Question No. 4 to develop your safety excellence strategy

What’s your story? Never forget most people remember stories and pictures, not facts and figures. Yet many companies, when trying to align people toward change, tend to provide just the business case to support the needed direction, accompanied by statistics.

Not having a story means people can’t communicate what success looks like. Stories hold the power to inspire action.

Stories in the form of parables, myths, allegories and fables have communicated ideas, expectations and reasons since the dawn of time. Stories explain, influence and persuade. And they do that by engaging the listener’s imagination. You see a story unfold in your mind’s eye. A persuasive story talks to your head and heart. Every company today is trying to lead them. Getting your story right is a high-stakes proposition. Stories have purpose. They can inspire individuals to great success or, in the case of enemy propaganda, seek to instill a sense of futility and inevitability. Stories can also clarify ideas and expectations. They can make rationales or complex ideas understandable by showing concrete examples.

In this framework, you have already been asked and answered to create your safety excellence strategy. These additional questions will help you establish your story: How can you express your vision and rationale quickly and clearly? Do you have a story or stories? Is your story still relevant? Are you telling the right stories? Are they understandable? Do they fit with the culture? What effect are you seeing from the stories you tell? How do new beliefs inspired by stories change behavior? Can people identify with the story? Can they see themselves as actors in it? How much investment will you make to communicate your story? What channels work best to get the story to your audience and customers? Who are the storytellers best influence others within the culture?

Not having a story means people can’t communicate what success looks like. Stories hold the power to inspire action. What’s your existing narrative? Is it covert or overt? Which conversations add value and which don’t? Does your story connect people emotionally, or are you just making a business case? What’s your story?

Upcoming articles will continue to focus on the remaining questions that must be asked and answered to create your safety excellence strategy.

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