



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Advisory Group Breakout Session Summary

The first Advisory Group meeting on July 20 included breakout sessions during which participants discussed these questions:

1. What is the top issue impacting your job as a safety professional?
2. What three things would make your time on the Advisory Group valuable?

This document includes a compiled record of participants' comments, which we've only edited for clarity (grammar, etc.). We have also organized the comments by general topic areas.

From Q1, the primary concerns expressed were training and development for safety professionals and staff, gaining management support and buy-in, and workforce and staffing issues. Other topics included COVID-19, risk, environmental issues, technology, and the future of the OSH profession.

For Q2, the general themes included communication and connection with the ASSP Board of Directors, learning more about and supporting ASSP, and opportunities to network.

As an Advisory Group member, you represent the 36,000 ASSP members and we want to make sure we continue to provide a forum for you to share your ideas and concerns.

We are off to a great start! Please continue to share information and gather input on Advisory Group activities with colleagues in your various ASSP communities.

The information will also be shared with the Board of Directors.

Thank you.

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What is the top issue impacting your job as a safety professional?

Training/Development

- Recurring training
- Development for managers, supervisors, non-safety professionals
- Development of training for managers ... executive staff gets it, a lot of our non- management personnel get it, but it is the group in the middle and as high as some VPs do not understand the full impact of a loss and the importance of primary training to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of expectations
- Employee turnover and training
- Lack of training and accountability for front line supervisors
- Lack of mentoring in the profession (no regional manager involved)
- Lack of education
- Soft skills
- Training, Development, and Outreach
- Resources are not increasing in organizations in proportion to our workload
 - Spending time training and investing in resources who are turning over for more permanent positions
- Participation beyond surveys, active discussion, and networking to meet training and knowledge demands, important to strategic planning 6-9 months out
- Lack of preparation of early professionals
- Continued learning
- Safety professionals would sometimes rather be liked than to do the job they were hired to do. Also, a lack of engagement of the safety professional – they do not walk out on the operation floor instead, they stay in their office so employees do not know who the safety professional is.
- Education of workers
- Education of young safety professionals
- Making complex information easy
- Time management, so much to do and not enough time to do it... So much to stay on top of with regs, etc.
- Staying current with changing thinking in the world of safety – New Paradigms as we manage safety in organizations.
- Safe behaviors of workers.
- Trying to break the mold of the safety cop, to be a safety on your side approach (mindset shift).
- Educate safety and health occupation in behavioral economics.
- Emotional intelligence (and cultural intelligence).
- Administrative tasks – excel
- Criteria for defining a safety professional
- Retraining, retention
- High demand for day-to-day and being able to keep up with the demand and keeping EHS quality.
- Maintaining quality safety training, with having operations staff spread out across the country.
- Training (Construction) at all levels, loss of experience and knowledge as professionals move out of workplace





Management Buy-In / Support

- Management buy-in of safety programs ... them seeing the value of safety i.e., seen as cost-sink not cost-benefit ... showing the significance of the program.
 - It is highlighted when you are spending the citizen's dollar i.e., municipality situation.
- Lack of executive or leadership buy in
- Management commitment to safety staffing and program implementation; training for safety professionals on how to coach line leadership into safety leaders
- Commitment from management on safety issues of concern
- Full support from top management and knowing policies and procedures
- Behavior based safety from management ... how do you lead in safety?
- Bridging the gap between safety and compliance
- ROI and support of OSH – Organizational support is still a challenge for OSH
- Company buy-in and support
- Leadership style
- Competing priorities
- Lack of respect for safety
- Support from management for OSH Professionals and initiatives
- Focus on culture-based behavior modification, not forced participation
- The behavior of employees is lacking – no one wants responsibility for safety, and they put the responsibility on the EHS person only but its everyone's responsibility. Changing their mindset to want to be involved.
- Coaching on understanding the value of EHS professional
- Global compliance and ensuring continuity across an organization
- Safety Culture improvement globally. Safety culture is quite different in different countries. How to improve it with some level of continuity yet respecting the norms of each country.
- Lack of commitment in complying with safety management systems that are in place.
- Workers having no way to voice their complaints or concerns
- Getting people to be proactive – Seeing businesses working reactively rather than taking a proactive approach to safety. This helps support profit – tying the two together.
- Culture change
- Mindset vs safety mindset
- Providing the business case for EHS
- How do we impact change in the workplace melted into the emotion aspect of a human
- Culture and communications in a global organization

