

# PART 3: SELLING SAFETY & MAKING IT WORK

*“Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead

## **OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SECTION**

- to understand what makes upper management commit to safety
- to understand how to ‘sell’ safety in a way that leads upper management to commit to safety excellence
- to summarize and integrate our knowledge of how to use ISMS to get superior safety results



CHAPTER 20

# SELLING INTEGRATED SAFETY MANAGEMENT



*“There is probably more interest and commitment at the executive level today than we have ever seen before... but they typically do not have the foggiest idea of what to do to make safety happen.”*

Dan Petersen

Safety doesn't live in a vacuum. When you try to change your company's safety management system, you may encounter time shortages, tight budgets, indifference, and possibly outright scepticism. Or maybe you'll encounter enthusiastic, willing people who don't have a clue how to make safety happen. This chapter will help you to effectively 'sell' key people on safety and gain their commitment for safety initiatives.

## IDENTIFY YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

Safety folk need to spend significant time identifying who their stakeholders are. Who *are* the people with the power to agree, the power to implement, the power to block? Almost invariably, it's the line managers. You need to spend enough time with these people. You have to hang out with them. You have to have conversations with them, and find out what makes them tick and what's important to them. This is essential if you want them to commit to safety.

## BASIC SALES TOOLS

*“Focus on interests, not positions.”*

Robert Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton

Scratch the surface of any person who’s really good at leadership and creating lasting change, and you’ll usually find a darn good salesperson underneath. Below are some tips for selling safety.

### CREATE DISSATISFACTION

A basic selling technique is to create dissatisfaction with the current state. Why buy a new refrigerator if you’re one hundred percent happy with the old one? Before people will buy anything, they have to be dissatisfied in some way with what they already have.

When you’re selling safety, you can often create dissatisfaction by comparing your company’s loose, somewhat nebulous system of safety management with the disciplined, proactive systems of controlling production that you currently have in place. Wouldn’t management like a more active form of control over its safety results? Wouldn’t they like to have more influence over the size of their WCB payments? Wouldn’t they like to reduce lost time hours, have fewer people hurt, be more immune to allegations of negligence in case of an accident, etc? Wouldn’t they like to *shape* their safety results, instead of just letting them happen?

### SPEAK TO NEEDS, WANTS, ASPIRATIONS, AND FEARS

If I want to sell you something, it has to fit your needs, your wants, your aspirations, and protect you from your fears. Suppose I want to sell you a refrigerator. If I don’t know much about selling, I’ll probably launch right into an enthusiastic sermon about my favourite model – it’s compact, inexpensive, good quality but no-frills, finished in a nice off-white shade that goes anyplace – just the thing for you!

Uh-huh. But what if you’re looking for a monster-sized family fridge to match all your other gold tone appliances – preferably a really expensive model with two ice-makers, so you can brag to your in-laws about how much money you make, because you have this lingering fear that they think you’re not really making enough money to feed your sixteen kids? Do you think my pitch for the small, no-frills model is going to be very successful? Hah. (But if you do, I’ve got swamp-land in Arizona....)

Good salespeople start by asking questions to find out what you want. If you don't know what you want, they'll help you to clarify that. At the same time, they'll be probing to find out what you need and fear and aspire to. Only after they understand those things will they start selling you anything. Good salespeople don't upsell you, they right-sell you. They figure out how to give you exactly what you want, so they can get what they want – a sale. Done well, it's an honest process for mutual benefit.

Selling safety is like selling anything else. First find out the needs, wants, aspirations, and fears of the people you're selling to. Then tailor the sales pitch to fit.

## OFFER RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

Clearly, safety is not free, nor are the full benefits immediately visible. Like a preventive maintenance program, a good safety system is an investment that pays off over time. To effectively sell safety, you need to take the time and care to demonstrate this Return on Investment. ROI can involve issues other than money; we'll cover the subject of ROI in detail later in this chapter, after we talk about Motivators.



## SELLING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

The Safety Professional needs a thorough understanding of how to sell safety at different levels within the organization. However, in companies with superior safety results, the Safety Professional is not the only person selling safety. In very safe companies, what you'll find is that people at every level of the organization are selling safety to the people who report to them. It's a top-down process. However, the Safety Professional can provide invaluable advice and assistance with this activity – a sort of 'safety sales training' for managers and supervisors, if you will.

