

COMMUNICATING SAFETY

SESSION NOTES FROM GARRISON WYNN

This document contains an overview of Garrison's presentation and is designed for people who have attended the session.

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

The research

- 5,000 top-performing people of influence in multiple industries. **They had the trust and relationships in place to make safety happen every day. They were looking out for each other!**

Being right!

- **The ideas of others – If you criticize others' ideas about safety, they will almost never listen to yours, no matter how good your ideas are!**
- How you make people feel – If you make people feel important, what you offer is more important to them.
- People don't choose the best safety strategy. They choose what they are the most comfortable with, whether it's the best or not.

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRUST

We are judgment machines.

Everybody knows something you don't.

- **The minute you think you know everything about safety, your wisdom leaves you.** I think we understand that everyone knows something you don't when it comes to safety. The problem is sometimes people are just wrong!
- The top 1% didn't use the word "wrong." Instead, they said things like "Please tell me more." When they took that tactic, they noticed three things that could happen:
 1. You might find out that you are more in agreement than you previously thought because you listened.
 2. You listened and found out they don't make any sense, but now you know *why* they don't make any sense because you listened.
 3. They start to change their story to match your story in an effort to look right in front of other people.

- The beginning of trust: You've known people for 5 years who still don't trust you, and you've known people for 5 minutes who do. Most information on trust stresses that it takes time. But actually looking at research from 1916 to the present reveals the truth about trust.

Trust is built on the foundation of two things: compassion and competence.

- If people know you care and they believe you can do your job, they will trust you. Believability gives you credibility as a safety leader.
- The listening test: 78% of us don't listen very well. But that doesn't mean you can't learn to be a better listener. Be present in the moment and make people feel heard.
- How can you prove you care and are competent? Make sure people feel heard and can see their input in your idea.

What most people won't do, and what the most effective always do

- People you can't stand: Are you willing to own 5% of their problems to gain more influence? Are you willing to look at the role you play in their behavior or reaction?
- People you don't understand: We let others' "odd" behavior take up a lot of our thoughts. We believe everyone has a different agenda. But people basically want sincerity, value, and prestige.

Sincerity

- Does your sincerity match the situation? Are you seen as real? If you aren't sincere enough, people see you as cold. But if you're overly sincere, they see you as fake.

Money/Value

- Multiple solutions for a single problem – If you tell people there is only one way to do something, you have no influence. Younger people were raised to believe there are multiple ways of doing everything. Finding those avenues makes them feel valuable. **What to say:** "There are other ways to do this, but this is the way most people agree works best."

Prestige

- Will working with you make them look good to others? Can you make them look good in front of the people they want to impress? Can you make them look smart?
- **If people know you are being real, you have more than one way to solve their problems, and you can make them look good to others, they will listen to everything you say every time you speak. That's the foundation of influence.**

Believability

- Some things may be true but not believable. The issue: Some people believe a thing so strongly that they just look for reasons to prove what they already believe is true.
- The key to influence: Make sure people feel valued. They will look out for you and make fewer mistakes.
- When introducing change, reassure people that what they already know will help them. People don't want to change if they feel a new way reduces their value or expertise. **No one wants to be a senior beginner.**
- Similarities first: Show how what you offer is similar to what they're used to, and then show the benefits of what you offer – how it's better than what they're used to. **People who feel valuable make fewer mistakes. People who feel valuable are more loyal to company policy. You prove to people that you believe they are valuable by letting them know you have faith in their abilities. Let them know you are glad they are on your team!**

WHAT THE MOST INFLUENTIAL HAVE IN COMMON

They know the impact of value and clarity.

- Can you clearly explain your value in 20 seconds? Your value must be easy to understand.
- Don't let your brilliance prevent you from making sense! It doesn't matter how smart you are if no one knows what you're talking about.
- If you are intelligent, you may lack tolerance for those who don't understand things as well as you. If that is the case, you may be labeled a poor communicator, which robs you of influence.
- **A clear example: If your job is to get everybody on the same page, you should at least make that page a lot easier to read. Does everyone agree on what successful safety looks like?**
- Safety communication is not just about making the information available; it's about making sure people actually understand what you've told them. Zero accidents is about clarity, about being present in the moment.

They clearly communicate their point.

- **Beware of mixed messages such as "Be safe but hurry up!"** Better message: "Do the best you can between safety guidelines. If you are outside the safety guidelines, stop and rethink it!"
- It takes courage to say "Stop the job!" Can you tell your boss that he or she is not safe? Accidents happen because people are not present in the moment; they're working on one thing but thinking about something else.

They show value clearly.

