

**Communication**

**Transform Your Safety Communication**

How to Craft Targeted & Inspiring Safety Messages for a Productive Workplace  
 By Marie-Claire Ross. Published by Digicast Productions, 2014, [www.digicast.com.au/safety-communication-book](http://www.digicast.com.au/safety-communication-book).

As a safety consultant for more than 20 years, I appreciate the competencies and skill sets necessary to effectively influence stakeholders. I have always promoted good salesmanship skills along with an understanding of how to influence culture within an organization. These points were discussed in the chapter I wrote on safety management in ASSE's publication *The Safety Professionals Handbook*.

Unfortunately, there is a steep learning curve to gaining insight on how to apply salesmanship and marketing to safety communications. Understanding and influencing an organization's culture is the foundation of a successful safety management program. However, acquiring effective communication competencies and skill sets specific to the safety profession are not easy tasks.

I recently found a publication that not only explains effective communication skills specific to

the safety profession, but also provides an easy-to-use model to create influential communications that positively impact an organization's safety culture. In *Transform Your Safety Communication*, Marie-Claire Ross shares some sound advice on how to use market- or advertising-based tactics to influence attitudes toward creating positive safety behavior. This book will bring readers up to speed on top-notch safety-specific communication skills in hours instead of months.

Ross understands the objections that many safety professionals have with using slick advertising campaigns to sell safety. However, she has found the perfect balance between using a strong safety message combined with the use of time-tested and effective communication tools. As she puts it:

It's important to understand that the marketing techniques . . . are really about influence to change behavior, attitudes and values. It's not about manipulating people and duping them into believing that they have to work safely (and here's a philosophical question for you: Is it actually wrong to "manipulate" someone to work safely?). Instead, it's about persuading people to work safely, consider others and learn new safety behavior.

Ross provides information to help the safety professional understand the importance of using

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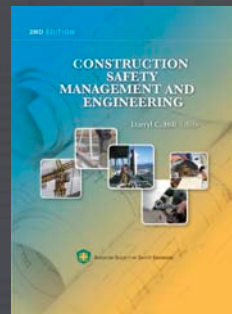
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effective communication to influence a safety culture and safe behaviors. She introduces a proven formula on how to write interesting information on safety for a company newsletter or website; training documents; senior management reports; safety meeting talks or presentations; and safety communication campaigns.

Essentially, the book is divided into six sections, plus templates:

- 1) Learn: Discover the proven safety communication framework.
- 2) Attention: Capture your audience's attention.
- 3) Remember: Achieve memorable safety communication.
- 4) Persuade: Get the effective communication system.
- 5) Create: Transform your safety communication.
- 6) Engage: Make your safety writing engaging.
- 7) Templates: Use templates to make safety messages stick.

Chapters 1 through 4 provide theory and examples of how to create compelling safety communication that grabs attention, is memorable and positively influences people to change behavior. These easy-to-read chapters are loaded with time-tested concepts for effective communications. A bonus is provided at the end of chapter 4 that introduces the reader to the "SELLSAFE" formula for effective safety communication, which includes examples of a real-life safety campaign.

Chapters 5 through 7 are more useful for the experienced safety professional. They help the reader create new communications or enhance current communications with many impactful tips and example templates. In the final chapter, all of the theory discussed earlier in the book is combined into user-friendly models to make it easy to start creating effective communications in a quick and straightforward manner.

The end of each chapter includes tips that summarize the key points, and the book offers links for further reading, free resources on graphic images, and additional tip sheets and checklists. The book contains a great deal of information that will have an almost instant impact on all forms of communications.

In summary, this book provides easy shortcuts to quickly produce or improve safety communication using effective techniques from social psychology that are commonly used by advertising agencies. The real benefit is that the techniques are formatted specifically for communications designed to influence the safety culture of your organization. I highly recommend this book.

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