Remember, though, that it is *not* the Safety Professional's role to deliver safety to workers on a day-to-day basis. *Safety is a line function.* It is your managers and supervisors who have to sell their subordinates on safety.

Of course, the Safety Professional is instrumental in selling management on safety. When you're selling safety to management, remember to emphasize that an integrated safety *system* is necessary for getting the desired results. Pieces alone will not do it.

## SELLING TO MANAGEMENT

*“Try to draft a proposal to which their responding with the single word “yes” would be sufficient, realistic, and operational.”*

Robert Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton

## PICK THE RIGHT MOTIVATOR

Every managerial decision about safety is driven by some combination of three basic motivators: legal, moral, and financial.

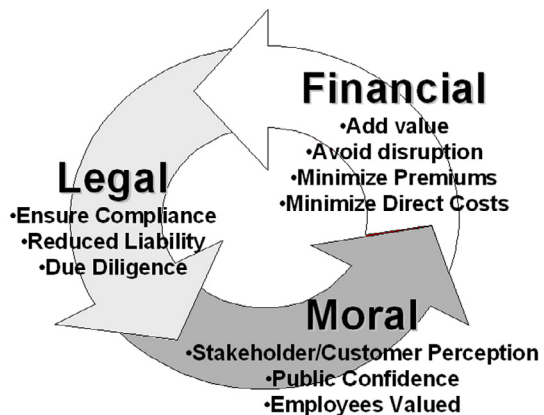
**Legal:** decisions made for the primary purpose of complying with all laws (including safety legislation), codes, and standards that are relevant to the organization

**Moral:** driven by the desire to ‘do the right thing’, to value people as individuals, and to protect them from harm

**Financial:** this includes recognition of the costs of safety programs and the costs associated with accidents (WCB payments and indirect costs)

As shown in the diagram at right, these three factors interact with one another and drive one another. If you look back at the chapter on the history of safety, you’ll see that every advance was triggered by one or more of these factors. For example, Hammurabi took a moral position (you can’t hurt people with impunity) and made it into a legal code. The creation of WCB was an act of financial and moral responsibility (society says that if you hurt a worker, you have to pay), upon which companies responded with a financial consideration (we’ll agree, but only if workers give up the right to sue us). And Bill C-45 turned a nation’s moral outrage into a legal imperative.

## The Three Motivators



The three motivators – legal, moral, and financial – are the foundation of your company’s safety culture. The relative value that your organization places on these three considerations will underlie all its choices in relation to safety.

### What's Motivating This Person?

Now that you know about the three motivators, you can learn to assess which one(s) are operating in each person you're selling safety to. It's not too hard to find out which motivators are driving an individual. Just have a conversation. For example:

Hans: "Safety costs us a lot of money, doesn't it, Goldie?"

Treasurer Goldippus: "Snakes eyes, you're right! Safety, safety, safety! This empire isn't made of money."

Okay (Hans thinks to himself): With Goldie, it's all about the financial aspect. That's good to know.

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Hans: "Safety costs us a lot of money, doesn't it, Shovelicus?"

Shovelicus: "Don't know. Never thought about it."

Okay (Hans thinks to himself): Financial stuff may not be a strong motivator here.

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Hans: "We've got a bunch of guys getting hurt here. It's awful."

Denigratus, The Emperor's Chief Advisor: "The Emperor has plenty of subjects. They're easy to replace."

Okay (Hans thinks to himself): you're not the moral type. I won't waste my breath with that angle.

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Hans: "We've got a bunch of people getting hurt here. It's awful."

Greta: "I know! Last year we lost Euripides and it felt so awful! These people have families, they have responsibilities... It just isn't right."

Hans nods: Moral type. I know how to work with this person.

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Hans: "You hear about that supervisor over in the Lyre factory down the block?"

He got a 10,000 drachma fine from the Senate. What do you think about this compliance stuff, anyway?"

Crackwhippida, V.P of Lyres: "Compliance? Pah! I'll break the rules till they catch me."

Okay (Hans thinks to himself): reluctant complier. No legal buttons to push here...

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Hans: "You hear about that supervisor over in the Lyre factory down the block?"

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Cheerfullicus, V.P. of Chariots: "Gotta comply, laddie. Gotta comply. Canna be breaking the law now, can we?"

Okay (Hans thinks to himself): Legal motivation is strong here. I can use this.

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People only commit to things that they perceive value in. So if you know what a person values—money, legality, morality, or some combination thereof—then you can use that