

6 Tips for Conducting a Perfect Safety Meeting



Kevin Burns, a safety speaker and management consultant, says that safety meetings are often organized in a mad scramble at the last minute, with no thought toward actively engaging workers. As a result, these meetings aren't very effective.

Burns recently conducted a webinar for us on how to hold the perfect safety meeting. For more than 15 years, Burns has worked with safety managers, front-line supervisors and staff in safety. His specialty: helping workers look forward to safety meetings, which creates safety engagement.

Here are six tips from Burns on conducting the perfect safety meeting:

1. **Have a theme.** A properly planned safety meeting has a theme and a desired outcome, says Burns. Make sure that presenters speak to that theme only, without going off on unrelated tangents. You should also have a "call to action" that's tied to the theme—that is, what you want workers to do differently after the meeting.
2. **Go positive.** The trend in safety training has been to "go negative"—that is, the "do this or you'll lose a hand/die/etc." But Burns explains that fear is only a short-term motivator. You won't get buy-in for long-term compliance with safety rules by using gruesome photos and videos. Instead, stress the positive benefits of compliance.
3. **Feature the workplace.** Visual aids, such as photographs, are a good way to liven up safety meetings. But workers are less likely to be engaged by pictures of generic people in a generic workplace. So try to use pictures of your workers in your workplace using the actual equipment and machinery they usually use.
4. **Choose the venue carefully.** Holding safety meetings in the shop, lunch room or a conference room is often convenient but may not be the most suitable venue. The venue can either energize the audience or put it to sleep, says Burns. So consider holding safety meetings in a part of the workplace without distractions or even moving it off site completely.
5. **Keep it short and sweet.** Safety meetings don't have to drag on for hours to be effective. Consider the fact that the famed [TED talks](#) are strictly limited to 18 minutes, says Burns. If these notable speakers can craft compelling presentations within that short time-frame, surely you can do

the same for a safety meeting. The idea is to keep the presentations short and focused. (Having a theme also helps with this goal.)

6. **Use different kinds of speakers.** There are three basic types of speakers for safety meetings, says Burns:

- Technical speakers, such as someone who explains how to properly use respiratory protection;
- Survivors'workers workers who experienced a safety incident and are there to share their experience; and
- Leadership or motivational speakers.

Vary the types of speakers you use. And consider using speakers from outside of the safety department to breathe new life into your meetings, advises Burns.

For more details on these tips and additional advice you can use to improve your safety meetings, watch a recording of Burns' webinar. And you can download a related free e-book by Burns.