COVID

- Working from home challenges, still “new” kind of... COVID made it a norm... how effectively can we work remotely... remaining connected with employees
- Impact of COVID and Pandemics – Leverage the voice going forward
- Safety is in the hot seat during and following COVID but has not been given the financial support to match the increasing necessity.
- Transition of COVID period and getting ahold of information as a consultant is hard
- COVID issues – shortage of labor in workforce – trying to move employees to fill gaps and they aren't being trained properly in their new area
- Trying to transition from working from home to traveling to locations. Offices opened in May, logistical challenge just figuring out if anyone will be on-site.
- COVID; staffing & safety culture (doing things right, every time)





Workforce / Staffing

- Workload management for consultants can be feast or famine – Consultants PS has been Very helpful
- Recruiting qualified professionals in the public sector (esp. regarding salary)
- New workforce with different expectations & motivators than prior generations
- Generation Gap... Welcoming millennials in as leaders... how to get that knowledge transfer from our current leaders to next gen leaders... how to utilize technology and get buy-in for technology that previous generations were hesitant to embrace... how to bring along gen-z and their belief systems into our current
- Personnel crunch... lots of new hires coming in, getting qualified individuals is challenging... have had to look to different ways to get messaging across, get creative... hard to enforce safety standards...turnover rates... keeping people... safety can be an encouragement, too...
- Personnel issues... changeover of personnel, onboarding them @ a faster rate...New personnel at a greater rate than ever before. Training them in new concepts and spinning up the application of the learning is a big challenge for us. As an example, I can do a fall protection class or send someone to a class, but the learning must be adapted to the work environment. With turnover, it's difficult to move the training into a functioning application.
- The job market is a full challenge, turnover etc.
- Culture – fractured organization, people on same shift that won't talk to each other because of what happened in the last election. Staffing challenges.
- Lack of significant pool of next generation safety professional.
- Balance priorities with limited (or no) capacity
- Retirement (knowledge loss)
- Feeling overworked – got used to doing more with less during COVID,
- Constant turnover
- More with less – not trained EHS professionals at sites
- Contractor/Temp/Seasonal Workforce Management
- Lack of personnel – quality comes first
- People supply chain – availability of skilled labor
- Consistent turnover and subsequent impacts
- Construction industry has an uneducated workforce, there aren't enough workers, so companies are desperate for employees...not necessarily familiar with the hazards in the construction industry, all trades all aspects. Also, safety professionals are having a difficult time adjusting to become a safety professional straight out of college...job ads are looking for 10 years exp with a MS and pay is only \$60K.
- Behavior or human factors – lots of people at retirement – lots of injuries to aging employees
- Safety professionals are retiring, and new folks are coming in... People are bouncing around to jump ship to take another higher paying job > difficulty training people on their job when people are short timers...this is a generational challenge.
- Construction/Temp/Seasonal workforce
- Lack of workforce – certain jobs no one wants to do – so robotics are being introduced and not a lot of robotic safety resources are available
- Lack of safety professionals to hire – lots are coming out of college, but they don't have experience and it's a struggle to train them because they have no time. Hard to find those people with 5-8 years that you can hire and let them loose to do the work.
- Marijuana in the workforce (mentioned 3x)
- Filling open positions
- Change Management





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- Contractor safety management and getting qualified contractors
- Regional teams/operations on the same page strategy wise
- Bilingual resources
- Training and retention, sustainability, loss of experience as professionals move out of the workforce, not enough safety focused professionals, updated best practices for technology, safety investment in smaller organizations
- Safety professionals are under a lot of stress and pressure. How do we help them and revitalize and motivate them? Keep the passion and help them to survive and thrive.
- Generating enthusiasm for part-time and short contract employees, near miss
- Workforce not attuned to manufacturing
- Language barriers (9 languages spoken at my site); workers who have never worked around operating equipment.
- Consistency in Performance

