



Communication: The Key to Better Safety Outcomes

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**Herta Communications
specializes in solving business
challenges through strategic
communications and marketing**

Today's Discussion

- Benefits of safety communications
- Principles of effective safety communications
- Getting started
- Building a better safety message
- Case studies
- Q&A

Effective Communications Can...

- Drive safe behaviors
- Encourage incident/near miss reporting
- Provide a consistent understanding and application of safety protocols
- Send an “I Care” message to the workforce
- Drive accountability for safety



Don't Take Our Word For It...

“Effective safety communication practices were found to enhance the efficiency of the safety management system and guide workers in reducing unsafe incidents.”

Source: National Institute of Health

“There is a direct correlation between an employee’s understanding of a safety protocol and their adherence to them. Without effective communication, this understanding will be lacking.”

Source: Safety Stratus

“A safe workplace thrives on open communication and accountability. Employees should feel encouraged to report unsafe conditions or near-misses without fear of retribution.”

Source: Material Handling Solution Network

Communications Can't Fix...

- Ineffective processes
- Faulty equipment
- Poor leadership



Principles Of Effective Safety Communications

- Leaders must drive communications
- Actions speak louder than words
- Engage employees in safety
- Make messaging personal, interactive and impactful
- Reinforce through repetition
- Incorporate it into day-to-day operations
- Keep it fresh

Getting Started

What gets in the way of communicating about safety in your organization?

Getting Started

- Recognize that one size does NOT fit all
- Perform an honest assessment of the current state
 - SWOT analysis
 - Third-party review
- Identify the desired state
- Perform a gap analysis



Start With What You Know - Incidents

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
<p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees• Visitors• Contractors• Seniority• Job type• Other	<p>Incident type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sprains/strains• Lacerations• Burns• Slips/trips/falls• Other	<p>Patterns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shift• Time of day• Seasonal• Other

WHERE	HOW/WHY	
<p>Location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certain buildings• Departments• Operations• Other	<p>Causes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complacency• Rushing• Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inexperience• Equipment failure• Other

Start With What You Know - Audience

- Audience size
- Geographic location
- Time zone/shift
- Education/reading level
- Language
- Hourly/salaried/contractor
- Wired or non-wired
- Hours of operation
- Reporting relationships
- Cultural issues
- Pay/benefits/incentives



Start With What You Know - Communication Channels

***How do you currently communicate
with employees?***

Communication Channel Examples

Face-to-face and other two-way channels

- All-people and town hall meetings
- Department meetings
- Team meetings
- Skip-level meetings
- Videos

Written and other one-way channels

- Job instructions
- TV monitors
- Intranet
- Newsletters/e-newsletters
- Email
- Pulse surveys
- Hotlines

