

ENGAGING SAFETY TRAINING

Effective Strategies for Better Learning

By Rose Dawson

In the ever-evolving landscape of workplace safety, effective training is paramount. Organizations must ensure that their employees are not only informed but engaged and prepared to act in real-world scenarios.

A combination of in-person hands-on engagement, practical situation application discussions and fun interactive learning tools such as Kahoot can provide an exciting and comprehensive training experience. This article outlines three basic recommendations for delivering safety training (hands-on, applied and gaming) that maximizes retention and application of knowledge and makes learning safety principles enjoyable for the student.

1) In-Person Hands-On Engagement

In-person hands-on training is invaluable in safety education. Experiencing situations firsthand allows employees to understand the nuances of procedures and protocols. This method not only enhances

learning, it builds employees' confidence to act decisively in the field or during emergencies. There are a few different techniques for effective hands-on training.

- Simulations.** Create realistic scenarios that employers might encounter. For instance, conducting a fire drill or a first aid practice session helps reinforce critical skills. Simulations that include performing inspections on tools or equipment or completing job hazard analyses bolster employees' abilities to proactively identify hazards in the workplace.

- Role-playing.** Employees can assume different roles in safety scenarios, such as a first responder on scene or an injured party. This approach fosters empathy and a deeper understanding of responsibilities. Effective safety communication can be practiced through role-play scenarios as well. Having employees deliver diverse toolbox talks to their classmates helps the class recognize and understand various safety topics relevant to their work and builds a collaborative work environment in which employees will share knowledge and feedback with one another.

- Use of equipment (tangible tools).** Allow students to handle safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers or PPE. Bring personal fall arrest equipment, lockout/tagout kits and even ladders into the classroom and set them up. Familiarity with these tools can significantly improve response times during actual incidents. Putting materials and tools in employees' hands during training is a practical approach to integrate them into their everyday work environment while teaching them how to safely conduct work-related processes in a controlled environment.

2) Practical Situation Application

To enhance the effectiveness of safety training, it is crucial to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications. This ensures that employees can translate what they learn into action that may save lives.

- Case studies.** Analyze past incidents in the organization or industry to highlight what went wrong and how it could

have been prevented. This method encourages critical thinking and reinforces the importance of adhering to safety protocols. OSHA violation details are a great resource for this activity, available on OSHA's website.

- Field training.** Whenever possible, conduct training in the actual work environment. This not only makes the training relevant, it familiarizes employees with the specific hazards they may face daily.

- Feedback loops.** After each lesson topic and practical exercise, facilitate discussions where employees can share their experiences. This can lead to valuable insights and improvements in the organization's safety practices.

3) Interactive Virtual Learning

Kahoot is one of many available online platforms that transform traditional learning into an interactive and engaging experience. By incorporating tools like this into safety training, organizations can leverage technology to enhance employee engagement and retention.

- Pre-training assessments.** Use online quiz platforms to assess employees' knowledge of safety procedures before training begins. This can help tailor content and address knowledge gaps.

- Real-time feedback.** Incorporate quizzes throughout the training to gauge understanding in real time. This immediate feedback can reinforce learning and identify areas that need further clarification.

- Competition and collaboration.** Create an atmosphere of friendly competition by organizing team-based quiz sessions. This not only encourages participation but fosters teamwork, which is essential in safety scenarios.

Integrate Strategies for Optimal Results

The most effective safety training programs combine multiple teaching strategies to cater to various learning styles and maintain interest. By integrating in-person engagement,

STRATEGIES FOR BETTER ENGAGEMENT

•Make training hands-on.

Incorporate simulations, drills, equipment inspections and practical exercises to help employees build confidence and develop real-world safety skills.

- Use real equipment.** Put PPE, fall protection gear, lockout/tagout devices, ladders and other tools directly into workers' hands during training to increase familiarity and proper use.

- Apply learning to real-life scenarios.** Use case studies, incident reviews and OSHA violation examples to improve employees' understanding of how safety principles prevent injuries and regulatory violations.

- Train in the actual work environment.** Whenever possible, conduct training in the field so workers can recognize site-specific hazards and practice safe procedures in realistic conditions.

- Encourage discussion and feedback.** Build time into training sessions for employees to share experiences, ask questions and suggest improvements to strengthen the organization's safety culture.

TRAINING TIPS

practical application and virtual tools, organizations can create a truly holistic training experience. Recommendations for integration include the following:

- **Course structure.** Design a training curriculum that incorporates all three methods. For example, start with a theoretical overview, followed by hands-on practice, and conclude with a virtual quiz to reinforce key concepts.

- **Ongoing training.** Safety training should not be a one-time event. Regularly schedule refresher courses that use varied methods to keep employees engaged and informed about new safety protocols and regulations.

- **Evaluate effectiveness.** After each training session, gather feedback from participants about what worked well and what could be improved. This can help refine future training sessions and ensure that they remain relevant and effective.

In an era when workplace safety is of the utmost importance, organizations must adopt innovative training methods that resonate with employees. The key to successful safety training

lies in active engagement and practical application of knowledge. By embracing a multifaceted approach, employers can ensure that their personnel are well equipped to handle safety challenges with confidence and competence. As organizations look to the future, investing in robust training programs will be crucial for maintaining the highest safety standards and protecting their most valuable asset: their employees. **PSJ**

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