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Welcome to Safety Culture Excellence. Today's topic: Successful Communication is Sticky. My name is Shawn Galloway, and I'm proud to be your host.

Greetings from Amsterdam. As I conclude my visit again to the Netherlands, it's also fitting that I'm concluding part six of the Safety Process Communication Loop series. As I've said in the others, if you haven't listened to the previous portions of this series, I encourage you to go back and listen to that first, as I'll be closing out this topic with some ideas on ways to make your communication sticky.

I thank you for all of your support so far, and your communication back to me as been very helpful. I'm always looking for new way to add value, and to continuously improve these podcasts myself. So, I begin this last part with a fantastic book. It's personally helped me find new ways to try to improve my own communication within our firm. I hope you have a fantastic week. Here we go.

"There's a great book called Made to Stick. Fantastic book, and I highly recommend this about communication. And the duct tape across the front of this orange book always will help you. And it always reminds me of a bumper sticker that Terry told me about. It said, 'Silence is golden, duct tape is silver.' I kind of like that one. But look at, 'How do we make messages sticky out there?' And what they spell out in this book is something called success. Now, we don't have all time in the world to talk about this, but I wanted to mention it, because it's a great book.

"First off, it's got to be simple. The information has to be simple. It can't be overloaded. It's got to be a core message, something that's simple. The next thing is got to be unexpected. Just like the message from the kids, from the family members that were being played over TV radio, that was simple. And, boy, was it unexpected. Next thing is, it's got to be concrete. It's got to make sense. It's got to be factual. It can't be something that people are gonna really object and disagree with. And it's got to be credible. It's got to really be credible to the organization. Emotional – if you can make it emotional, it's going to be that much more sticky.

"Stories, analogies, in the beginning of the book they talk about this. How come almost everybody in the world can remember the last hoax e-mail that they received about, 'Do this and this is going to happen.' Or, 'If you print this out, a coupon for this store is going to pop up on your screen. You can print it out.' It's not gonna happen. But how come most people can remember that, but they can't remember the last corporate e-mail that was sent? Because they're sticky, they're unexpected. They're stories that are told here. That's why people buy into those things and forward them on to all their friends.

"But the stories really help send that message out there. And, a lot of times, we try to communicate too many things. And Mark Twain said it best. 'If I had more time, I would've written a shorter story.' A lot of times, we just send them all the information. It's got to be something simple enough for people to remember, and it's got to be delivered in a way that they can remember it. And it's got to be delivered personally, that makes sense to them. Too much of anything is bad for you. If you think about the racecar drivers, NASCAR drivers, there's a lot of things they need to look at.

"There's a lot of very important indicators that the pit crew needs to manage. But, you look at the average driver out there, they only have a couple of key measurements. They really only have access to the things

that are most important to them while they're driving. If we look at developing a personal safety focus, there's a lot of things that we want people to focus on. But, what are the most important things? The analogy that we like to use is called 'scan and focus'.

"When you're driving down the road, you scan for all the big issues. You look out for the dangers that are always gonna be changing, the ball that may be bouncing across the road, wondering, 'Where's the kid gonna come from?' But your eyes always come back to the lines in the road. Those are the most important things to pay attention to while you're driving. Because that'll help you navigate. Do we have those most important things for people?

"Yeah, you gotta pay attention to the rules. You gotta follow the procedures. You gotta wear your PPE. But, it's absolutely critical you gotta pay attention not moving anywhere before you look, before you previous moved anywhere. Those are the most important things, that people have the control over their own actions; that we wanna try to encourage. Not force, but encourage. So, when we're developing this communication plan, step one is to identify the purpose, the scope, and, of course, the intent of the project. But, write out the communication actions necessary to carry out the project.

"The why, the who, the what, the how, the when, by whom. This is something that we put together just for benefit, and it's just an example. Use the value stream mapping approach. Some of you already have action plan communication forms that you can tap into that people are already familiar with. Anything you can leverage at your own site, certainly look for those opportunities. Carry out the communication action plans, evaluate the plan during, while you're doing it, and, of course, afterwards. And, lastly, measure the retention and effectiveness.

"If we've given people information – and that's the problem about a lot of training initiatives, even this one, quite frankly. If we give you a lot of information, your attention's gonna be high for about 30 days, and it starts to drop right off. All training initiatives are only as successful as the reinforcement systems that follow. And, if you don't have a reinforcement system that continues to say, 'Is that possible?', are people remembering what we're focusing on? This is just something that we kinda put together; develop your own, though, if you like. Leverage whatever you have.

"Objective – why is the communication necessary? What's the organizational objective for that? Who needs to receive it? What's the message? Does the material message pass the success test? Is it simple? Is it unexpected? Is it concrete and credible? Is it emotional? Does it tell it in a way that's a story? Does it pass that? How will the communication be delivered? What's the media that we're gonna use? Power-Point, Tool Box topics, sending letters home and employees, their paycheck stubs. Some sites use those things.

"Whatever you can do – by whom? Who's gonna do that, and what's the follow up and feedback for it? And, lastly, as far as the takeaway here, just try to avoid any conflicting messages. You've all seen the communication signs with arrows pointing different ways. And, stop, don't stop sign right underneath it, park here, no parking anytime. There's a lot of things that we do that conflict the message there. Try to watch that. Stay on the transformational message.

"In the military, again, they call that the commander's intent. That's the most important objective that we

wanna do. There's a lot of other things, but this is your commander's intent. This is the most important thing. Of course, try to keep it positive. Safety, too often, is defined as 'what not to do'. We wanna try to keep these messages as positive as possible where people can help understand them. Also, set those levels of expectation for retention. Because if you set the level of expectation, you're gonna hold yourself more accountable for ensuring it. Recognize and remove those barriers to success. And set good personal examples for yourself.

"The number one reason why people don't wear PPE is because the response is, 'Because my boss doesn't do it.' So, set a good personal example for yourself, and share those strategies with your family and friends. I can't tell you how important that is. I want you all to be safe, and I want you all to share these strategies with your folks at the site. But make sure that they share it with their family and friends. It's horrible when a worker loses their life. Nobody wants to experience a tragic accidental death of a family member. Share these ideas, the things you're focusing on with your family and friends out there."

Until next time, remember: "In safety, prevention trumps reaction." For more information on Safety Culture Excellence, or if you have a topic to suggest, please e-mail us at podcast@proactsafety.com.