Build A Better Safety Message

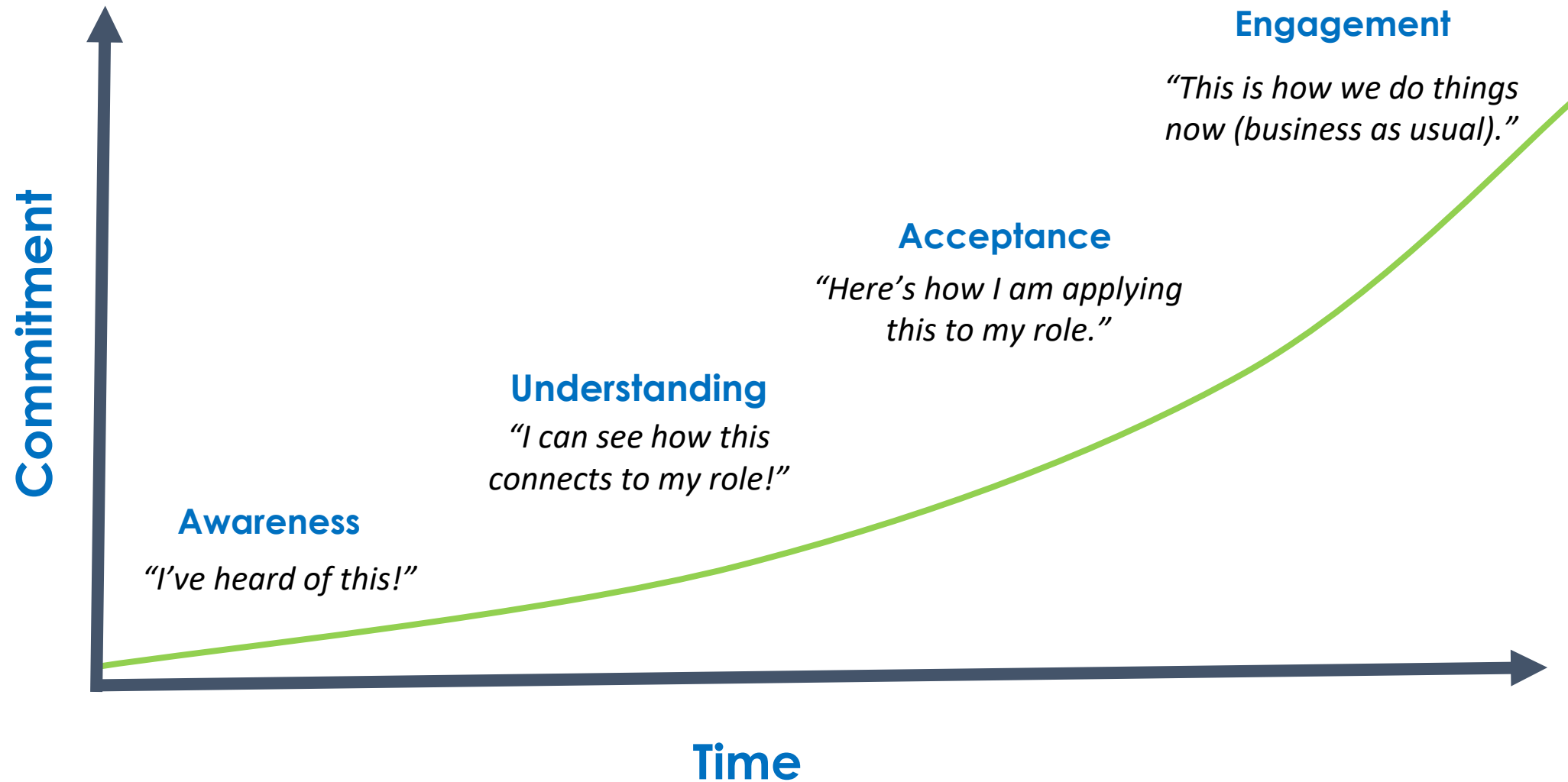
What messages have you heard over the past two months regarding the best way to lose weight?