- Clarity is the foundation of value. People buy into what they can understand quickly. If you are easy to understand, you have more influence. Getting buy-in on safety requires that you make sure the value for a specific person or group is extremely clear. **Contractors and other cultures need to see how your "lifesaving rules" apply to them personally. That means you have to know what they value to make safety consistently live in their minds.**
- To get top managers to buy into safety, you must be clear and brief. "Not putting time and money into safety makes it seem to the public like we don't care. If there is an accident that they suspect we could have prevented, we have a very expensive publicity problem. Statistically, we are going to have an incident; how deep the effect is on our pocketbook and our reputation is up to you."
- There are people out there who have less value to offer than you do; they're just better at explaining it. It seems that actually *having* value is not quite as valuable as *explaining it well!*
- Make it clear that your people are valuable and that they value safety enough in general to do what it takes.

They know the perfect team is not perfect.

- The definition of a team is people playing different positions to achieve a common goal. Teamwork is key to efficiency.
- The foundation of true agreement is disagreement. To make safety part of your culture and ensure that it carries realistic expectations with it, you need people to be honest. You **do not need** people paying lip service.
- **A leader can forge team performance that you can't get from people who say "yes" to your face and "no" behind your back. Safety might not always be easy, but it needs to be easy to understand so it's simple to repeat to others.**
- A good leader can hold a team accountable and make them feel valued as a unit. Safety is an organized effort.

They know the leading cause of stress.

- Stress (the most common cause of illness) arises from knowing exactly what you are supposed to be doing but consistently doing something else. Practicing safety lowers your stress. It's the true link between safety and wellness.

They avoid jellyfish management.

- No spineless leaders! True leaders do not blame those above them for what the company requires.
- Non-jellyfish statement: “Our new process is different but definitely doable.”

They know that older and younger workers must work better together.

- The worst leadership strategy you could ever have is wishing people were just like you.
- Younger workers may be more organized but often lack a sense of urgency. “Now” means now!
- Influence younger workers with your praise and attention.
- You can’t lead by example if you’re a bad example! Don’t create unsafe behaviors in others by telling them “how we used to do it before safety equipment.” Young men will try to prove their bravery if you challenge them.
- **Show that you believe in the change. The definition of leadership is when others follow someone because they want to, not because they have to.**

THINKING LIKE A SAFETY LEADER

Expect bad news

- The media vs. reality – Don’t let the media tell you what your life looks like. That’s for you to decide. Good news doesn’t sell newspapers.
- Watch more History Channel and less nightly news.
- To make change work, you have to spread **good** news (i.e., “Why Safety Is Good for Everyone”), which requires effort.

Points worth reiterating

- If you sincerely criticize others’ ideas about safety, they won’t use yours!
- They will trust and listen to you if you make them feel valuable. People who feel valuable have fewer incidents.
- **You must be clear and explain the value of safety to an individual or a specific group.**
- Your behavior can create safety issues for others. What comes out of your mouth can influence the safety culture.
- You cannot make safety work by yourself. Being honest with each other builds the trust that creates a safer environment.
- You have to stand up for safety regardless of your opinion.
- If you do all that we’ve talked about, we will all be looking out for each other’s safety.

CHANGE

- **Action and adaptability** – Change is not the problem; resistance to change is the problem. The tool of the day is influence.
- **We have a choice** – Success lives in you. The best way to stay motivated is to motivate each other.

- **Don't wait for bravery** – The most successful people take action while they're afraid. You do that a few times and you develop courage.
- **Your value** – If you make others feel valued, you'll be seen as more valuable. People who trust each other and communicate look out for each other every day.

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Research on employee engagement: Find it at evolvepg.com/about/impact

How to Get People to Do What You Want Them to Do

by Garrison Wynn, CSP

If this article title pulled you in, maybe you've recently realized that having a better tactic or using your *charisma* is not producing the influence you would have hoped. You've read the leadership and negotiation books and you've witnessed some disturbing YouTube videos that appear to prove you no longer need talent or a point to be in front of a camera. However, depending on your age and situation, one or more of the following all-consuming problems still remain: Your employees just can't get the job done, your boss is a low-IQ narcissist, your parents think you actually want *their* life, your girlfriend is addicted to vampire books, your boyfriend is still a "skater-dude" at age 30, or your 22-year-old son has just told you "I don't, like, see myself as, like, working every day at a job and stuff."

Could it be that what works for others in the area of influence will not work for you? Over the years, Wynn Solutions (along with former Gallup researchers) has conducted anonymous surveys with thousands of extremely influential people who have a proven track record of motivating people to do what needs to be done. From them, we found the root of influence to be some foundational ideas that we often deem irrelevant. Here are those ideas:

Are you proving to people that you see them as valuable? Have you told them that you appreciate their talent and could not have done so well without them? That's very different from just saying "Good job!" And it's not as ridiculous as saying "You'll have a job here as long as you want one," which seems to indicate that they will definitely quit – it's just a question of *when*.

