior and unit managers. However, that repositing relationship only provides you an opportunity to get in the door or to meet with various managers and senior manager-level personnel. The influence and ability to create a relationship is built on providing some value to the organization and to the management team. Each manager has key motivational buttons—you must determine what those key triggers are and influence them in a way that supports the organization.

“Relationships are about creating trust, having integrity and supporting the corporate vision and business goals. Managers’ primary purpose is the economical survival of the organization. It does not get

any simpler than that. SH&E must create management systems and processes that support that management purpose while protecting organizational assets such as human assets and capital,” he affirms.

Smith believes SH&E reporting relationships can be improved by “creating worth and added value within the organization.” He explains, “Creating value can take various forms and SH&E must display that value. SH&E professionals must become problem solvers who protect the firm’s human assets and develop meaningful solutions that are integrated into the corporate business plan. When your management processes and programs are in line with the corporate value and business plan, you will be more successful. Safety interventions and their successful implementation will lead to creating value within the organization.”

BoSC and CoPS will continue to survey the ASSE membership during the next year to gain further insight on SH&E reporting relationships. Both groups welcome member feedback on this subject and encourage members to send their comments to tfisher@asse.org. ■

Safety 2008 Recap

If you missed Safety 2008 in Las Vegas, NV this past June, this article presents a recap of the Management Practice Specialty’s (MPS) activities at the conference.

In addition to the Management Practice Specialty (MPS) Advisory Committee meeting, MPS representatives attended the Council on Practices and Standards (CoPS) and annual House of Delegates (HoD) meetings, as well as the Manufacturing and Hospitality Branch Advisory Committee meetings, which were well attended.

CoPS approved a new Human Resources Branch to be sponsored by MPS. This branch will cater to SH&E professionals who have human resources responsibilities or who report to a human resources function. Ultimately, the branch expects to attract human resources professionals who have occupational safety and health responsibilities. Members who have expressed interest in this branch are sorting out their roles.

CoPS also held its annual awards and honors luncheon during Safety 2008. More than 200 practice specialty and branch members attended. Jim Smith, past CoPS Vice President, presented Safety Professional of the Year (SPY) awards to practice specialty and branch members. (More on these award winners is found in the August 2008 issue of Society Update found at www.asse.org/societyupdate.)

A new award was presented for outstanding contributions to the standards development process. Michael Parker was recognized as the MPS SPY. David Natalizia received the Hospitality Branch SPY Award, and James Jones received the SPY Award for the Manufacturing Branch. MPS and four other practice specialties achieved top honors in the practice specialty performance matrix.

MPS and Hospitality and Manufacturing Branch members also helped staff the CoPS booth outside the exhibition hall. The CoPS booth gives practice spe-

cialty and branch members the opportunity to meet current members and to recruit new ones. We also spoke with attendees about the new Human Resources Branch.

MPS also sponsored a roundtable session on preventing employee error. ASSE members who attended this roundtable had plenty of material to share. In the future, you may see the outtakes from this session as an article in *The Compass*.

Speaking of *The Compass*, we are always in need of articles. We are also looking for an editor who will serve as Chair of the Communications Committee. Contact Assistant Administrator David Bascom or me if you would like to submit an article or serve as editor.

I hope this description of our activities at Safety 2008 will entice you to come to Safety 2009 in San Antonio, TX, and to arrive a day or two early to participate in our Advisory Committee meetings. ■