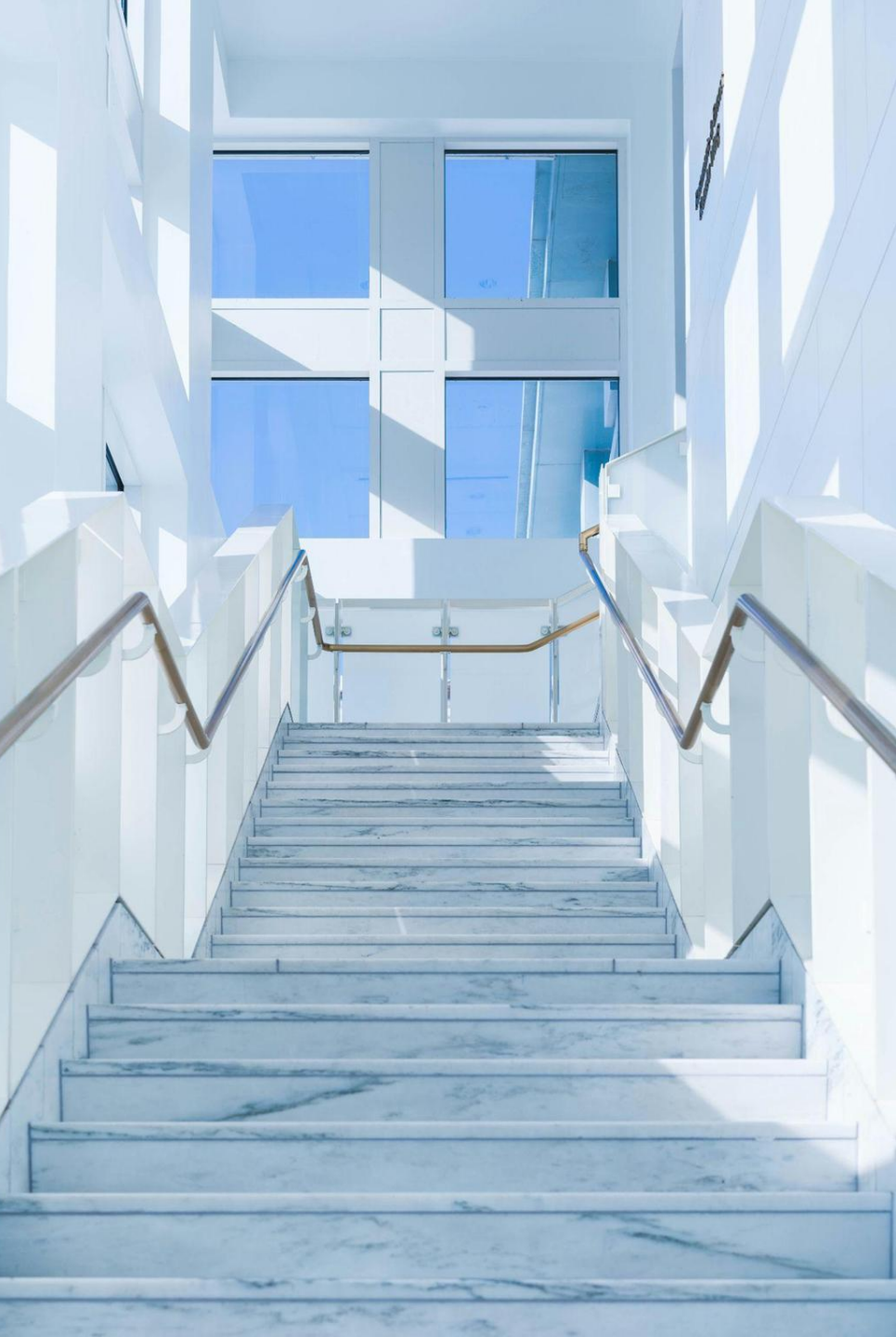
**Research shows the average
person needs to hear a message
seven times before it sticks**



Source: <https://www.yourthoughtpartner.com/blog/dont-just-say-something-important-once>

Commitment Curve





Case Studies

Case Study #1

Situation

- A vehicle assembly plant implemented a “no cell phones” policy on the plant floor
- Communications included new policy documents, signage, meetings, etc.
- Surveys showed nearly 100% of employees were aware of the policy
- However, no one was following the new policy



Discussion: What Principles Were In Effect In Case Study #1?

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Case Study #2

Situation:

- Tier 1 Automotive Supplier was battling variable safety performance and outcomes across U.S. Manufacturing.
- No “formal” process was in place – safety culture fluctuated from site to site
- Injury rates were increasing Y-O-Y but lack of reporting hindered corrective actions



What We Did

- Engaged Leadership: C-Suite prioritized safety as a corporate initiative, linking safety results to business objectives and pay across all levels of organization
- Implemented a comprehensive change management program that drove awareness, safety prioritization and consistent, measurable approach throughout company
- Key element was employee participation in the solution and implementation.
- Safety was “built in” to the existing manufacturing process which minimized adding additional processes/workload.

