

EFFECTIVE PRESTART COMMUNICATIONS

The Western Program Alliance (WPA) developed Effective Communications Sessions (ECS) for presenters to increase engagement and transfer knowledge within the primary method of daily communication on site.

Effective prestart communications help improve safety by:

1. Greater audience engagement and knowledge transfer of activities and safety requirements within the workplace.
2. Providing communication skills and confidence to prestart presenters that are commonly subject matter experts in technical disciplines.



Effective Prestart Communications is the biggest daily opportunity to impact site activities.

The Situation

Daily prestart meetings have become an industry-accepted forum to present important construction, safety and compliance information. Modern construction practices can result in work crew(s) attending multiple different project sites in the same week. Though the structure and tools for implementing industry best practice and controls is similar across the industry. Each project site has its own "language" for critical controls. For example, Safety Golden Rules, Global Mandatory Requirements, Lifesaving Rules etc. Getting the site specific and right information for the hazards of the day communicated effectively has never been more important.

There are several challenges to delivering effective prestarts, such as:

- How to add variety to prestarts
- How to deliver same or similar messages day after day without becoming boring or disengaging
- Highly dependent on presenter
- Prestart presenters are usually subject matter experts in technical discipline, with only informal on the job communications experience.

As a result, WPA developed and deployed ECS sessions for safer, more audience friendly and retainable information delivery on their projects.

The Solution

ECS have been developed with a television presenter to ensure more effective capture and engagement of the prestart audience.

ECS highlight the importance of:

- An individual's zone of influence
- 3-7 seconds to engage your audience
- How to structure the message delivered
- How to deliver a message with confidence
- How influential hand gestures and eye contact can be when
- Stressing an important point.

ECS enable increased efficiency and effectiveness of daily key messages critical to maintaining a safe and productive site.

*Your zone of influence is what (or whom) you can affect indirectly: it's the conversations you have with colleagues, it's the enthusiasm and support you demonstrate for a given initiative. You can't directly control the result, but your behaviour can help sway others to take action.

Benefits and learnings

Implementing effective communication strategies at our Mt Derrimut Road and Narre Warren Webb Street sites has delivered almost immediate results.

- Rotating the presenter of the prestart
- Prestarts have shortened
- Prestart content become more focused on key issues of the day
- Prestart presenters understanding that the quality of the conversation they have with the audience is dependent on the enthusiasm and support they demonstrate for the material delivered
- Prestart presenters understanding that presentation content alone is unlikely to drive a result, but presenters' behaviour can help sway audience to take action
- Increased workforce audience engagement and participatory behaviour exhibited through increased questions from the floor.

Participants were quoted:

"I will use this learning not for only doing prestarts/toolboxes but for normal everyday talking and engaging with small groups of people."

Program Office: Level Crossing Removal Project
Work Package: Western Program Alliance

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