Risk

- Understanding the impact of risk management and the impacts to OSH. Risk management and OSH field have still not connected to reach a full impact.
- Linking EHS with Risk (perception that risk is not the role in EHS)
- Quantifying risk beyond compliance
- Risk Control Insurance
- As a consultant, I work with lots of different types of businesses. Mom and pop shops that don't know their risks and need help in trying to help them understand and address those risks. This issue was brought up by 2 people. Technology potentially has a place in this solution as small companies don't have a lot of money and resources. Tech and automation can help.
- Risk Management. Incidents still happen often, too often.
- Business expectations and pace – can create risk downstream for the workforce. Especially for procurement. Cost, resources, and other aspects can impact safety when moving quickly

Environmental

- ESG is trending (Environmental social governance).
- Environmental – Synergy and sustainability
- Understanding environmental issues like air emissions– going to hire environmental person to handle

Technology / Future of OSH

- Technology is a big thing they've been focusing on lately... Partnering with technology companies from risk management perspective. Determining what those challenges are... How to encourage and show my clients
- Emerging technology
- Future of work and how you use technology to advance safety.
- Where profession is going – NIOSH research that informs behavior
- Tracking leading indicators, how do we quantify these into predictive scoring? Need a more predictive tool than we have now. (z16)
- Cooperation with organizations regarding research
- Future of industries within Practice Specialty

Other

- Battery safety
- Learning disabilities challenges



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- Wellness challenges
 - Money
 - Recognition of safety credentials by trades
 - Entertainment Safety Professionals
 - Advancing cultural maturity ... having metrics (how can we measure it)
 - Quickly changing standards and keeping up with all of them, implementing
 - Constant changeover in supply chain in PPE and equipment
 - Supply Chain (PPE, Fall Protection, etc.), Training of “Safety” leaders that are new to the field, Building Engagement in updated practices
 - Recycling Industry,
 - Transition to Hybrid ENV – Customer support
 - Lack of regulatory activity, Covid slowed things down, TLV/PEL’s are 40-50 years old, complacency
 - top issues...we need new regs from an IH standpoint, but the problem is enforcement. Enforcement would
 - Information sharing vs. Information overload
 - Focus on too much on quantitative instead of qualitative
 - Safety and Medical Professional Interface
 - Challenge: so much research doesn’t get to practices
 - PTD and how it applies to what safety professionals get to deploy
 - Information overload – make content impactful
- Prevention through design model would be helpful.
- Keeping Up Pace – Constantly changing day-to-day needs.
 - Being New to Safety – Getting new things out of the safety profession
 - Salary Discussion – How to have the discussion?
 - Balance of compliance versus accepted operating practices and standards

What are 3 things that would make your time on the advisory group valuable?

Board of Directors / Leadership

- Feedback from those in leadership directly addressing the insights from the advisory group
- Provide feedback to the board on potential new changes & needs
- With there being 300 of us, being active and voice being heard, being a part of the decision
- Feedback loop to the board
- Changing the Structure – Exciting to hear the direction which ASSP is going and providing 2-way communication. Improvement from the previous structure. In the past, we only heard what society was doing without allowing feedback.
- Feeling like I am really being of service and making a difference
- Feeling like I am truly engaged in the process and that I am being heard.
- Providing mentoring and support along with resources for new leaders
- Implementing feedback given - not just performative. If they can’t implement it, communicate why.

ASSP

- Knowing that activities are having a positive impact on the organization
- Organization – understanding what goals we are responsible for
- How is ASSP promoting themselves to non-safety population





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- Understanding of how the society as a whole, functions, and why decisions are made
 - Allows for better understanding & ability to support / communicate on Society's behalf
- Transparency
 - Info to and from Society
- ASSP's thought process into decisions – why? (i.e., sell property, etc.)
- Deeper understanding of ASSP's value
- More experience working with ASSP and learning the process of how ASSP works. And how to best use my skills to help the organization.
- Know and be curious about what the Society is doing
- Unlocking value of ASSP
 - Understanding the need for ASSP
 - Grasping the value of being an active part of ASSP
- ASSP value outside of US borders
 - Creating tangible outcomes
- Exciting Opportunities to Impact ASSP
- Contributing – Contributing to the decisions of ASSP
- Getting image out that it is not always who you know, but can join in multiple ways and still have an impact
- Be a resource, add value to the society, move forward into the future
- Understand how to get better as an organization
- Example of quarterly publication from ASSP