Case Study #2 - Results

- Safety became a recognized corporate focus in corporate offices and manufacturing environment within 6 months
 - Mandated “First Topic” in all meetings and manufacturing “huddles”
 - Celebrated and rewarded employees showing safety excellence
- Reporting processes installed that led to robust “near miss” investigations
- Double digit improvement in LWD cases within 12 months
- Used as National Safety Council example of safety excellence within 36 months

Discussion: What Principles Were In Effect In Case Study #2?

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Case Study #3

Situation

- A heavy equipment manufacturer's data showed 44% of all safety incidents were hand injuries
- The company experienced spikes in injuries in the summer and other peak vacation periods
- New hires were also more likely to sustain hand injuries
- Robust communication channels and leadership commitment



What We Did

- Socialized campaign with leaders and gained buy-in
- Focused on personal responsibility (“I Have A Hand in Safety”)
- Commitment kickoff event
 - Banners
- Monthly leadership packets and supervisor talk points



I HAVE A HAND IN SAFETY

What We Did

- Paired new hires with a safety mentor for their first two weeks
- Developed a safety orientation for all new hires
- “Safety coaching” for everyone returning from a break/vacation
- Monthly activities that could be done in team meetings
- TV monitor trivia to reinforce messaging
- Use of personal stories



Case Study #3 - Results

- Reduced overall injuries by over 50% – and maintained that level for 18 months (until the pandemic)
- Made hand safety a personal issue
- Had fun!



Discussion: What Principles Were In Effect In Case Study #3?

- Leaders must drive communications
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Case Study #4

Situation

- Housing products manufacturer had a strong safety culture, but the pandemic, an influx of new workers and growing demand for the company's products led to a rise in safety incidents
- Leadership was committed to making safety a priority, but was unsure how to proceed



What We Did

- Workshop with key stakeholders (safety leadership, plant managers, etc.)
- Developed eight-month “back to basics” safety awareness campaign
 - Regular drumbeat of consistent messaging
 - Leveraged existing communication channels
 - Kickoff during National Safety Month (leader commitment first)
 - Use of personal stories

Case Study #4 - Results

- Re-established communication processes to meet their new, post-pandemic reality
- Raised awareness of most frequent injuries and mitigation actions
- Steady month-over-month reduction in recordable injuries

Discussion: What Principles Were In Effect In Case Study #4?

- Leaders must drive communications
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Case Study #5

Situation:

- Large commercial food supplier operating successfully without highly visible safety procedures, protocols and programs
- Company experienced high levels of workers comp cases
- Leadership prioritized safety as a corporate initiative, linking success to business objectives and pay across all levels of organization



What We Did

- Secured Executive Leadership “Safety Czar”
- Began a cadenced communication plan to begin raising awareness of safety importance within the organization
- Build out and formalization of “safety coordinator” responsibilities throughout all global locations (not new positions, leveraged quality organization to speed implementation and limit cost.
- Began a multi-year commitment to clearly develop, define and train on formal safety protocols and procedures.

Case Study #5 - Results

- Safety emerged “from the shadows” to have a clear seat at the executive table and was included in quarterly business updates raising awareness and importance
- A “network” of existing employees were given safety responsibilities became the organizations front-line safety activators, trainers and recording agents that were able to deploy safety procedures and strategies quickly and with credibility
- Within 3 months, safety was a daily topic at all locations and reporting processes were capturing critical data for the first time that allowed the beginning of a proactive safety strategy

Discussion: What Principles Were In Effect In Case Study #5?

- Leaders must drive communications
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Q&A

Summary

- Start from where you are
- Let your data and information drive communications
- Use existing communication tools/opportunities at your site
- Make communicating about safety “business as usual”
- Leaders must drive communications
- Actions speak louder than words
- Make messaging personal, interactive and impactful
- Reinforce through repetition
- Keep it fresh



Thank you!

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