Are you being sincere but emphatic with your adult child who still lives at home? These days, over 50 percent of all adults 18-26 years old live with their parents. So if you are in your 20s and living at home, it's pretty close to normal these days. However, if you have an adult child still living at home, not making a contribution, wearing your bathrobe, and wanting to know when more food will be arriving, you need to be forthright. You might say something loving but pointed, like this: "The only way someone else will appreciate you as much as we do is if they see you as self-sufficient. You and your generation have more opportunities and greater knowledge than any other generation has ever had. So getting out on your own (which will involve leaving this house, by the way) will cause the good things in life to come your way." Letting them stay too long sends the message "We love you so much that we're willing to sacrifice your ability to be a functional adult." Being 37 and still living at Mom and Dad's house is more than just pathetic; it's creepy.

Do you have extreme clarity? Intelligence is not enough. It doesn't matter how smart you are if no one knows what you're talking about. The average IQ for an executive is 104, which is lower than the average for middle management. But if you think your boss is stupid, remember that he's just smart enough to be your boss! If you've ever been to a Mensa meeting, you might have noticed a disturbing number of 35- to 50-year-olds wearing backpacks and a lot of crummy cars in the parking lot. Intelligence is just a small part of influence.

As for tried-and-true solutions, it all comes down to value.

1. *If you want to be influential, you must be able to **clearly state your value (or the value of whatever you're proposing)**.* Clarity is the foundation of value. People buy into what they grasp quickly. The leading addiction on the planet is not drugs or alcohol or video games. It's convenience. We will abandon a complex process that works for a mediocre one that's easy but barely works. Simply stated, good ideas just aren't good enough. Case in point: It took 40 years to get seatbelts in cars, but they green-lighted the Pet Rock at the first meeting. Spray cheese caught on pretty quickly too.

We are influenced by things that sound good instantly, and nothing sounds better than what we seem to already believe. Making things very *clear* makes them familiar. When we hear something clearly stated, we will often say, "Oh, yes. That's common sense." But the truth is we did not think of it until it was very clearly stated. Clarity makes the stated value *make sense*. So if you think this paragraph has told you something that you already knew, then you are right and enlightened at the same time.

2. *To influence people under 30 years old, what you propose **must make sense at a very basic level**.* This younger generation grew up with so much information thrown at them that you've got to be able to show them why you're doing something. If it doesn't make relevant sense to them *today*, they will question it and have difficulty taking action on it. If you want young people to come to work early, you need a real business reason – not just that you like to get to work at

7:30 a.m. and don't particularly care for loneliness.

3. *The key to getting people to do what you want them to do is **understanding what they value**.* In its clearest, simplest form, what they value is love, money, and prestige. If they can get *that* from you, they're willing to listen and take action. Unfortunately, most people believe they need to outsmart others to get them to take action. So if you're upset because you think the world is run by idiots – well, you might have a point. Most research shows that it's easier to simplify things so you can compete. The truth is that when it comes to getting people to take action, in many cases, explaining your value is more valuable than actually *having* it.
4. *It all comes down to engagement.* You may have heard the term “**employee engagement**” or “**client/customer engagement**” and just viewed it as corporate buzzword, but it's the ultimate foundation of success. Engagement is what this article is really all about. You need real personal influence to make it happen. It's hard to be successful at your job if you think no one at work cares about you (especially your boss). It's difficult to write a check to someone who does not value you as a person. So the key word that ties it all together is *value*. The way to make sure people see your value and are willing to make a decision that will benefit you is to show them that *they* are valued. Then you have a level of engagement; you also end up with a minimal amount of haters. There is always that one person who hates success, Christmas, pizza, vacation days and money (your money, of course, not theirs).

According to Evolve Performance Group, an organization run by former Gallup executives and researchers, engaged employees are 40 times more likely to say they would recommend their company as a great place to work, and 4.5 times more likely to recommend their company's products and services. So not only is being influential the best way to get people to do what you want them to do; it's something you have to do just to compete.

The idea is to position yourself up front with all the influence tactics you can and then throw all your effort behind that. This strategy is central to a story I often tell about a speaking engagement I had at a convention years ago. My wife was in the audience for my event. She'd just heard me speak and she was clapping – yes, even *after* a few years together, she still applauded (maybe because I was through talking). In fact, she clapped so hard that she lost the diamond in her ring, but she didn't know it at the time. So the next day she goes back and starts searching all along the 10,000-square-foot parquet floor. The custodians have already swept and mopped. Twice. Nothing has turned up. Everyone's thinking, “Lady, you're never going to find it.” But my wife insists, “I'm looking anyway.” So she's on the ground, face to the floor, searching, searching... She's sucking up dust bunnies for a full hour and a half before she spies a little glimmer from across the room. And there it is! In the end, we walked away with two big lessons. First, if something is important enough to you – if you believe in it enough – then the effort, skill, talent, and ability generated from your body and channeled into achievement is amazing. But also, if you buy a *r-e-a-l-l-y* BIG diamond, it's a LOT easier to find.

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