

ASSP Town Hall #1 Summary Report

OVERVIEW

The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) is in the process of creating a new strategic plan to develop a road map to guide its decision making, budgeting and tactical planning for the next several years. ASSP has engaged Association Management Center (AMC) Consulting to facilitate Town Halls to inform the process and achieve a deeper level of understanding of opportunities, trends, and challenges faced by the safety profession. The following is a summary of the discussions resulting from the first Town Hall.

SUMMARY

AMC utilized the CDC/NIOSH Future of Work Initiative to guide our discussion on trends in the Workplace, Work, and Workforce. The Future of Work Initiative applies Total Worker Health principles across the spectrum of organizational policies, programs, and practices. Issues that impact workplace include organizational design, technical job displacement, and work arrangements. Issues that impact work include artificial intelligence, technological advances, and robotics. Issues the impact the workforce includes demographics, economic security, and skills.

TRENDS WHICH WILL HAVE THE GREATEST EFFECT ON ASSP MEMBERS (US/GLOBALLY)?

Workplace:

- **Awareness of the profession and of ASSP** were mentioned multiple times.
 - Feedback included increasing marketing of the value of ASSP to members and non-members, communicating the importance of safety professionals to company leadership, and highlighting the safety profession as a whole.
- **Mental health, burnout, and stress** were another key topic in the discussions.
 - There is a move towards flexible work hours and a heightened focus on maintaining a healthy work/life balance. Post-Covid, workplaces are experiencing an increased workload with the same or less staff/resources. This is leading to burnout and stress among the workers. In the safety profession, burnout and stress mean divided attention and a higher risk of injury, fatality, or delayed emergency response.
- There is a need to **upgrade standards and guidelines to keep up with technological advancements** and changing regulations.
 - This could include new trainings, a certification for international regulatory knowledge, updated guidelines for risk management as the environment changes and the safety profession grows, and collaborating with other associations to meet the needs of ESG.

Work:

- **Sustainability** was a key theme that emerged in the breakouts.
 - The UN sustainability goals could have a big impact on the industry. Green energy alternatives are also changing the safety industry with electric vehicles, hydrogen power production, battery regulations, etc.
- **Artificial intelligence and advance technologies** to expediate work or replace certain tasks are on the rise.
 - Smart manufacturing is changing the way safety professionals do their jobs. Larger companies that can afford the new technology and training their employees are operating much differently than smaller companies. This is increasing the gap in how safety professionals do their jobs. It also can lead to an increased risk due to poor training.
- **Automation** is changing the way employers train workers.
 - It has become more difficult to move across companies due to varying technologies and the skill sets needed to adapt to automated worksites.
- **Other trends** that were mentioned but not discussed at great length included:
 - Workplace violence,
 - Cyber security concerns with technological advances,
 - Shift away from hands-on interactions,
 - PEL vs TLV,
 - Changing ergonomics,
 - And addressing professional ethics globally.

Workforce:

- Discussions of workforce related trends focused largely on **training safety professionals across industries and across technological levels**.
 - Companies, not understanding the necessity of safety professionals, are increasingly hiring underqualified individuals for these positions. Trainings that are offered are often being done virtually, are not accessible for disabled persons, or are not conducted in languages widely spoken by employees. There needs to be a higher focus on offering standardized remote learning that is accessible and inclusive.
- Another trend that emerged in the discussions was a **labor shortage**.
 - Companies are finding it difficult to hire and retain quality employees, especially in factory settings. Contract workers are transitioning into new industries, especially healthcare. Broadening recruitment efforts to include high schools, community colleges and technical schools could fill the workforce pipeline. A reduced workforce is also adding to the work responsibilities of generalists, leading to burnout that was mentioned earlier.
- Issues related to **diversity and inclusion** were raised throughout the discussions.
 - From increasing diversity training within the workforce to branching out and hiring a more diverse group of safety professionals. DEI is a key focus for ASSP members.

HOW CAN ASSP LEVERAGE OR PROTECT AGAINST THESE TRENDS?

Workplace:

- Increase ASSP's representation in other industries, specifically regarding writing standards.

Work:

- Create and distribute practical and vetted tools and solutions to work related problems.
- Host a certification course on ESG and sustainability and develop ANSI standards.
- Change the way ASSP markets education and training.

Workforce:

- Collaborate with other associations to provide trainings to members about new technologies.
- Provide cross-training to members on ESG topics and blended training.
- Find alternate ways to engage members.
- Communicate the changes we see in society and industries in a way that allows members to engage.

FINAL NOTES

ASSP leaders will continue discussions about these and other trends at the upcoming second Town Hall to see how these issues should be brought into ASSP's strategic plan moving forward.