Networking/Communication

- Effective 2 Way Communication
- Networking
- sharing ideas
- training opportunities
- Network with other colleagues, contribute and add value to the ASSP/profession, stay connected with the field
- Lack of networking opportunities/resources
- Continued connectivity, personal/professional development, and opportunity to network
- Networking – outside comfort zone
- Understanding more today compared to yesterday – Relationships and networking opportunities to impact others.
- Two-Way Communication – Feel more inclusive.
- Mechanism to communicate issues to the membership overall
- Regular and consistent communications
- Hope for open dialogue and ability to discuss even if not the preferred “answer”
- Resources made available – Time, staff, ability to network

Connecting with Members / Membership

- Reach out and encourage reaching out to members who left and reengage members.
- Encourage members and give them a better understanding of what ASSP will be doing in the future
- How are we providing value – be able to show/communicate this to members
- Use skills of engagement and consultation, connecting with members
- Future proofing the society membership





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- Recruit new younger members as some of the involved members are getting older, getting people trained up and invited to face-to-face meetings.
- Not to be reactionary to the house of delegates and be proactive to generate ideas based on what our members feel
- How to funnel all the information to the right people through the necessary platforms
- Communication with ASSP membership. One person expressed a lot of excitement over the possibility of this new advisory group being able to help improve communication with membership.
- Help improve continuing education for all members
 - Utilizing advisory group minutes in magazine
 - Creating a connection from national to local level
 - Share insights of meeting with local members
- Being of service (what was written in the invitation email about the benefits struck home); being a voice for and to the members
- More accessible to the members
- embrace diversity - many people from different continents – activities and workplan to embrace diversity
- Role to add value, support the members, be there for the young professionals to onboard into safety

Advisory Group Role / Meeting

- Clear feedback after meetings
- Understanding expectations - including clear pre-scheduled meetings well in advance with an agenda and expectations.
- Our role and expectations moving forward
- Opportunities for collaboration and a way to discover who can be a useful resource for each topic – easy to access and use for our group
- Clear direction on what they're looking for us to do—and within that, reminders of purpose and clear vision of goals.
- have information to share before an actual response is needed from your group, don't put us in a cold call situation, be mindful of everyone's time
- Formalize the process, building a foundation for future advisory group (digitize the ordinary/humanize the extraordinary)
- Knowing the path is not fully decided yet and that we will have input
- Will they be conducting a Survey of when these meetings are held as far as time, or even have a few to accommodate more people
- People want to be heard. This new group has the unique opportunity to excite the membership just because it is new. Those that gave up trying to give their opinions because they thought they were not being heard might speak up again. Communicating a lot with the membership will help them feel heard and trust the new process. Break out room 11 is excited to be in year 1 of the process and help build the ship.
- Follow up on meeting discussions (meeting minutes)
- Value of pre-packaged information – being prepared
- Clarification on time commitment.
- See the benefit quickly from delegates to advisory
- The transparency of initiatives is nice – it would be nice to see deliverables of the whole advisory group – if there is anything we can do to help
 - what progress are we making – what goals do we have – so see the progress
 - Milestones and the road map





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- consider some sectors of the Advisory Group (i.e., Construction sector? Manufacturing?)
- Structured direction
- Put discussions into action
- Being Part of Larger Team – Knowing people around the country helps with learning
- Expansion and enhance training for new volunteer positions
- Access to data and information to give insights

Safety Profession / Issues

- Look at Safety differently
- Learning from others; Learning best practices; Figuring out how we set the stage for professional growth.
- Solving the problems, we heard during discussion of the first question
- Clarification of OSHA regulations, lots of differing opinions.
- Professional Development (all levels, including management)
- Sustainability
- keep things practical and relevant
- Variety of perspectives from across the profession.
- Having resources that are of more value to safety
- our work must impact the people we are entrusted to protect
- Cultural Maturity (advancing it, metrics)
- Feasibility and why
- Also share OSH technical and professional information impacting the membership
- Training – Always good to have support.
- CEUs

Chapters

- Ways to help chapter leadership. (It can feel isolated—like we're on an island)
- Helping regions and chapters learn how to work more efficiently. 2 people said this one. Each season the wheel gets reinvented in a new leader's image and the HOW things get done (logistics) does not improve. Automation can help.
- local input from the chapters
- Finding a way to take what we learn to help chapter leaders
- How are chapters affecting ASSP decisions? How is input integrated?

